

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer would like to answer the two research questions. The first one is the description of *Cap Go Meh's Tatung* existing in the Chinese Indonesian community in Ketapang and the second one is to reveal the meaning of *Cap Go Meh's Tatung* for the Chinese Indonesian community in Ketapang. To answer these research questions, the writer interviewed some *Tatung* and some elders who understand Chinese tradition.

4.1. The description of *Cap Go Meh's Tatung* existing in the Chinese Indonesian community in Ketapang

Cap Go Meh festival with a parade of *Tatung* is just a Chinese customs “*Jadi arak-arakan kite pas Cap Go Meh tu adat dan tradisi turun temurun dah*” [the procession at the time of the go meh festival is Chinese customs] (I2, Interviewed on 13th December 2020).



Figure 4.1. The parade of *Tatung*

This ritual aims to expel or cleanse all the evil spirits that exist throughout the city. At the festival, the parade is accompanied by drums and the lighting up of “*hio*”, a traditional Chinese candle. During the parade, the *Tatung* represents Chinese gods or generals, or local Dayaks commanders. Below are the descriptions of the *Tatung* that attend the *Cap Go Meh* Parade in Ketapang.

4.1.1. The *Tatung* possessed by Chinese gods or ancient Chinese generals

Tatung joining the parade in the Cap Go Meh festival has different levels. The level depends on the spirit that enters their body. Some *Tatungs* are possessed by the spirit with the level of an ancient Chinese general or a Chinese god.

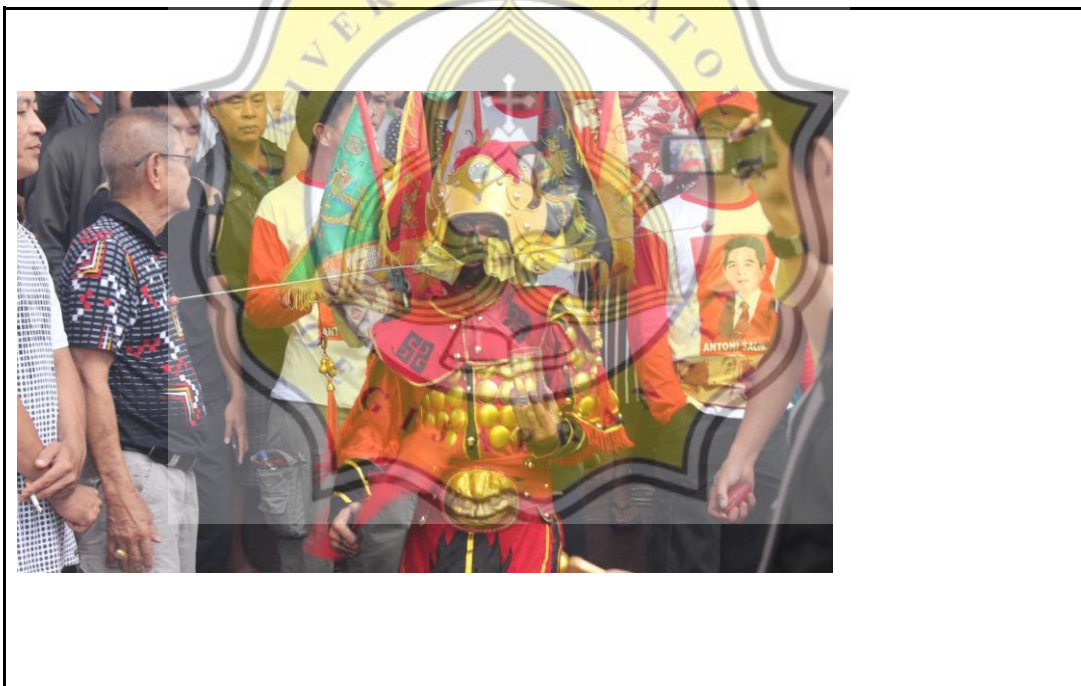


Figure 4.2. *Tatung* was possessed by ancient Chinese or generals

The *Tatung* in figure 4.2 is a general in ancient China. He is dressed in full ancient China armor with a breastplate and helmet. Like a general who is ready to go to war, the *Tatung* also carries weapons; in this case, he carries a sword. The *Tatung* also carries some flags with Chinese characters. This *Tatung* like the

