

PAHANG STATE FOLKLORE BASED ON THE LEGEND OF CHINI LAKE DRAGON

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ABSTRACT – This paper discusses the famous Pahang state folklore which is the Legend Dragon of Chini Lake. This state has an extensive forest as well as breathtaking islands. Among the popular attractions are Tioman Island and Chini Lake. Chini Lake is very famous for its stories of dragons in various versions. It is said that the history of Tioman Island started with the tale of the dragon that left Chini Lake. It is believed that the story of the dragon is related to an island in Indonesia. Hence, the name of the villages on the island are similar to the names of the villages on Tioman Island such as Mukut, Genting, Juara, Salang and Paya. Apart from the similarity of the village name, the shape of both islands is also quite similar as both have sharp mountain tops such as dragon horns. The similarity of the name of the village has led to allegations that the residents of Tioman Island are from the Riau Archipelago and Khmer, Cambodia. The allegation states that the residents there are of Cambodian descent because the dialects used have little in common. Nevertheless, this unique qualities demands more in-depth research to be documented to today's generation.

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INTRODUCTION

The term of folklore is "ordinary knowledge of the common people" has a double meaning that is about stories, songs, beliefs and is said to be a "separate science" that is closely related to humanity, literature and history [1]. According to Bausinger (1990) [2], William John Thoms created this terminology in the year 1846 as the substitute of famous antique and equivalent to *Volkskunde* (from German which means "study of people or people with culture, language, and descendant").

Folklore has a meaning and context which covers the community and sociocultural and related to traditional knowledge [3]. The term traditional knowledge is a general term that includes creative expression, information and know how that specifically has its own characteristics that can be used as a social unit identity. The form of knowledge refers to the traditional environment knowledge [4]. With the reform of laws and policies, agricultural development policy, biological diversity and intellectual property, as well as other local wisdom, the study of traditional knowledge began to grow from year to year [3].

Therefore, the traditional stories exist, belong to the people, and named as folk literature is literature that is born among the community. Usually, folk literature refers to literature in the past, which has become a community heritage. Folk literature is part of the cultural life of the old society. For instance, in the old Malay folklore, it is considered as entertainment for the locals.

METHODOLOGY

This study is using qualitative method based on the text analysis approach. The text analysis operates in two stages:

- i. Single sign analysis such as types of sign, mechanisms or structure and meaning of the single sign.
- ii. Analyzing the sign in a form of groups or combination which is forming a group of signs called "text".

According to Brown and Yule (1983) [5], text analysis will produce the denotative meaning which means explicit and connotative meaning which means implicit. Every text has an information framework. The information framework will form the structure of the text. Hence, researchers need to read the text to identify the information framework found in the text structure to understand the text in-depth and divide according to themes often found in the text.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

The aim of this study is to determine the structural framework of folk literature or folklore that is synonymous with the state of Pahang as stated in the text used for this discussion. The themes used for text structures analysis are dragons, lakes, and islands. The design of this study is the content analysis design, which analyses the type of text structure of each unit and the correlation of the text structure of the unit with the main topic of Pahang folklore. The analysis findings will explain the story of the origin of Pahang and the entities that are often associated to with the folklore of Pahang.

THE FINDINGS OF STUDIES AND DISCUSSION

Pahang's State Origin

The history of Pahang began before the Sultanate of Malacca and the southern part of Malay Peninsula are all included in the state of Pahang. Ages ago, Majapahit community mentioned Malay Peninsula as Pahang. In the early 16th century AD, starting with the formation of Johor Sultanate, with its north are bordered with Pahang, Sedili Besar to Terengganu; the western boundaries are Rembau, Selangor and Perak. Pahang is surrounded by mountains ranges to the north and west while while to the east lies the South China Sea [6]. Pahang Darul Makmur is the largest state in the Malay Peninsula with an area of 35,515, square kilometre. In the past, the fame and greatness of its name became the target of the surrounding government. Currently, Pahang is the state in Peninsular Malaysia divided into 11 districts namely Kuantan, Pekan, Rompin, Maran, Temerloh, Jerantut, Bentong, Raub, Lipis, Tanah Tinggi Cameron, and Bera. The population comprises various races and ethnicities [7].

