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# Nandong Smong As Song Heritage From Tsunami Disaster In The Aceh Simeulue Culture: A Study Of Musical, Textual, Functional, And It's Local Wisdom

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## Abstract

The theme of this research is *nandong smong*, namely the singing of means of survival from the tsunami disaster in the culture of the Simeulue Aceh tribe. This research examines four aspects of *nandong smong* in Simeulue Aceh, namely: (1) musical, (2) textual, (3) functional, and (4) local wisdom. In this study, to study the four aspects of *nandong smong*, separate theories are used: for musicals the weighted scale theory is used, for textual semiotic theory is used, for functional theory is used, and for local wisdom, ethnoscience theory (ethnomethodology) is used. The methods and techniques used are qualitative research methods based on field observations, direct involvement, interviews, and audiovisual data recording. The results of this study are as follows: (1) from a musical aspect, *nandong smong* uses a typical Simeulue microtonal scale, in the form of a semi-free meter, and a heterophonic texture; (2) from the textual aspect of *nandong smong*, it is included in the type of poetry, consisting of five stanzas, which as a whole tell about what a tsunami (*smong*) is and how to save oneself from the *smong*, the meaning contained in the *smong* text is mostly denotative and little metaphoric connotative meaning; (3) functionally, *nandong smong* has uses and functions. The use of *nandong smong* is: (i) to enliven the atmosphere of the wedding party, (ii) to enliven the atmosphere of the circumcisi on party, (iii) to enliven the welcoming ceremony for guests, (iv) to celebrate the anniversary of Indonesia's independence, (v) to inaugurate the government building, (vi) for tourism activities, (vii) cultural performances, and others, according to the times. While there are two main functions of *nandong smong*, namely: (a) to inform the symptoms and phenomena of the tsunami and (b) to tell how to save yourself from this tsunami disaster, plus other functions such as: (c) maintaining cosmological balance, (d) communication, (e) cultural sustainability, (f) strengthening Simeulue's cultural identity, (g) appreciation of Islam, (h) entertainment, and (i) socio-cultural integration. (4) From the aspect of local wisdom, *nandong smong* expresses the wisdom of the Simeulue people in dealing with disasters.

*Keywords: nandong smong; musical; textual; functional; local wisdom*

## 1. Introduction

Basically, humans are an inseparable part of nature. Humans need nature as a source of life and a place to live. However, nature can also create disasters. Among these natural disasters are: floods, drought, forest fires, residential fires, smoke, volcanic eruptions, whose hot clouds wipe out the environment around the mountain, as well as large waves of the ocean hitting the coastal area, in the form of a *tsunami* disaster. In the context of Indonesia and the world, a well-known tsunami disaster occurred in 2004, with the focal point of the incident in Aceh. However, the tsunami that occurred in Aceh, in a world context, was not the only thing that happened. Based on history, tsunamis have also occurred in various parts of the world, including in Japan. The term tsunami itself comes from a word in Japanese. In the context of the world, so far 28 tsunami events have been recorded. What is famous is the tsunami in Aceh.

On Sunday morning, December 26, 2004, various areas in Aceh experienced an earthquake that reached 9.3 on the Richter scale, which then caused a tsunami which resulted in approximately 500,000 lives lost in an instant, all over the coast of Aceh which directly borders with the Indian Ocean. Currently, Aceh is experiencing the world's largest loss of life and thousands of buildings destroyed, thousands of bodies missing, some of them buried. The earthquake occurred precisely at 07.58.53 WIB, the epicenter was located at longitude 3,3160 N 95,8540 E approximately west of Aceh as deep as 10 kilometers below sea level. This earthquake has a magnitude of 9.3 on the Richter scale and is hereby the most powerful earthquake in the last 40 years that hit Aceh, the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand, the East Coast of India, Sri Lanka, and even the East coast of Africa. This panic occurs in a matter of 500-600 seconds (about 10 minutes).

On the other hand, apart from the physical and psychological impacts, there have also been other incidents in Aceh, as an expression of local wisdom, particularly in Simeuleu, in responding to this tsunami disaster. On the island of Simeulue, which is located about 150 km from the west coast of Aceh and is above the confluence of the Asia-Australia plate and the Indian Ocean, *only seven residents* of the island of Simeulue died. One of the cultural factors is that the ancestors of the Simeulue people have inherited the *nandong smong*.

