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## THE MEANING OF THE WAYANG KAMASAN PAINTING 'LINTANG PERAU PEGAT' (SPLITTING SHIP) AT KLUNGKUNG ROYAL PALACE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study analyzes the implicit meaning of Kamasan painting featuring the scene of Lintang Perau Pegat (Splitting Ship) in the Bale Kambang floating pavilion at the Klungkung Royal Palace, related to the Japanese occupation. The data in this research were analyzed by using art history approach with Erwin Panofsky's iconography and iconology analysis. Historic research methods, complemented by related data from observations, documents and literature, then continued by doing the selection, analysis, and interpretation of data to produce synthesis. The conclusion obtained is that the pre-iconography, this painting reveals the event of the splitting of a Japanese-flagged ship by a large fish. The iconographic analysis is about the themes and concepts of the nature power that can influence human life. The basic concept of this creation was about belief in the secret power (God) that can undermine human power. Through a psychological atmosphere during the Japanese occupation, this painting was a crystallization symbol of resistance in the midst of powerlessness towards the rulers (the government of Japanese occupation), and hopes for the presence of divine power to help eliminate the oppression by Japanese over Balinese.*

*Keywords: Wayang Kamasan Painting, Japan, Bali*

### INTRODUCTION

The Wayang Kamasan painting on Bale Kambang not only captivates many tourists to visits, but also keeps traces of the history of the Japanese occupation in Bali. This painting is located on the ceiling of the Bale Kambang pavilion, a building in Semarapura Castle (palace), as a heritage of the Klungkung Kingdom (17th century) which was renovated between 1930 and 1940. This painting is estimated to have been made around the 1940s, along the Japan's power on the island of Bali (Kam, 1993: 32, Vickers, 2012: 83). This paper will review the influence of the Japanese invaders presence by analyzing the meaning of the Wayang Kamasan painting, taking the object of the painting case at Bale Kambang which visualizes the theme of *Lintang Perau pegat* (Splitting Ship). This research becomes important, amidst the scarcity of writings on Balinese Fine Arts during the Japanese occupation.

The painting of Wayang Kamasan on Bale Kambang is beautifully displayed on the ceiling of the building. This painting visualizes three story themes namely the *palelintangan* theme which is found at the bottom of the line, the Brayut family story that extends at the second level, and Sutasoma's story at the third, fourth, fifth and sixth levels.

At the first glance, the Wayang Kamasan Painting in the Bale Kambang does not show any connection with the Japanese occupation period. The shape and its composition resemble the Wayang show. It is showing visualization of a story, which is built on a number of scenes lined up to meet the ceiling of the building. Characters and scenes appear in ornamental forms such as the mostly of the Wayang Kamasan style. However, if we look closely, there are displays of a number of unusual visual elements than those commonly found in the painting of

Wayang Kamasan. The presence of this element is scattered in several scenes and is very interesting to study. In this paper will be limited to one scene in the theme of *palelintangan* namely *lintang perau pegat*.

This painting was done by painters of Kamasan village who coordinated by I Wayan Kayun. I Wayan Kayun is a painter who participated in repainting the Wayang Kamasan Painting on the ceiling of Bale Kertha Gosa in 1933 with Pan Ngales, Nyoman Dogol, and Pan Seken. Pan Seken and Nyoman Dogol are listed as members of Pita Maha (Adnyana, 2015: 152-154).

The visualization of *palelintangan* knowledge on the ceiling of the *Bale Kambang* building is on the bottom row. In previous studies conducted by the author of *palelintangan* paintings on the ceiling of the Bale Kambang, it can be stated that this painting is divided into three types of scenes namely *lintang*, *Dewa* (God)/Wayang and *sato* or animals. The cross section consists of 35 panels or scenes, the Gods and *sato* each have 7 panels, so that the total sum of the *palelintangan* scenes on the ceiling of the Bale Kambang is 49 panels (Cahyadi, 2015: 449). The *palelintangan* knowledge presents information about one's character and fate based on the day of birth (Ardhana, 2005). This visualization of *palelintangan* provides information on personality predictions as well as one's fortune according to birth day in the Balinese calendar calculation. According to I Nyoman Mandra (interview, August, 11<sup>th</sup> 2017), visualization of *palelintangan* refers to the name of *lintang*. At least the visual object that is visualized follows the name of the *lintang*. For example, the *lintang* of *perau pegat*, which is the main object of visualization, is a *perau* or boat that *pegat* or separate into two.

