

# The Dance Performances in the Karo Society

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Abstract : In the Karo society the dance is a part of customs, beliefs and entertainment. The dance becomes a very important communication besides as entertainment and expression of feelings of sad, happy, and love. Although the dance as non verbal communication but has meaning that can not be expressed by speech. With the dance there is a sense of humanity that can be transformed not only to the kinfolk in social relations but also to those who have supernatural powers. Therefore the dance performances in Karo society are so important. The dance in Karo society is inseparable from the legend. The dance development is very significant since the keyboard become one of the ensemble Karo music. The dance performed at traditional ceremonies, religious ceremonies and at traditional Karo art performances.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the Karo society the dance is called *landek*. Landek is a very important element in every the traditional ceremony, the ceremony of religion and entertainment. In the traditional ceremonies that require the *landek* there are five types, namely 1) the weddings 2) the funeral ceremony 3) the appointment ceremony of ancestral bones, 4) award ceremony of the stick, and 5) the ceremony of entering a new new home.

The ceremony of religion that requires *landek* in Karo society there are four types, namely 1) the ceremony of purification or *erpangir ku lau* with some variations, 2) the ceremony calling the human spirit or *raleng tendi* with some variations, 3) the ceremony cleaning of habitation or *ngarkari*, 4) the ceremony of calling rain or *endilo wari udan*. The ceremony of mixing between custom and belief that requires dance or *landek* there are two types namely, 1) the ceremony of shocking or *nengget*, and 2) the ceremony of salvation or *ngari-ngari*.

The dance that is the entertainment in Karo society is found in three types of activities, namely 1) *gendang guro-guro aron* (the performances of dance and musical by Karo's youth and girls), 2) the certain celebrations both general and individual, and 3) festivals.

Therefore, to explains the dance of Karo is very important. Firstly, however, every community activity uses the dance as a communication tool

between human and natural relationships. Secondly, the dance in Karo society is very important as cultural preservation. Thirdly, by observing the dance, the Karo's views of his world can be understood. Fourth, the dance in Karo society shows the ability of someone as a member of the community. Fifth, with there then the Karo community is still there and the sixth the dance as one art that is local wisdom.

## 2 THE MEANING, HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF DANCE IN KARO SOCIETY

### 2.1 The Meaning of Dance

According Manalu (2017) dance is a gestures with rhythmically at a specific time and place for the purposes of association, expressing feelings, intentions, and thoughts. Ewidiani (2012) dance is the movement of the human body based on the movement in the activities of everyday human life. Human movement based on its function can be divided into three parts, likes play, work, and art.

According Dwi Restika, Ahmad Syai, Nurlaili (2016). The dance is one of the media statements of human activity in realizing values and overall through motion. Dance is as an expression of human

feeling through the movement of the body. So the basic essence of dance is motion.

The definition of the dance above is more or less the same as with the meaning of dance in Karo society. The dance in the Karo society is a *landek* which means knee up-down motion and hand swing movements that match the rhythm of the *gendang* (music) to meet certain needs. In this sense there are three important aspects as the basic the meaning of the *landek*. The three aspects are, 1) *endek* (dance movement) 2) *gendang* or music as an accompaniment of the dance, and 3) *kerja* or the purpose of performance. In the actual sense the *endek* means a knee up-down motion. But in a broader sense, the *endek* is the movement of the body to follow the rhythm of music. In addition to the up-down motion of the knee, the important movements rather than hand. In general, the movement of the hand is called *jemole*.

*Gendang* or music in the dance performances very important, without music no dance. The music that accompanies the dance in Karo society is called *gendang*. *Gendang* is a musical ensemble that in the music composition consists of melodies, the rhythm of drum, and the rhythm of two *gung* (gong) which is a colotomy. The dance movements are always associated with both gong rhythms.

The third very important aspect is *kerja* or activities that require the dance performances. Without *kerja* as a context of the dance performances is considered only playful and meaningless.

## 2.2 The History of Dance in Karo Society

Tracing the history of dance in Karo society is inseparable from the first death legend than human being. In the legend it is believed that the first human died in their time totaling 48 peoples. In order that those who died can continue his fate then in his funeral made accompaniment of *gendang* (music). *Gendang* (music ensemble) is considered the most powerful that can communicate with the supernatural. The first *gendang* (song) played was a *perang empat kali*. This song is presented to honor all the unseen who are believed to have power. After that is presented song for human being. To respond to the *gendang* (music composition) presented to humans there is the dance. Keadaan untuk merespon setiap ada *gendang* harus ada tari dianggap masyarakat Karo menjadi adat. Circumstance to respond to every *gendang* (music composition) there

must be a dance considered Karo society becomes customs the way of life of Karo society.