The Origins of Pahang's Name

Before this, Pahang had various names. Chinese Manuscript refer to it as Pang-Hang, Peng-Heng, Pang-Heng, Pong-Fong, Phe-Hang, Pang-Kang and others. In the year 1225, an author named Chao Ju-Kuawrotea wrote a book entitled *Chu-Fan-Chi*, he claimed that among the states conquered by San-Fu-Chi or Sriwijaya was a state called Peng-keng or Pahang [8]. The ancient Arabs and European mentioned Pahang as Pam, Pan, Phang, Paam, Pao, Paon, Phaam, Paham, Fanhan, Phang and Pahagh [8].

An Arab author named Mas`udi argues that the names refer to the state of Pahang [9][10]. He agrees that pronouncing Fanjab as Fanhan, Panghang or Panhang means Pahang. According to Tibbetts (2002), there are several views that Pahang is derived from the Siamese and Khmer languages which means tin ore. The Siamese used to live in this state and opened the tin ore mines especially in Sungai Lembing.

According to Mohamed Roselan (1998) [11] due to the location of the Pahang River which opposite Kampung Kembahang, there is a large Macaranga tree or "Pokok Kayu Mahang" crossing the river. Due to its large size, it can be seen from the South China Sea and used as a guide for the pirates to rob the people of the state. Due to the security, Pahang state government at that time ordered the tree to be cut down. Finally, 7 people of Orang Asli were ready to cut down the tree and they took 7 days to bring down the tree because of the size. After the fall, it is said that the base can hold as many as 40 dishes and all seven of them who brought down the tree died [11]. After that incident, the river that flows near the tree is called "Sungai Mahang" and the state was pronounced as Mahang. From time to time, that word was replaced to Pahang and remains until today. The Pahang's name was inspired by the tree named Mahang. In Hikayat Hang Tuah and other manuscripts, Pahang is referred to as 'Indera Pura' and its capital is Pekan. To this day, Pekan is known as the royal city. Before the colonization by Malacca Sultanate, it was known as Pura [6].

The stories of dragons and island

According to Mustaffa (2005) [12], rivers, lakes, seas, plants, and animals in an ecosystem are having correlations whether explicitly or implicitly in a culture or belief system in this world. In Malaysia, there are two largest natural lakes which are Bera Lake and Chini Lake which are situated in Pahang state. Both of these lakes are not only rich with the biological resources and plants as the source of foods, water supply, medicine, handcraft, construction, and fuel, but are also important for the tourism economy. The unique landscape and diversity of biology and plants of the lakes have become an attraction for tourists from all around the world [12].

From this text, it is found that, one of the popular locations in the folklore is Chini Lake. Based on the locals folklore, the dragon named "Naga Seri Gumum" also known as the Loch Ness monster of Malaysia has been inhabited the Chini Lake. Several locals people stated that there is an ancient city at the bottom of this lake. The ancient city is said to be similar to that in Khmer, Cambodia. The cliffs inhabited by an Orang Asli tribe attract linguists because their language is related to Khmer, Cambodian. Hence, this becomes the basis of the theory that Malay people were originated from north to south.

This paper explains that this island's history begins with the defeat of the dragons fight at Chini Lake. After the defeat, two pairs of dragons which are male and female moved to the South China Sea. On their way to the South China Sea, the female dragon cloth slipped into the middle of the ocean and the male dragon had to turn back and look for the cloth. Because there is no fight between the dragons, peace can prevail again. In this circumstance, the female dragon can hear the sound of rooster crowing, then the female dragon continues to transform itself into an island forever. There is also folklore mentions that the origin of Tioman Island is from a female dragon that trapped in the small island named Bukit Dato' which is located in Kampung Juara.

In 1926, the locals saw the dragon or big snake at the downstream of Sungai Tembeling and then on to Pahang River to Kuala Pahang during the massive flood incident. At the same time, the flood had submerged many villages in Pahang. It is believed that the big snake appeared was the last dragon in the Pahang River named "Seri Daik".