The *lintang* of *perau pegat* in Bale Kambang which is the focus of this study is found in line 39 in a series of visualization *palelintangan* which is calculated from the Northeast. The *lintang* of the *perau pegat* becomes interesting because based on the name of the *lintang* of *perau pegat* means a splitting ship which implies a conflict. Visually it shows a number of foreign elements from the tradition of the painting of *Wayang Kamasan* tradition. The most striking feature is the appearance of objects that resemble the Japanese flag. A number of researchers had mentioned the existence of Japanese elements in this painting. Kam and Vicker argued that the appearance of the Japanese flag was as a mark of the time of the painting that made during the Japanese occupation (Kam, 1993: 32, Vickers, 2012: 83).

According to the identification of the above problems, the following research questions are then formulated: First, how do the visual markers in the Wayang Kamasan Painting represent the *lintang Perau pegat* scene in the Bale Kambang? The second, what themes and concepts which are build the visual of the *Wayang Kamasan Painting* in the *lintang Perau pegat* scene in *Bale Kambang*? Third, what are the intrinsic meanings that can be revealed from the Wayang Kamasan Painting, the *lintang Perau pegat* scene in Bale Kambang? The purpose of this study are : First, to know the shape of visual markers in the Wayang Kamasan Painting *Wayang* of the *lintang Perau pegat* in *Bale Kambang*. Secondly, to know the themes and concepts that builds the visual of Wayang Kamasan Painting, the *lintang* of *Perau pegat* in Bale Kambang. The third, knowing the intrinsic meaning in the Wayang Kamasan Painting of the *lintang Perau pegat* scene at Bale Kambang in connection with the Japanese occupation.

In order to answer the problem that formulation above, the writer uses analysis method Erwin Panofsky's iconography and iconology theory (1955). This theory reveals the intrinsic subject or meaning of a work of art through the viewpoint of art history. The intrinsic subject or meaning is an integrated principle that underlies and explains an explicit or implied event, which is manifested through symbolic arrangements (artistic motifs, themes, and certain concepts) in a work of art. This theory offers three interrelated steps from one step to the next, namely the Pre-iconographic Description step, the Iconographic Analysis step, and the

Interpretation of Iconology (Panofsky, 1955: 26-28). Pre-Iconographic Description is the step of describing primary or natural subjects, in the form of factual and expressional elements. The description of factual elements is done by identifying shapes, which include colors, lines, or textures that means representations of scientific objects (natural) such as living things (humans, animals, plants) and objects (such as houses, buildings, clothing, etc.). While the description of the expressional element is done by identifying the causal relationship of an event, or feeling the expressional quality, for example the sad character of a gesture or the feel of a comfortable home. Factual and expressional elements are also referred to as artistic motifs (Panofsky, 1955: 28). Iconographic analysis is the step of interpreting secondary or conventional subjects by combining artistic motifs that form images, stories, or allegories into the composition of a particular theme and concept. (Panofsky, 1955: 28-29). Iconological interpretation is the step of interpreting intrinsic meaning or content, namely by knowing and understanding the principles that apply in a nation, time, class, religion or philosophical doctrine which are manifested in the method of composition or certain symbolic values (Panofsky, 1955: 30- 31).

This study applies qualitative research with a case study approach. This approach was chosen because the object of research is focused and explored one particular case, namely the existence of painting and visualizing the knowledge of the *Lintang Perau pegat* that located in *Bale Kambang* (1940), through in-depth data collection from various sources of information, such as field observations, interviews, and documents. The main characteristic of the case study approach is showing a deep understanding of a case by involving a variety of qualitative data and reporting the results of the study descriptively (Creswell, 2015: 135-136).



Picture 1. The Wayang Kamasan Painting, *Lintang Perau pegat* (1940)  
Source: Cahyadi, 2019

## DISCUSSION

### *Visual Markers (The Pre-iconography)*

The panel or "*Lintang Perau pegat*" scene is found in row 39 (counted and read from the Northeast corner with a clockwise rotation (*pradaksina*), precisely located on the Northwest side of the ceiling of the *Bale Kambang* building (Cahyadi, 2015: 449). The measure of *Perau pegat* panel is 50 cm x 30 cm, made with natural colors (Balinese color) on the surface of asbestos sheets.

The scene in this painting shows a large fish or a *ulam agung* (probably a whale shark) emerging from the surface of the sea water, with its large head crashing and splitting the hull, splitting it into two parts. Its large mouth adorned with sharp teeth managed to devour a passenger of the ship until part of his body was blown away and leaving a leg with trousers and shoes. On the boat left four passengers, two people fell due to the impact and the others two looked stunned staring at this incident with a scared face.

The passengers figure of this ship are depicted wearing a hat with a cloth decoration on the left and right sides of his face, wearing a long sleeved shirt without a collar that is equipped with shirt buttons. They wearing trousers with the bottom covering the calf looks tight wrapped around the strap. They use black shoes with a rather pointed tip and slightly bent upwards. From the costume worn, it can be identified if the passenger and owner of the ship are not Balinese, but may be foreigners from other countries (maybe Japanese soldiers). Meanwhile, a boat that broke with luggage packed in a box did not show any resemblance to a typical Balinese fishing boat (*jukung*). The mast was equipped with six white flags with a red circle in the middle that reminded of the Japanese flag.