general he is representing has power as a leader and a healer. During the parade, this *Tatung* performs some unordinary abilities. He shows the audience that he is invincible. With the help of some assistants, he pierces his cheeks with the iron spears painted in gold. He also shows his invincibility by cutting his hand with a knife. Along the parade, this *Tatung* shows his fierce expressions.



Figure 4.3. *Tatung* possessed by the monkey god

The *Tatung* in figure 4.3. is the *Tatung* of the famous monkey-god in Chinese legend, Sun Wukong. This *Tatung* is believed to be possessed by the spirit of Sun Wukong. As a monkey god, this *Tatung* is dressed like a warrior too. He wears attributes that are typical of Sun Wukong's attributes such as a golden and red shirt, a cap with a phoenix feather, and boots. This *Tatung*, like Sun Wukong, also carries a staff. This staff is believed to be sacred. No one else can touch the staff without the *Tatung's* permission. Similar to other *Tatung*, the *Tatung* of the monkey god also does attractions that show his invincibility during the Cap Go Meh parade,

Concerning the costume worn by the *Tatung*, the writer found that the colors of the costume are various; it is black, yellow, red, or green. One of the interviewees addressed the different colors of the costume. Green, gold, red with

golden accessories, means the *Tatungs* are Chinese General, while yellow, black means they are just entered by an ordinary spirit “*Jendreal, baju hijau, emas-emas, berarti dewa langit punya, kalo macam pakkong tu ya hanya baju biasa*” [the general, green clothes. Golden gold belongs to the god of the sky. If it is a *pakkong*, the costume is just ordinary clothes.] (I1, interviewed on 13th December 2020). *Pakkong* is an ordinary ancestral spirit that does not have any rank and can enter the body of whoever becomes a *Tatung*. In the writer’s knowledge, the *Tatung* who wears green clothes is just a general, but the one who wears golden clothes is both a general and a god.

4.1.2. The *Tatung* possessed by a Dayak warrior

Besides the *Tatung* possessed by Chinese ancient generals and gods, other *Tatungs* are possessed by Dayak warriors. *Tatung* possessed by Dayak warriors are not uncommon because the warriors are taken as the Chinese ancient generals in terms of power and strength by the local people.



Figure 4.4. A *Tatung* possessed by a Dayak warrior

The *Tatung* in figure 4.4. is a *Tatung* possessed by a Dayak warrior. This *Tatung* is not possessed by an ordinary Dayak warrior, but the leader of the Dayak warriors. His position as the leader of the Dayak warriors can be seen by his head accessories that consist of feathers of *Ruai* bird and a hornbill crown. In general, this bird is considered sacred and is not allowed to be hunted or eaten. In their life, the Dayak Kalimantan people are very closely related to this hornbill. Stories and myths related to the hornbill can be found in many regions although the story will be different in each region. As one story says, the hornbill is an incarnation of the *Panglima Burung*. *Panglima Burung* is a figure who lives in the inland mountains of Kalimantan and has a supernatural form. He will only be present during the war.

The hornbill itself is a sign of the closeness of the Indonesian people to the natural surroundings. All parts of the hornbill's body are used as a symbol of the greatness and glory of the tribe, symbolizing peace and unity. Its thick wings symbolize a leader who always protects his people, while the long tail is considered as a sign of the prosperity of the Dayak people. In addition, hornbills are also used as examples of family life in the community to always love their life partners and raise their children to become independent and mature Dayak people.