This manuscript also has noted that there are two other dragons named Seri Kemboja and Seri Siam that always threaten the peace of Pahang state. It is said that the dragons named Seri Gumum and Seri Pahang fought with these foreign dragons but lost because these dragons possess their unique strength. The following are the unique traits of dragons; the Seri Daik dragon has golden scales, the Seri Pahang dragon has silver scales, the Seri Kemboja dragon has bronze scales, the Seri Gumum dragon has iron scales and the Seri Siam dragon has ordinary scales.

The strength and supernatural powers of a dragon are measured by the types of scales, in the strongest sequence starting with gold scales, silver scales, bronze scales, iron scales, and ordinary scales. The Malay people at that time was practicing magic; and leaders and guards who practiced the magic can turn themselves to a crocodile. At that time, they still adhered to the teachings of Hinduism and the goals are to become powerful and to be a feared person in order to ensure the security of the state and to become a dragon. The hermitage requires a hundred years to become a dragon especially the one with golden scales. They will undergo changes in the scales during hermitage. Their scales will turn from ordinary to iron and later on will change to bronze and silver. Finally, their scales will turn to golden scales once it has reached a hundred years. The time required for the scales to change is 25 years for each type of scales and cumulate to a hundred years of hermitage to become a golden scales dragon. The period of hermitage not only changes their scales, but they also acquire various strengths and advantages. The body of the dragon is very large and long. If the dragon swam in the ocean, the waves will be very massive. The places of hermitage are in the cave, in the ocean or straits, on the lake, and by the river bank. During hermitage, the whole body is covered in thick mud.

According to the other texts conserved by Madiawati et al, (2018) [13], due to the body being covered with thick mud and moss, there are a lot of fishes in the place of hermitage. During the hermitage period, they never moved or walked around. Sometimes, their body is moving a little bit and causing a splash of water and big waves. This happens by accident and the people are aware of this situation. If they move, all of the inhabitants around the jungle and nearby area will be feared.

Despite having supernatural powers, dragons also have weaknesses. If the dragons move from their place of hermitage during the day, they will become a rock and this will cause them to only be able to move during the night. If they could not return to their place of hermitage during the day, they will turn into normal human. When the dragons die, they will turn into rocks and look like the mountains or islands. The Seri Daik is considered as the eldest dragon and achieved the golden scales during its life and has been captured and locked by a saint or pastor with certain verses (such as in Al Quran or spells) so that it is unable to move. Several rivers are formed around Seri Daik's body. Tioman Island has two "horns" which are Gunung Nenek Semukut and Batu Sirau. The longing borne by Daik caused the dragon to also become an island in Riau after it parted with its partner. Daik Island is currently located in Lingga district, Riau Archipelago has many similarities to Tioman Island. The villages name on that island are similar to the villages name at Tioman Island, such as Mukut, Genteng, Juara, Salang, and Paya.

CONCLUSION

From the folklore presented in this paper, people can know about the stories and existence of the dragons such as "Seri Daik" where their Location is unknown, "Seri Gumum" and "Seri Pahang" in Chini Lake. Even though the existence of the dragons cannot be scientifically proven, these stories are related to the location, the places name, and topographic forms, which is the surface area such as hills, islands, and others. In accordance with the finding of the studies presented, these stories can be considered as local legends.

Other than that, the findings of studies have explained the origins of a place's name and how it gains its name. There is also a possibility that the folklore stories are meant to reprimand the attitude of past governments such as power struggles and attempts to conquer. The ability of the immigrants to succeed is because they have the strength and good effort which similar to the Cambodians living around the river or lake. Hence, the people in Chini Lake have been in harmony with their environment and used the natural resources without disturbing the lake ecosystem and forest. The harmonisation between the life of humans and nature has ensured the lake's sustainability for a long time ago. The harmonious atmosphere is successful because of knowledge, traditions, and the sense of belonging of the locals towards Chini Lake which interpreted through the local's folklore.

All in all, folklore or folktale is the collection of traditions and manifestation formed by legends, myth, proverbs, traditional dances and customs which passed down from generation to generation. The word folklore means intelligence or wisdom of a certain race. The word is form by the 'folk' (people) and 'tradition' (wisdom or knowledge). Folklore symbolizes popular culture and has major significance in the identity of the community, a nation. In order for today's society not to lose the tradition of the people, it is important that the studies based on wisdom and folklore are considered to be known by the younger generation today.

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Additional Material

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