This fact is also practiced by *guru sibaso* or shamans in religious ceremonies. That way there is also a dance in every ritual ceremony when there is a *gendang* (music ensemble) accompaniment the ceremony. The basic dance movements found in traditional ceremonies and rituals are created by *perangga-mangga* ((a traditional Karo singer's term during the 1930s) developed it into an entertainment dance. This is the beginning of dance creations in the Karo community which was later created into a community performance called *guro-guro aron*. In this performance there are two types of dance, namely *perkolong-kolong* (the term of professional Karo's singer) dance and *aron* (the Karo's youth and girls whose participated in the performance) dance.

## 2.3 The Development of Dance in Karo Society

The development of dance in Karo society can not be separated from the development of *gendang* (music). The most significant development of *gendang* (music) lasted from the end of 1991. The development was started by Jasa Tarigan a Karo musician. He uses the PSR 500 keyboard as a drum enhancer. Due to the addition of drum sounds the dancers are increasingly dancing and not tireless. Although there are people who disagree but much more who love it, so musicians keep using it.

Five years later (circa 1996) the musician used a KN 2000 type keyboard, Tecnicos. By using this instrument he not only produces drum sounds. This keyboard can imitate all the sounds of Karo musical instruments, such as the sounds of *sarune* (like oboe), *gendang* (drums), *kulcapi* (double strings lute) and both types of *gung* (gongs) both large and small.

Around the middle of 1998 every marriage used *gendang kibot* (Karo music ensemble using keyboard instruments). The use of keyboard on Karo music makes dancing easier and more passionate. As a result of this development at every wedding party there is a *gendang la radat* (presenting music unrelated directly to customs). The performances of *gendang la radat*, intended to give the opportunity to the kin to dance with their spouse. In general the development of Karo dance today is much more free by creating movements from other tribal dances.

### 3 THE PERFORMANCES DANCE IN THE TRADITIONAL CEREMONY, RELIGION CEREMONY, ENTERTAINMENT, AND CONSERVATION EFFORT

#### 3.1 The Performances Dance in the Traditional Ceremony

Performances is the structure of a comprehensive unity of relationships by presenting, processing, and arranging of dance. This explains how the dance is performed by all supporters of the traditional ceremony. In every traditional ceremony, the *sukut* (the family whose conducted the ceremony) always invited kindfolks which consists of three groups. The three groups were composed rather than, *senina* (same grandfather), *kalimbubu* (a family giver girl/wife) and *anak beru* (a recipient girl or wife). According Tarigan (2017) First, the *senina* group is consists of, 1) *senina*, is the same grandfather then interpreted as "brothers", 2) *sembuyak*, like a brother with different of clan branch, 3) *sipemeren*, the same clan of his mother or sister's mother, 4) *sepengalon*, namely the relationship of two or several people who have the same of *anak beru*, 5) *siparibanen*, namely the relationship of two or several brothers to marry a brothers sisters, 6) *sedalanen*, has a relationship between two or several people who have the same of *kalimbubu*.

Secondly, the *kalimbubu* group consists of, 1) *kalimbubu*, often also called the family giver girl / wife, 2) *puang kalimbubu*, is a *kalimbubu* than a *kalimbubu*, and 3) *puang ni puang* is a *kalimbubu* than a *puang kalimbubu*

Third, the *anak beru* group consists of, 1) *anak beru*, often called a recipient girl or wife, son-in-law and the man who marries our sister, commonly called the *anak beru i angkip* or *anak beru i ampu*, the off spring of men than marrying of fathers and men than marrying sisters of grandfathers, namely *anak beru i pupus*, besides, there is a *anak beru sipemeren*, means the relationship *anak beru* happens because their mother is siblings, 2) *anak beru menteri* is a *anak beru* than a *anak beru* and, 3) *anak beru pengapit* is a *anak beru* than *anak beru menteri*

In every event of the dance performances in the traditional ceremonies, the *sukut* always dances with the kinsfolk and the village government. The dance sequence in the ceremony, first, the *sukut* danced

with the *senina*, second, the *sukut* danced with the village government, third, the *sukut* danced with their *kalimbubu*, and the fourth *sukut* danced with *anak beru*.