Tatung possessed by a Dayak warrior does not always wear head accessories from *Ruai* feathers and hornbill crowns. . The hornbill crown means that the *Tatung* is a traditional leader, or a commander because not everyone can use the hornbill crown. Some of them also wear a robe with many skulls as their accessories. The skull that is used as an accessory is a human skull that is believed to have supernatural powers which are known to be the most powerful

magic in the world. Freshly decapitated heads were believed to be potent enough to save them from all evil, and the feathers on the head are *Ruai* bird feathers that are characteristic of the Dayak people.



Figure 4.5. A *Tatung* with skulls as accessories

As shown by figure 4.5, a *Tatung* sometimes wears a Dayak warrior costume with many skulls as accessories. The costume with skulls as accessories is a costume of a war commander. This particular costume is worn by the warrior when he goes to a fight or a war. He also has a red color on his face that represents the spirit in his body. The red color on his face showed that the spirit inside was the spirit of a warlord. In short, this *Tatung* has great strength. The number of skulls in the costumes worn by the *Tatung* shows the number of people the spirit had beaten during the war.

As a Dayak warrior, this *Tatung* carries a *mandau*, a traditional Dayak weapon. During the parade, this *Tatung*, like the *Tatung* of an ancient Chinese general, shows his invincibility by stabbing himself several times with a machete.



Figure 4.6. A *Tatung* drinking pig's blood

Stabbing oneself with a sharp object like the machete is not the only action done by the *Tatung* to show off their strength. In figure 4.6., a *Tatung* is biting a piglet to drink its blood. This action was done while the *Tatung* was possessed by a spirit. Drinking pig, chicken, or dog blood is what a *Tatung* usually does because the blood is considered the food for the spirit. The figure also shows that the *Tatung* also carried a dead chicken. The *Tatung* killed the chicken by biting its neck. He later drank the chicken's blood too to feed the spirit. It is believed that drinking the blood of the animals will reinforce the strength of the *Tatung*.

In the parade, some *Tatungs* are not alone. They are accompanied by some guards who carry weapons such as swords gilded by gold and silver. The guards carry the offerings, items needed by *Tatung*, and the triangular flag containing the names of the *Tatung*.



Figure 4.7. *Tatung* with the guards

The social status of the *Tatung* among the people can be seen from whether the *Tatung* is carried in the stretcher or whether they walk. The *Tatung* who is carried in the stretcher is the high-level *Tatung*, while the walking *Tatung* is the lower level *Tatung*. A famous *Tatung* has many clients so he has money to hire stretcher-bearers. When the *Tatung* sits on a stretcher, he sits in a seat lined with sharp swords or hundreds of spikes. During the parade, they exhibited deadly attractions. For example, pressing the abdomen and legs with a machete, or eating a glass fragment from fluorescent lamps, or penetrating the cheeks and lips with an iron spear over 50 cm. Some people even stab their neck or slice their tongue with knives or *mandau*, a distinctive weapon of Dayak people. When possessed, the *Tatung* can do all the attractions without dripping blood.



Figure 4.8. A high-level *Tatung* in a stretcher

Other than the descriptions of the *Tatung* discussed above, the writer found some additional information from the observation and the interviews. The first one is before the parade is held, the *Tatung* usually does a prayer to thank god for the life he has received and the life he has lived so far. Figure 4.9. shows a *Tatung* who is thanking the sky god for the life he has. This *Tatung* is also grateful for being able to participate in the *Cap Go Meh* parade that year.



Figure 4.9. A *Tatung* thanking the sky god

The second one is before performing in the parade, the *Tatung* does a street cleansing ritual. Only high-level *Tatung* can do this ritual. The interviewee, I1 said that, “*kalok yang biase nyuci jalan tu jendral gak itu, tak semue bise cuci*

jalan di sekitaran tolak bala tu. [the one who usually cleanses the street, a general cannot do it, not every *Tatung* can cleanse the street to ward them off from evils.] (I1, interviewed on 13th December 2020).” The third one is after the parade, the visitors hunt for the blessed offerings such as pork, grapefruit, banana, and liquor, statues of gods and dragons, and even motorcycles. Sometimes the goods are used personally; some goods are sold as commodities.