*Nandong smong* is a genre of Simeulue Aceh folk song, which can be grouped into folklore in the form of multi-indexical narratives about the natural situation known as *smong* (tsunami). This song contains cultural teachings, if an earthquake occurs, then there are big waves in the ocean, and the waves drown the village, then another strong earthquake occurs, and the sea water recedes, so it is advised that all people in this area immediately run to a high place, in order to be saved from natural disasters, which are then internationally known as tsunami

With this background, the author will describe the research written in this paper, on four problems. The four are: (1) musical, (b) textual, (3) functional, and (4) local wisdom.

## 2. Theory and Method

To analyze the *nandong smong* musical, the *weighted scale* theory is used. Based on this theory, there are eight parameters or criteria for analyzing a melody, namely: (1) scale, (2) pitch center, (3) range, (4) number of tones (frequency), (5) number of intervals, (6) cadence patterns, (7) melody formulas, and (8) contours (Malm 1977).

Furthermore, to analyze the meaning of the *nandong smong* text, the writer used the semiotic theory. A theory about the meaning of connotations and denotations that are communicated. The term semiotic comes from the Greek semeion. Sudjiman and van Zoest (1992) stated that semiotics means a sign or signal in a larger symbol system. According to de Saussure (semiotics pioneer and linguist), semiotics is the study of "the life of signs within society." To study the local wisdom contained in it, local wisdom theory is used based on Simeulue ethnic knowledge.

The method used in this research is qualitative, based on the main data narrated by key informants. This research is based on field work, in the form of: interviews, involved observations, recording audiovisual data, and others. Data were collected and then analyzed in an ethnomusicological laboratory.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. *Nandong Smong* in Simeulue

*Nandong* is one of the traditional arts in Simeulue Regency. As far as the writer's observation, no book has written about the meaning of the word *nandong*. The author, basic from informants explanation, argues that the word *nandong* is taken from the Malay language, namely the word *senandung*. This word means singing in a soft voice to comfort yourself or lull babies and others. So, *nandong* is a song that is sung with the meaning of the lyrics which aims to remind, advise, and inform the audience about daily life. *Smong* comes from the Simeulue language, which means sea water rises, when an earthquake or better known as a *tsunami* (Japan terminology). *Nandong smong* is a type of song that tells about the tsunami event.

In history, it is recorded that this tsunami hit the island of Simeulue in 1833 and 1907 ago. In 1833 there was a *smong* in these islands. Then in the next 74 years, right in 1907 the *smong* hit the islands again. From this natural disaster, parents tell their children and grandchildren that if an earthquake occurs and the sea water recedes, immediately run to higher ground.

According to the explanation of an informant named Mr. Suherman (65 years old), it is stated as follows: "Our ancestors sent down or gave this advice by means of the *bernandong*, which is humming accompanied by *violin (biola)* and *kedang* strains. Because of this habit, we survived the 2004 tsunami. "

*Nandong smong* is often sung by *nandong* artists when there are gatherings, national and regional holidays, and is even included in a series of traditional wedding ceremonies. This *nandong smong* is considered to be the original tradition of Simeulue. Due to its existence as a local oral tradition that is able to minimize tsunami victims, the United Nations (UN) gave the Sasaka Award for this tradition, on October 13, 2005.

### 3.2. *Musical*

Although *nandong smong* prioritizes singing performances, musical instruments (instruments) are always used. The instruments are the violin, the short-necked lute, which plays it swiped with a bow. This musical instrument is tuned according to the harmony in Western music. In addition, two *kedang* (two headed, conical shaped drums) are also used.

The musical performance structure of the *nandong smong* has norms of sequence of performances. The first thing that filled this performance was the *kedang* rhythm pattern. Based on the patterns produced by the *kedang* players, there are rhythm patterns: (1) four beats filled with a quarter note duration, (2) a combined rhythm pattern of duplicate beats; (3) combined duple and quadruple.

The scale is the notes used in *nandong smong*, which are related to the melody and basic notes. These scales have member notes, which make up the overall melody. The scale used by the singer to sing the *nandong smong* can be classified into a scale that uses eight tones, it could be that this is the development of a common scale in Acehese culture, namely heptatonic plus microtonal tend.

### 3.3. Textual

The text of nandong smong in the context of the Nature of the Archipelago can be categorized as poetry, with a saga theme. In this case, the poem *nandong smong* tells the story of a tsunami, signs of a tsunami, and how to save yourself from the tsunami. The text structure is as follows.