In the upper right corner decorated with a banner in the shape of a luminous circle, this is a visualization of a star or *lintang*, in the middle of which there are two letters ("s" and "pua") written in Balinese script. "s" is the initials of the name *saptawara: Sukra*, and "pua" is the initials of the name *Pancawara: Pon*. The *Sukra* and *Pon* meeting provides an explanation of the day of birth of someone who has the *lintang* of *perau pegat*. The banner box in the upper field contains the Balinese script "*lintang perau pegat, kapegang lanang wadon, ngwat balu, babaribinan, bobotoh pangan, pati bati, muka prihania, duh katemahaniya, pamahayuniya, bawi, ji, 777, bebek, 2, ayam, 11*". This is an explanation of the prediction of the fate of people who born on the day of *Sukra-Pon*, as well as actions that can be taken to avoid the predicted disaster.

The expressional meaning is found by expressing empathy through observation of habits and familiarity with objects and events. By identifying the relationship between forms and events can make the expressional quality as a character or body language object. This painting scene shows a tense event, an attack by the lord of the sea against humans who boarded a ship with Japanese-flagged. A very big size of black sea fish breaks through the sea, rises to the surface, splits the ship and preys on a passenger. This sea ruler fish seemed to feel very disturbed and did not accept the existence of this ship in its territory, so it violently broke the ship and devoured a passenger. Its large mouth opened perfectly and a row of sharp teeth, and his bulging eyes showed a convincing look and high confidence in doing what was considered right. The atmosphere on the ship seemed tense and two passengers had fallen over helplessly. While the other passengers, just pay attention and clearly show a sense of fear of the events experienced. Their gaze was indeed directed at the big fish, but their posture seemed to want to move away and avoid.

### **Themes and Concepts (The Iconographic Analysis)**

The theme of the *perau pegat* painting reminds us of the belief in the myth of the invisible secret forces (*niskala*) that live in the midst of Balinese society. The enormity of a big fish power that can easily splits this ship as a representation of the secret forces.

The Balinese believe strongly in the existence of secret forces or the power of the Gods. The stories about magical animals that are believed to be the *rencangan Ida Bethara* or the army of the gods, *unen-unen Ida Bethara* or the property of the Gods continue to develop in the midst of society. The sightings of certain animals, rare and mysterious, often considered as messengers, convey a warning, from the ancestors or Gods to the people of Bali. In the teachings of Hinduism, the *Dewata* of heaven are always described as present by riding an animal.

In the Awatara Vishnu story, Vishnu descends to Earth in various forms, one of which is in the form of a holy animal. The first Awatara Vishnu who descended to Earth took the form of a Big Fish called *Matsya Awatara*. It is said, this big fish is here to save human from the flood. Balinese people who are based on Hinduism highly respect the natural forces that reside in mountains, oceans, forests, big trees, rocks and animals. Big Fish, known as *Ulam Agung*, is believed to be the messenger or plan for the power of *Sang Hyang Baruna*, the deity ruler of the sea.



The *Pelinggih* or sacred sites are often found to worship sea Gods by displaying big fish with elephant head.

According to the shape of ships and costumes which was worn by passengers, it seems that they are not Balinese, but foreigners whether traders or intermediaries from foreign nations. The sighting of the Japanese flag seemed to confirm that this was a Japanese-owned ship that was rammed up by a big fish.

It has been traced from various sources of mythology, history, and various allegories, it can be concluded that the concept that made in creation, actually reveals the basic concepts of Balinese belief in the existence of natural power that are presented through the presence of big fish that can defeat the sophistication or greatness of the technology of the big Japanese-flagged ships.

### ***(Intrinsic Meaning) The Iconological Analysis***

The psychological tendency and outlook on the creation of this work seem to be related to the 1930s. This period is considered a revival of Balinese art, which is contained by *Pita Maha*, an organization of Balinese painter which centered in the village of Ubud. In this period many innovations are found in Balinese painting, ranging from concepts, themes to techniques that tend to start in contact with modern Western knowledge. Painters began to find freedom "free" in expressing new ideas in their work. From the Wayang genre paintings then began to shift more naturalist, began to pay attention to the life around them to become objects in their paintings. The influence of this almighty ribbon spreads to other villages such as Batuan Sanur village.