Figure 4.10. Visitors try to get the offerings

Other information that the writer gathered during her study is that Ketapang is not the only place that has a parade of *Tatung* during its *Cap Go Meh*'s festival, but Singkawang also has a similar parade.



Figure 4.11. *Tatung* in Singkawang

In addressing the interviewer's question on the differences between Ketapang's and Singkawang's *Tatung*, the interviewee stated that there is no difference between Ketapang's and Singkawang's *Tatung*. This interviewee even said that the majority of those who become a *Tatung* are the people of Singkawang.

Ndak ade, ndak ade yang bede. Semue tatung tu same jak. Justru yang banyak beloya tu orang khek, orang tiociu tu ndak ade, bukan ndak ade tapi bise di bilang jarang, ade pun bise di hitung lah, mayoritas emang orang khek dan emang udah turun temurun. [There are no differences, all the same. In fact, the majority of *tatung* are Khek, and almost no Tio Ciu people. It does not mean that there is no *tatung* from the Tio Ciu ethnic group, but they are rare] (I1, interviewed on 13th December 2020).

As mentioned earlier in the review of literature, the Chinese people living in Ketapang are the descendants of Chinese people coming from *Tio Ciu's* ethnic group. In the old days, all *Tatungs* are from the Chinese descendants coming from the *Khek* ethnic group. Therefore, there was not any *Tatung* who was originally from Ketapang before the Khek came to Ketapang. However, nowadays there are some *Tatung* who come from *Tio Ciu's* ethnic groups. That is why the *Cap Go Meh* Festival in Ketapang also features *Tatung* both from Khek ethnic group and *Tio Ciu* ethnic group. Naturally, Ketapang's and Singkawang's *tatung* are the same. Even though there is almost no difference in the *Tatung's* appearance and performance, the festival itself is slightly different. Singkawang's *Cap Go Meh* Festival looks more festive than Ketapang's, mostly because the *Tatung's* *Tatung* population in Singkawang is bigger.

...buat tatungnye bah tak ade bedenye, tapi pas perayaan Cap Go Meh nye tu terlihat bede karne mungkin di Singkawang tu lebih meriah kali ye dari pade di ketapang. [...there is no difference between the two of them, but maybe it looks different just because *Cap Go Meh* in Singkawang is more vibrant than that in Ketapang] (I4, interviewed 28th November 2020).

Moreover, it is interesting to note that figure 4.4. shows a *Tatung* who brought his son to join the parade. He probably wishes his son to become a *Tatung* when he grows up. According to the interviewees, *tatung* is a tradition passed down from generation to generation although ordinary people can also learn how to become a *tatung* "Nah untuk jadi *tatung* sendiri tu ada yang turun temurun, ada yg memang datang sendiri, dan ada yang belajar menuntut punya bah" [to become a *tatung* is hereditary, some come naturally, and some learn to get it] (I1, interviewed on 13th December 2020).

4.2. The meaning of *Cap Go Meh's Tatung* for the Chinese Indonesian community in Ketapang

During the interview about the meaning of *Cap Go Meh's Tatung* for the Chinese Indonesian community in Ketapang, the writer was informed of the history of *Tatung* in Ketapang. Interviewee 1's response reveals that "*Tatung*" originated from the migration of the Chinese community that has supernatural powers from China to rural areas in Singkawang.