Specialized in funerals, the *sukut* may danced with *kalimbubu* more than twice. This is due to certain divisions within the *kalimbubu* group. The division of the *kalimbubu* group not only because the *kalimbubu* group is crowded but also because there are levels on *kalimbubu*, such as *kalimbubu* of grandfather, *kalimbubu* of father and *kalimbubu* of child.

Body movement in general at the time of the *sukut* danced with *senina*, both *sukut* and *senina* slightly bow their heads. It shows love each other because the position in everyday life is considered equivalent. A reality like this also happens when the *sukut* dances with the village government. This means that the village government highly respects to the people as well as the people respect for their government. Somewhat different body movement at the time of *sukut* dancing with *kalimbubu*. It is seen that the *sukut* more bowed the body of the omen highly respects *kalimbubu* while *kalimbubu* loves the *sukut* by way of widening hand gestures. Body movements at the time of *sukut* dancing with the *anak beru*, it appears that the *sukut* dance by opening the hand. That is rather wide as a compassion to the *anak beru*, while the body movements of *anak beru*, dance with a bow as a sign of respect for the *sukut* as *kalimbubu*.

#### 3.2 The Performances Dance in the Religion Ceremony

At the religious ceremonies, who acts as a dancer is *guru* or a shaman. In religious ceremonies, shamans use accessories to dance is a *dagangen* or white cloth. So the shaman danced to communicate himself with supernatural powers. However the shaman dancing begins with slow motion and gradually accelerates. At a certain moment a shaman possessed. In a state of trance shaman dancing according to the spirit entering the shaman's body. Sometimes there is a like animal spirit that enters the shaman's body. In such movements according to the nature of the animal, such as snakes, tigers, and monkeys. The dance in religious ceremonies is very personal, however, the basic movements of dance remains the same, namely *endek*.

### 3.3 The Performances Dance in the Entertainment

The dance in the entertainment there are some parts, but the most important is the dance in the *guro-guro aron* (the performances of dance and musical by Karo's youth and girls). The performance is held by a village community. Its purpose is only for entertainment to the public. However there is still a connection with customs. However, between the youth and the girl should not dance if same the clan. In Karo's customary view, one clan is considered to be a sibling. Therefore, the dance in this performance can be called the symbol of love. The dance in this performance is pairwise. Now the dance is generally free dance without being tied to the pattern of hand gestures and presence. Usually begins with a medium tempo, and *perkolong-kolong* sing one or two songs, then followed with a fast track.

A reality like this will take place throughout the show. Young men and girls dance in a more or less the same way, but take turns. At night this show may last for eight hours. which starts at 8:00 pm so that at 04.00, but during the day may last about seven hours, starting at 10:00 pm so 17:00 afternoon.

### 3.4 Conservation Effort

There is a keyboard being part of Karo traditional music (gendang kibot) there is a very significant influence on the dance. The musical atmosphere that results from the keyboard gives a very lively feeling in the dancing. This causes a feeling that there is no needs to take the dance practice seriously. The reality of this is that for more than 20 years there has been no training in dancing. That way people who dance make their own style by not paying attention to diversity. It's as if dancing is just to meet the needs of the customs. In the dance there is no sense of beauty both in the context of customs and in entertainment. Therefore, conservation efforts are needed by increasing aesthetic taste so that the dance produces beautiful dances. Conservation efforts by increasing aesthetic taste are done by choosing people who are very close to traditional activities. People who are very close to traditional activities in the Karo community today are people who work on cosmetology called 'salon'. Karo people need their services, especially in arranging clothes and makeup and other accessories. At the same time, however, they can teach the basics of dancing with aesthetics. We believe that their contest will be followed by the Karo people in general to get beauty for all the work done, especially in Karo customs.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The Karo's dance evolves based on the needs of the support community. The dance may be divided based on several criteria. First, based on the context of presentation, such as traditional dance, belief dance and entertainment dance. Secondly, based on the person who presents the dance, such as the person who performs and supports the traditional ceremony, shaman, youth. Third, based on creation, such as traditional dance and new creations dance.

Traditional dance is all the dance that always accumulate in the pattern of tradition that has existed from generation to generation. While the new creations dance is a dance that leads to freedom in expressing, not based on the pattern of tradition.

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