The discussion about *Pita Maha*, always put aside the existence of *Wayang Kamasan Painting*, even though the movement of this great ribbon also echoes into the Kamasan village. This is confirmed by the existence of a number of Kamasan artists who are members of *Pita Maha*, including Pan Seken and Nyoman Dogol (Adnyana, 2018: 151-154, Vickers, 2012: 84). I Wayan Kayun (1878 - 1956) who coordinated the painting work at Bale Kambang, previously had also worked with Pan Ngales, Nyoman Dogol and Pan Seken when renovating a Wayang painting in Kertha Gosa (Vickers, 2012: 83, Kam, 1993: 33), so it is very possible that the spirit of renewal that was echoed during *Pita Maha* was still ringing in I Wayan Kayun when working on paintings at Bale Kambang. Among the grandeur of the themes of motology, a number of everyday themes and tend to be realist which burst in the painting scenes in the *Bale Kambang*, such as in the scene of *Lintang Perau pegat*, new elements that emerge are costumes worn by passengers and Japanese flags on that time which had power in Bali island.

Within such a framework, the scene of the *Lintang Perau pegat* at Bale Kambang (1940s), became an expression of I Wayan Kayun, revealed the value and cultural history at that time. In the early 1940s the Dutch lost against Japan. Bali changes hands to the grip of Japan. The Pacific War (World War II) erupted on 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1941 and on 19<sup>th</sup> of February 1942 the Great Japanese Army (Dai Nippon) successfully landed and occupied Bali, without any resistance from the Dutch or the people of Bali (Pendit, 2008: 22).

The Dutch helplessness against the arrival of Japanese in Bali, has fascinated the Balinese, and they did not fight against Japan. Some even welcomed Japan as liberators, and helped silence the Dutch regime. At first, the Japanese occupation offered new hope for the Balinese. The line of propaganda called *Sendenbu-Sendenka* and *Naimobu* tried hard to win the hearts of the people, succeeding in driving the people's enthusiasm. The spirit to remain obedient and believe that the war of Greater East Asia under the leadership of Dai Nippon will definitely be won, and mutual prosperity in Greater East Asia will be achieved (Pendit, 2008: 30, Robinson, 2006: 107).

But, things began to change when Japan suffered a serious setback in the Pacific War in the second half of 1944. When it demanded more and more food and other

ingredients, the burden on the local population increased dramatically (Robinson, 1995: 108 - 114). The Japanese army actions on the island of Bali, all of which were aimed at achieving victory in war, turned out to be too much in violation of the values and beliefs of the Balinese with a collective spirit. This situation caused a change in the attitude of the Balinese, from feeling submissive according to being silent and silent (Pendit, 2008: 44).

The Balinese silence, a form of feeling challenging to the Japanese government, this was not known by the Japanese army. Hence they thought, there was no need to be afraid or suspicious of the Balinese. Then in certain circumstances, the Japanese occupation government was never tried to alleviate the sufferings of the people. Thus, the first days of mid-1943, people began to felt how arbitrary the actions of the Japanese army. People become poor and destitute. The wealth in the form of property was collected through propaganda and by force, all of it was destined for war supplies (Pendit, 2008: 44).

Based on that cultural history background, and observing various psychological symptoms of the artist, as well as drawing the image around the object that refers to the psyche and outlook on life that develops in the supporting community, then the scene of *Perau pegat* becomes a crystallization of symbols about the attitude of resistance in the midst of lack of empowering the authorities (the Japanese occupation government), and hoping for the presence of the Gods to help eliminate the oppression experienced by the people of Bali.

## CONCLUSION

The first conclusion of this research, is about the various visual markers in the scene of *Lintang Perau pegat* as factual and expressional. The factual visual marker of this painting, which is the scene of the attack of the big fish figure in the ocean against the ship and its passengers which make the ship to split into two. Its style is a traditional style of *Wayang Kamasan Painting* which is dominated by narrative and decorative elements. The appearance of Japanese flags and costumes resembling Japanese soldiers shows Wayan Kayun incorporating new elements that portray conditions in the 1940s during the Japanese occupation. The expressional depiction in this painting reveals a process of communication that contains resistance between sea-dwelling animals and human passengers on the ship which is felt from the decisive action carried out by these fish which preyed and split Japanese-flagged ships in two.

The second conclusion is about the themes and concepts that make up the *Perau pegat* painting. The work reveals the awesome power of nature represented by the presence of big fish from the ocean capable of destroying ships and its passengers. The more specifically, it was the presence of the power or the God's messenger to protect the people of Bali from the Japanese-flagged foreign power in the middle of the ocean.

The third conclusion is about the symbolic values which are expressed in the painting. The process of symbolization is obtained through the intuition of synthesis concerning the essential tendencies of personal psychological thought and weltanschauung (view of life). Therefore, after observing the situation of the colonial era, especially towards the people who experienced oppression by oppressors, the painting of *Perau pegat* as a symbolic expression about an attitude of resistance in the midst of powerlessness towards the authorities (the Japanese occupation government), and hopes for the presence of the Gods to help eliminate the oppression experienced by the people of Bali.

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