

# *Barongsai* as a Strengthening Tool to Reach Harmonious Multiculturalism

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**Abstract**—In the 19th century there was an influx of large numbers of Chinese immigrant workers to the Dutch East Indies to work in mines and plantations. The largest group of Chinese immigrants began between 1860 and about 1890, they were composed of several very different ethnic groups and had cultures and customs and even the language was difficult to understand by each tribe, that of the Hokkien tribe, the Teo-Chiu tribe, Hakka (Kheh), Santung or Cantonese. This caused the Dutch colonials to issue a policy regulating the existence of ethnic Chinese in the Dutch East Indies by making segregation with the Java community. This segregation became very strong until Indonesian Independence. During the Reformation President Abdurrahman Wahid issued a policy to allow Chinese to express in the cultural field. *Barongsai* is one form of expression. The result is capable of lion dance as a Harmony Adhesive Multiculturalism. This study uses a short methodology of history to assess the effectiveness of lion dance.

**Keywords**— *lion dance, Chinese Peranakan, multiculturalism*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The word *Barongsai* comes from 2 (two) words namely Barong (Javanese) meaning Lion and Say (Hok Kian/China) means also Lion, in the original language (Hokkian) *Barongsai* often called *Samsie/Samsu* so this art show beauty, elegance and dignity of Lion beast, but the Lion here is not the Lion we can see in the Zoo or the Circus.

The term *Barongsai* was popularized by President Abdurrahman Wahid when he issued Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 which revoked Presidential Decree 14 of 1967 on all forms of discrimination/prohibition for the Chinese expression with all customs, beliefs and culture.

In the ancient Chinese story, the Lion animals referred to in this arts are the Lion of the Gods who believed their presence on earth will bring peace and blessing to mankind, especially when the Lunar New Year arrives, it is no wonder there are still many people who honor this attraction by doing Pie (worship by claspng fists) while the Lion is in action in front of him, even many who give *Angpao* (red envelope) in which filled a sum of money to be taken/struck by the action *Barongsai* or usually *Angpao* hanging on the door of the house for example.

People believe that the given *Angpao* will get God's reply hundreds of times over, but what is clear with the presence of *Angpao* attractions will be more vibrant.

For now, *Barongsai* art has become a branch of sport that is competed in both provincial, national and even international levels, in 2011 this *Barongsai* Indonesia team represented team from Tarakan (Kalimantan) and Kong Ha Hong (Jakarta) entered in 5 (five) big The International Open *Barongsai* Championship held every 2 (two) years at Genting Malaysia.

The philosophy that can be drawn from this art is how humans are able to withstand the test, hungry and authoritative (not wild and fierce) like the lions.

There is also *Liong* (Dragon) attraction which is usually also displayed when Lunar New Year arrives, especially for carnival on the street, this art is played with the appearance of 9 people (if only 2 person) that demonstrates the action of a Dragon Snake along more than 18 Meter, horned pair, bearded, has 4 legs, *Liong's* animal is believed to be a ride of the goddess *Kwan Im* (goddess of Mercy), but *Liong's* meaning/philosophy is: This dragon can fly, can live in Water and can walk (because it has legs) then in this life humans must be able to adapt to the environment anyhow, therefore we see many Chinese descendants can harmoniously cooperate with anyone, either in trade or in other things.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is about harmony and multiculturalism in culture. Sources of literature about Chinese tradition especially *Barongsai* dance is important for this article.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. *BARONGSAI* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CHINESE *PERANAKAN* COMMUNITY

If *Liong's* game is combined with *Barongsai*, the meaning is how we can align our life in this world, *Liong* represents the *Yang/Jantan* (positive) element while the

*Barongsai* represents the *Yin/Betina* (Negative) element, harmony/harmony between them will make life comfortable, imagine if we are rich but sick, hard right? Therefore, if attention is only for the physical/physical alone is not enough, spiritual or inner should we also note that we become healthy physically & spiritually.

This art is accompanied by music that is played by using 3 kinds of tools that is *Khu* (read *Gu*) or *Tambur*, *Ling* or *Gong* and *Ba* (read *Pa*) or *Cymbal*, but for *Liong* sometimes there is additional *Flute/Trumpet*. In every event of *Barongsai* game, there is 2 (two) types are contested is the game *Floor* (traditional) means *Barongsai* play on the floor or with aids in the form of a table/bench with a height cannot be more than 2 (two) meters, should not use electronic equipment, the props cannot be more than 10 Meters, the player is required to be able to demonstrate *Lion's* expression namely angry, drowsy, shocked, and delighted.