#### a. Introduction

*Enggelan mon sao surito* (hear a story)  
*Inang maso semonan* (once upon a time)  
*Manoknop sao fano* (drowned a village)  
*Uwilah da sesewan* (that's how it told)

#### b. Content

*Unen ne alek linon* (preceded by an earthquake)  
*Fesang bakat ne mali* (followed by big waves)  
*Manoknop sao hampong* (sink all over the country)  
*Tibo-tibo maawi* (and suddenly)

*Anga linon ne mali* (if the earthquake is strong)  
*Uek suruik sahuli* (followed by receding water)  
*Maheya mihawali* (after that looking for a place)  
*Fano me senga tinggi* (plateau in order to survive)

*Ede smong kahanne* (that is smong the name)  
*Turiang da nenekta* (the history of our ancestors)  
*Miredem teher ere* (remember of this event)  
*Pesan navi-navi da* (it's message and advice)

#### c. End

*Smong dumek-dumek mo* (tsunami your bath water)  
*Linon uwak-uwakmo* (earthquake your swing)  
*Elaik keudang-keudang mo* (lightning as your drum)  
*Kilek suluih-suluih mo* (your lightning light)

Table 1. Structure, Meaning, and Discourse or Thema Type of Nandong Smong Text

No Stanza	No line	Nandong Smong (in Simeulue language)	Meaning in English	Discourse and The Type
I	1.	<i>Enggelan mon sao surito</i>	hear a story	Explanation,
	2.	<i>Inang maso semonan</i>	once upon a time	It's said that our
	3.	<i>Manoknop sao fano</i>	sink all over the country	ancestors once drowned
	4.	<i>Uwilah da sesewan</i>	that's how it told	in a village
II	5.	<i>Unen ne alek linon</i>	preceded by an earthquake	Explanation,
	6.	<i>Fesang bakat ne mali</i>	followed by big waves	<i>smong</i> characteristis: earthquake,
	7.	<i>Manoknop sao hampong</i>	sink all over the country	big waves,
	8.	<i>Tibo-tibo maawi</i>	and suddenly	sink all villages
III	9.	<i>Anga linon ne mali</i>	if the earthquake is strong	Explanation,
	10.	<i>Uek suruik sahuli</i>	followed by receding water	Cara menyelamatkan
	11.	<i>Maheya mihawali</i>	after that looking for a place	diri dari <i>smong</i>
	12.	<i>Fano me senga tinggi</i>	plateau in order to survive	
	13.	<i>Ede smong kahanne</i>	that is smong the name	Eksplanasi,

IV	14.	<i>Turiang da nenekta</i>	the history of our ancestors	Itulah <i>smong</i>
	15.	<i>Miredem teher ere</i>	remember of this event	How to save yourself from
	16.	<i>Pesan navi-navi da</i>	it's message and advice	tsunami
V	17.	<i>Smong dumek-dumek mo</i>	tsunami your bath water	Advice and entertainment,
	18.	<i>Linon uwak-uwakmo</i>	earthquake your swing	<i>smong</i> a part of
	19.	<i>Elaik keudang-keudang mo</i>	lightning as your drum	our life
	20.	<i>Kilek suluih-suluih mo</i>	your lightning light	

The entire text above is a metaphorical style of language. The essence of the above text is *smong*, even though it is dangerous, both to oneself and to other life in this world that is hit by it, the philosophy of living nature is a part of the human being. No matter how great a disaster, just understand it as a lesson in life. The philosophy of life of the Simeulue people in this case is let's learn from this developed nature. So *smong* or tsunami need not be feared, but should be responded with wisdom and wisdom. That is the connotative meaning, according to the author's semiotic interpretation.

#### 3.4. Uses and Functions of Nandong Smong

For the people of Simeulue, the main function of *nandong smong* is a means of saving oneself from the tsunami disaster, as a value-laden local wisdom. From this main function, culturally, *nandong smong* is used in various community activities, whether formal such as marriage or non-formal such as accompanying children to sleep. What is important is the message what a tsunami is and how to save yourself from a tsunami. In the following, we analyze some of the uses of *nandong smong* in Aceh's Simeulue ethnic culture.

The use of *nandong smong* in Simeulue Aceh includes various activities, such as: enlivening the atmosphere of a wedding party, enlivening the atmosphere of a circumcision party, to accompany traditional ceremonies such as sea feasts, for cultural festivals, to accompany inauguration events, for tourism purposes, inaugurating government buildings, welcoming honorary guests, celebrating the anniversary of Indonesia's independence, and others.

Other uses of this *nandong smong* are also not limited, according to the suitability of the social context. Apart from celebrating the wedding ceremony, circumcision ceremony, welcoming guests, it is also used for various contexts such as: (1) welcoming the anniversary of Indonesia's independence; (2) inaugurating government buildings; (3) opening and filling out tourism events; (4) cultural performances; and others.