Jadi dulu tu ade migrasi Cine ke Kalimantan, disana mereke kerje di satu tempat hulunye Singkawang, tak ade yang namenye dokter atau apelah itu, orang yang kerje sana hanye ngandalkan tatung lah jadi tabib. Ade yang memang roh leluhur yang di bawa dari tanah leluhur, ade gak yang cuma kerasukan roh kampong sana [There used to be a migration from China to Kalimantan, they worked in a rural area in Singkawang and at that time there was no doctor or a person like that. So the workers only relied on the *tatung*, the medicine man to heal the sick. Some *tatung* were possessed by the spirit of the ancestor that they brought from their ancestor's land, some were not; they were only possessed by the spirit from the kampong (where the workers made a living)] (I1, interviewed on 13th December 2020).

The interview above reveals that *Tatung* in Kalimantan gained an important role in the past because there was no other choice but the *Tatung* to cure those who

were sick in the inland of Singkawang. The story about the origin of the *Tatung* shows that *Tatung* has been part of the Chinese Indonesians living in Kalimantan for a long time. It has already been part of people's life there. The idea that some spirits possessing the *Tatung* are local shows that the *Tatung* is even "localized".

In the present, the *Tatung* seems to maintain its importance among the Chinese Indonesians in Ketapang. Interviewee 2 said,

Sebenarnya tatung tu dipercaya sebagai manusia pilihan dewa. Orang-orang kite tu percaye kalo tatung tu bise membantu manusia mencapai kedamaian, menjaga agar tidak diganggu oleh makhluk lain, dan juga pengobatan, tatung ngelakukan itu dengan care membiarkan diri mereka di masuki roh yang bise bantu am." [In fact, *tatung* is believed to be a human being chosen by a Deity who can help humans to achieve peace, protecting people from spirits and also helps with medication. *Tatung* did all these things by allowing himself to be possessed by Deity spirits" (I1, interviewed on 13th December 2020).

The interview shows that people (Chinese Indonesians in Ketapang) still believe that the *Tatung* is the chosen one. Here, the interviewee did not only see the *Tatung* as merely a healer, but even more as a peacekeeper and a protector from evil spirits.

Because of its importance as a peacekeeper and a protector, *Tatung* receives a lot of support from the local community, as stated by interviewee I1, "*Mereke tuh malah dukung, makenye sampe ade tugu tolak bala tu tugu 9 suku yang tiap tahun kite beri makan, jadi Ketapang tuh aman, ndak ade agik pembunuhan orang Dayak same Madura itu dah ndak ada lagi*" [local community support the *tatung*, therefore we have a monument to repel reinforcements, a monument to nine tribes that we "feed" every year so that our city is safe, there is no Dayak or Madurese killing, there is no more](I1, interviewed on 13th December 2020)



Figure 4.12. Local community enthusiasm

The interview discloses that not only the Chinese Indonesians, but also people coming from other ethnic groups enjoy the *tatung* performance during the parade, “*orang-orang sinik yang non-chinese pun nampak kalo mereke suke ade tatung, mereke banyak gak nonton kadang ade yang bantu jadi asisten tatung gak*” [It seems that the non-Chinese like *tatung*, they watch (the parade). Sometimes there is one who takes part by being *Tatung*'s assistant.] (I5, Interviewed on 28th November 2020). However, the interviewee shared his opinion about the need to formalize the support to *tatung* through an organization,

kalo cine ketapang tu masi belum ade komunitas yang mendukung festival tatung kayak buat jadi donatur dll karne hatinye belum tergerak atau emang udah kurang peduli same adat yang ade. [among the Chinese groups in Ketapang there is still no official community that supports the existence of *Tatung*, such as being a donor, etc., because they are still not moved or maybe because they don't care about their tradition.]. (I1, Interviewed on 13th December 2020)

The need to finance the festival is the center of the interviewee's concern.

In general, Chinese Indonesians in Ketapang regard *Tatung* as part of their life and history. The existence of the local *Tatung* and local *Tatung* possessed by Dayak warriors show that an identity marker particular of Chinese Indonesians in Kalimantan (Ketapang and Singkawang). The *Tatung* is a pride for those people

as it uniquely represents the mix of the Chinese Indonesian culture of origin, Chinese culture, and the Chinese Indonesian local culture.