The other type of competition is the *Milestone/International* (2) game, the 2 lion dancers will exhibit the same stance with the floor action but are played on iron poles lined up on a 13 - 15 meter runway, a minimum of 1.5 meters, unlimited highs, of about 24 poles installed, half must be 2 meters high. At the end of the pole, there is round iron with a diameter of 33 Cm to rest on the feet of the players.

For this category *Milestones* players must be extra careful, once slipped in addition to getting a discount value, also a fatal result because his head hit the floor/iron grounding, then when the race was installed from the foam/mattress.

As for the *Liong* match, there is also a provision that must be obeyed if you do not want to cut the value, that is before the contest *Liong* head should be removed, weighed at least 2.5 kg, stick length/stick 1.85 M, from nose to *Liong* long horn 90 Cm, head size of horns down 60 Cm, body length 18 meters, distance between players 2.15 meters, body diameter *Liong* is 33 Cm.

#### B. THE DEVELOPMENT OF *BARONGSAI* IN SURAKARTA

Research activities that have been done that in Surakarta there are three groups of lions, namely: *Tri Pusaka*, *White Tiger*, and the gift of *God Almighty*. The three groups have developed lion dances for rituals, using *Konghuchu* temples and temples to request the blessing of *Tien* and others holding *Tiam* (enlivened with a ceremony of chicken blood on a new lion's eye). The three lion dances have also developed themselves for the benefit of the tradition, which is about seven times each year, as in *Imlek*, *Cap Go Meh*, *kempap* gods in *tri dharma*, the birthday of the *trio dharma* gods. In a series of traditional events involving *barongsai* has always been a tourist attraction, so this interest as well as lion function as a tourist interest. Almost every event held by the government *malalui* show art and *kirap*, lion dance never escape from the action.

The three groups of lion dances have also developed themselves for the sake of entertainment, such as inauguration ceremonies of offices, shops, weddings, birthdays to show that staged in the mall or other centers of

the crowd. Of the three groups of *barongsai* only one who has developed themselves in the field of sports namely *Tri Pusaka*. The concept developed by the researcher has been able to contribute the management of the lion dance group to be able to develop an integral lion dance for the sake of tourism, entertainment, and sports. *Tri Pusaka* became the largest *barongsai* group in Surakarta and has run the concept of harmony.

#### C. THE USE OF *BARONGSAI* TO STRENGTHEN MULTICULTURALISM

Surakarta is an area that is inhabited by various ethnic and *Tionghoa* is ethnic which have big enough amount. Chinese entrepreneurs start exist in Surakarta since displacement of *kraton* from *Kartasura* to Surakarta. The Dutch government in Surakarta deliberately sharpens the lives of Chinese people exclusively thus the attitude is also directed to the indigenous population which aims to keep each party living in a closed atmosphere.

In 1909 the Chinese government issued a nationality law stipulating that all Chinese descendants or any legal or illegitimate child with a Chinese father (or a Chinese mother if his father is unknown) is a Chinese national (*ius sanguis principle*) China's colonial rule also made the same Dutch decision to match it, on 10 February 1910 the Dutch government announced the entry into force of *Wet op het nederlandsch Onderdaanschap* (WNO). The Dutch East Indies considered all Chinese people to be Dutch subjects (the principle of *Ius Soli*) (Leo Suryadinata, 1986: 41). This situation resulted in the issue of dual citizenship and this problem continued until the signing of the *Dual-Citizenship Agreement* between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the People's Republic of China in 1955.

During the Order era, the Chinese citizenship problem could be solved by the government of President *Soekarno* through bilateral agreements between the Indonesian government and the government of the People's Republic of China in 1955, but the problem of discrimination remained in Chinese society during the Old Order.

The situation of Chinese society that is in various discrimination to bring solidarity movement to fight for their right as citizen. The organization of struggle of *Tionghoa* have existed since Dutch Colonial era and some stand after Indonesia Independence. Chinese community organizations are diverse from the regional, religious professionals to politics. These organizations include:

The first religious organization established in Surakarta in 1918 under the name *Khong Kauw Hwee*. This organization is a Confucian religious organization. At the time of the founding of this association is an organization that has members who are not too large, its members try to implement the teachings of *Khonghucu* in everyday life, at the beginning of its development *Khong Kauw Hwee* organize a lot of activities in *Tien Kok Sie* temple, but in the following years this organization has secretarial in *Jagalan* area.

The Khong Kauw Hwee organization also has a magazine issue named Khong Kauw Goat Po, but due to the lack of response the magazine is only published for several years and replaced by Bok Tok Goat Khan magazine or a magazine of virtue building containing the Confucian religion. In the course of the Khong Kauw Goat Po Organization changed its name to MATAKIN (*Majelis Agama Khonghucu Indonesia*) and branches in the region named MAKIN (*Majelis Khonghucu Indonesia*). MAKIN Surakarta is still standing and active in the field of religion and also education and culture. MAKIN Surakarta has a school that is still active until now, even though it has become a public school namely junior high and high school Tripusaka.