The main function of *nandong smong*, according to the study and interpretation of the author, is to study the symptoms and events of the tsunami, which was experienced by the ancestors of Simeulue several hundred years ago, and is very likely to happen again. The symptoms and events of this tsunami are clearly contained in the text.

The next function of *nandong smong* is to tell you how to save yourself from the tsunami disaster. This function is important in terms of the continuity of Simeulue's human generation, so as not to become victims of the tsunami. The way to save oneself is contained in the text.

Another function of *nandong smong*, according to the author, is to maintain cosmological balance. The Simeulue people have their own concept in seeing nature. For the people of Simeulue, this realm included him as well. Nature consists of the visible realm, namely the earth, planets, satellites, stars, the solar system, galaxies, and others, as well as the supernatural.

Another function of *nandong smong* is as a means of communication. In such a function, the *nandong smong* performance used in various cultural events, apart from providing knowledge, also functions for communication. In this case, people who present *nandong smong* are communicators. They are singers (*penandong*), violinists and *kedang*. Furthermore, people who watch the *nandong smong* performance in communication are called communicants.

In relation to the function of *nandong smong* for cultural harmony and stability, it is part of its main function, namely as a means of knowledge of the Simeulue people about tsunamis and how to save themselves from tsunamis. Understanding this, Simeulue's people subsequently largely survived the disaster. Furthermore, after the tsunami was over they returned to their homes, even though they had been devastated by the tsunami. They can still rebuild the facilities and infrastructure for their life again. Then slowly but surely filled his life with full of hope towards the future.

The function of strengthening Simeulue's cultural identity. According to the author, one of the other functions of *nandong smong* is to strengthen the cultural identity of Simeulue. *Nandong smong* is only found in the culture of the Simeulue people. *Nandong smong* is also an oral tradition full of local wisdom, which makes the Simeulue people known throughout the world. Even the United Nations has given appreciation for the existence of *nandong smong* in Simeulue.

Another function of *nandong smong* is to appreciate Islam. What this means is that in *nandong smong* there are values of Islamic teachings, especially about nature, disasters, responding to disasters, and what is important is that all of them come from Allah Subhanahu Wataala. According to the information of the informants, the teachings of Islam contained in this *nandong*

smong, as stated by Allah in the Koran, regarding the story of the Prophet Noah and his ark. Believers believed that there would be a great flood, and according to the direction of the prophet Noah, got into the ark, then people who were hostile to Prophet Noah and denied God's power did not want to get into the boat because they did not believe there would be a big flood. Finally, the believers who were in Noah's boat were saved and the people who were hostile to Noah were drowned.

One of the functions of nandong smong is for the people of Simeulue. In Simeulue Aceh, nandong smong is still alive because one of its functions is for entertainment. Traditional performing arts groups usually carry out their activities on the stage, at homes that have a celebration, in buildings, and others. The function in this context is to entertain visitors. In this regard, according to the economic factor is the main reason for this entertainment framework.

From a series of functions of nandong smong, according to the author, its function which is also important is to contribute to community integration. Through this nandong smong, the Simeulue people are reminded of the importance of working together in understanding, saving themselves from tsunamis, communicating with each other, and this will be more integrated by cooperating.

#### 4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research are as follows: (1) from musical study, nandong smong uses a typical Simeulue microtonal scale, in the form of a semi-free meter, and a heterophonic texture; (2) the textual of *nandong smong*, it is included in the type of poetry, consisting of five stanzas, which as a whole tell about what a *smong* is and how to save oneself from the smong, the meaning contained in the smong text is mostly denotative and little metaphoric connotative meaning; (3) functionally, *nandong smong* has uses and functions. The use of nandong smong is: (i) to enliven the atmosphere of the wedding party, (ii) to enliven the atmosphere of the circumcision party, (iii) to enliven the welcoming ceremony for guests, (iv) to celebrate the anniversary of Indonesia's independence, (v) to inaugurate the government building, (vi) for tourism activities, (vii) cultural performances, and others, according to the times. While there are two main functions of nandong smong, namely: (a) to inform the symptoms and phenomena of the tsunami and (b) to tell how to save yourself from this tsunami disaster, plus other functions such as: (c) maintaining cosmological balance, (d) communication, (e) cultural sustainability, (f) strengthening Simeulue's cultural identity, (g) appreciation of Islam, (h) entertainment, and (i) socio-cultural integration. (4) From the aspect of local wisdom, nandong smong expresses the wisdom of the Simeulue people in dealing with disasters. Thank you very much readers.

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