The Chinese community organization that is engaged in social is the Society of Surakarta Society (PMS). PMS organization is a fusion of six existing Chinese organizations in Surakarta that contradict each other. The six organizations are:

1. The Society Organization "*Kong Tong Hoo*"
2. Association Organization "*Hi Ang Gie Hwee*"
3. The "*Hap Gie Hwee*" Association
4. The Association of "*Kong Sing Hwee*"
5. The Association of "*Sam Ban Hien*"
6. The Association of "*Tiong Hoa Poen Sing Hwee*"

The six organizations of ethnic Chinese society was taken a joint decision which basically wants to merge into a single organization. On July 7, 1931 formed a committee consisting of the leaders of the six organizations. This merging process was tough and new on April 1, 1932 formed by the association of Chuan Ming Kung Hui, this organization is the organization of death (Begrafenisfunds), chaired by Tan Gwan Soei, while the patron of this organization is held by Major Be Kwat Koen.[1]

The change of name to PMS occurred during the Old Order of October 1, 1959 with the activation and dissemination of the integration movement among the Surakarta Chinese through this organization. This integration movement is the goal of the Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body (Baperki). Baperki was founded by President Soekarno in 1954. Baperki uses PMS as a monitoring of Chinese society in Surakarta in an effort to unite Chinese Chinese who become Indonesian citizens for political purposes (H Mulyadi 1999: 237). In its development PMS not only engaged in the field of death alone but also the field of social, economic, education, trust, culture and sports.[2]

The brotherhood of Hakka Surakarta (Perhakkas) is an organization of the Sino-Chinese Surakarta community that originated from Kwangtung province. The organization was first established in the 1940s under the name of Sung Chung. At the beginning of its founding Sin Chung engaged in education and culture, as Chinese organizations like Sin Chung during the Japanese occupation could not develop because of the repression of the Japanese occupation government against the standing organizations. After Indonesia's independence the organization changed its name

to Gek Suk Kong Hui (Hakka Organization). The development of this association progressed during the Old Order like other Chinese associations in Surakarta. At the time of the Old Order *Perhakkas* had schools as education for its members. The school was named Sinchung School which was founded in 1953, but the fate of Sin Chung school is not much different from other Chinese schools that were closed by the New Order government in 1966 after the G 30 S event. In addition, the brotherhood of Hakka Surakarta was closed from all activities.[2]

#### D. *BARONGSAI* AS A MULTICULTURAL CONDUCTOR IN SPORTS

In Surakarta there is a Group/*Barongsai* Society of Tripusaka (this name is taken from the 3 heirlooms taught by the Prophet Khonghucu that man must be Smart, Compassionate and Courageous to face the reality of life) this group is the only team in Surakarta who always perform and success in various Championship *Barongsai* from Provincial, National and even Southeast Asia levels.

This group was established in 1999 when the reform started to roll in Indonesia, starting from Clubs Wushu Tripusaka, at that time there were almost 200 members who diligently practiced because this sport besides healthy also entered into the type that is contested, but unfortunately because Clubs Tripusaka does not have building/place/In Door to practice finally Group Wushu which had brought the name of Surakarta as the fourth rank for three years since 1998 in National Championship, but unfortunately Clubs Wushu Tripusaka finally had to disperse because his student resigned move to "Other Clubs" stand up.

Club Tripusaka has a membership of about 70 people consisting of various ages, from the smallest 4 years old to the already married, who are Confucians, Christians, Catholics, Buddhists and even Muslims, whose Chinese descent is only about 15%, other Javanese. The members of Clubs Tripusaka routinely practice every Wednesday, Friday & Sunday at Tripusaka Junior High/High School.

The seniors are on duty to teach the new moves they get from the Internet or CD after the International *Barongsai* championship takes place every 2 years in Malaysia, and of course they also practice for personal progress. In the last week of training, the members of the clubs while drinking fresh milk and eating (once a month is provided, for the usual practice day there is only a drink) Pembina namely Js. Heru Subianto and Ws. Adjie Chandra took turns giving guidance both about the game as well as the matter of school ethics, ethics to get along and also share the input/suggestion how to progress and develop.

Something extraordinary was also felt by Clubs Tripusaka which was the signing of *Liong & Barongsai's* head by Gus Dur as he filled the narrative of Earth Charity Dinner at Legi Market, then the chairman of the Assembly (MPR) Dr.Hidayat Nur Wahid also signed one of the heads Junior from Tripusaka.

Shown many times in a short period of time is always felt by the players *Liong & Barongsai* Tripusaka usually when entering the month Imlek, 2011 was recorded more than 30 times performed in various Imlek events such as at Pangudi Luhur Elementary School, SD.Kanisius, SD Tarakanita, Piaqet, Focus Independent School, THR Sriwedari, Solo Square, Solo Grand Mall, Wisma Boga, Orient, at Pasar Gede temple, Coyudan temple, new Solo Carrefour, Pabelan, Assalam Hypermarket also in some malls and Supermarkets outside town.[3]

Clubs Tripusaka Board prioritize this art is always performed perfectly for 3 (three) kinds of Mission, that is for Ritual, Mission of Sports is always routinely follow various championship and of course Mission of Entertainment/Show as a means of increasing the means/cash/funds owned. mission ritual, before the stage (usually the Kirab event) all members without exception have to enter Lithang (Temple of Confucians) Jagalan follow the prayers and events Tiam led by Haksu, according to the way and beliefs and their respective religions all members solemnly pray for their game smoothly no disturbance whatsoever, as well as every new *Liong/Barongsai* purchase before this object is in Tiam first, even every race will advance also enter the Lithang to pray.

For the Sports Clubs Tripusaka mission instilled the motto of Yulius Caesar, Rome's Triple V to his players Vini, Vidi and Vision, meaning I heard, I came and I won; and it turns out that this slogan really lived and run by members of Clubs Tripusaka proven with various victories from the local level.

#### E. *BARONGSAI* AS ENTERTAINMENT

In Surakarta most of the people of Chinese descent reside in the city area. Areas or villages for Chinese or Chinese descendants can be found in Pasar Gede, Legi Market, Coyudan, Kampong Balong and Sudiroprajan, which are called Chinatown villages. In this Chinatown village, the Chinese are required to perform traditional Chinese customs so that they will remain distinct from the others.[4]

The social interaction between Javanese society and Chinese society is seen in the life of kampung Sudiro. In this case the most prominent is the use of means of communication in the form of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia. Sedangkan use of Chinese language is only used by the Chinese Totok. usiang language is not a problem for interactions between the two ethnic groups.[5]

In terms of other cultures that clearly visible is the art of *Barongsai* and *Liong* which is one form of Chinese culture, this art has long been growing and living in Surakarta. The art of *Barongsai* and *Liong* finally became part of the cultural treasures of Indonesia. But the art of *Barongsai* and *Liong* was then banned since the outbreak of the movement of 30 September 1965 (G 30 S/PKI). Despite having many fans, during this period until the reign of President Soeharto or New Order of this art is prohibited in the performances of Indonesian cultural treasures. Because during the reign of Chinese culture is not allowed to expand.

But the people of Chinese descent may conduct religious activities in their own environment and should not be shown to the public. At that time President Soeharto issued Presidential Instruction No. 14 Year 1967.[6]

In the New Order era, all Chinese activities were prohibited, the treatment of Chinese society was discriminatory and supported by several President Soeharto's decisions that prohibited Chinese schools and publications, name change, religion, beliefs and customs, the basic policy of foreign citizens, as well as the main policy of Chinese problem solving. Therefore, Chinese society lost its identity as a Chinese descendant. Since the issuance of Presidential Instruction no. 14 Year 1967 until the end of the Soeharto government, shackle things related to the celebration of religious festivals and customs Tionghoa not excepting the art of *Barongsai* and *Liong*. This art should only be played in its own environment in religious ceremonies such as Chinese New Year celebrations and inaugurations related to Chinese culture.[7]

Entering the reform era, all of the restrictions imposed by President Soeharto have been felt no longer appropriate because it is related to racial or ethnic discrimination that includes human rights violations. President Habibie then issued several Presidential Instructions which overturned discriminatory regulations against the Chinese people.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

There are 3 groups of lion dances in Surakarta: Tri Pusaka, Gifts of Almighty God, and White Tiger. Each has developed itself not only for religious purposes but also for tourism and entertainment. The Tripusaka lion group has pioneered the development of sports, and has a national reputation as well as a role in the international championship. The lion dance integration for ritual, tourism, entertainment and sporting interests can be developed by all lion dance groups in Surakarta. Output that produced in the year the first is the model of lion dance performance development that integrates ritual functions, tourism, entertainment, and sports. Outcome being produced in the first year that is a scientific study that produces applied model, so there is a reference foothold that can be used by lion dance groups in Surakarta. In the end, *Barongsai* art will continue to grow in harmony with Javanese culture in Surakarta. This can strengthen the interrelation of Java with *Tionghoa* which has an impact on the improvement of tourism economic sector in Surakarta along with Surakarta tourism stretch.

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