

Art of Cheers for Fisherman: “Comparison between Indonesia’s Tarek Pukat and Japan’s *Soran Bushi*”

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Abstract. This paper aims to describe the similarities and differences in cultural elements between two folk dance, Indonesian folk dance Tarek Pukat and Japanese folk dance *Soran Bushi*. Tarek Pukat is formed of cultural thoughts of coastal communities of Aceh, Indonesia. It originated in the fishing villages as a way to express mutual cooperation and unity in the community. The dance incorporates rhythmic movements inspired by the fishing activities, with dancers imitating the pulling of nets, rowing of boats, and the vibrant energy of the sea. In contrast, *Soran Bushi* is a popular Japanese work-folk dance hailing from Hokkaido. It was historically performed by fishermen to boost morale during strenuous work at sea. *Soran Bushi* showcases dynamic movements embodying the physical strength required for fishing. While Tarek Pukat and *Soran Bushi* both emerged from fishing communities and share a connection to the sea, they exhibit distinct characteristics that reflect their respective cultures. This comparative analysis sheds light on the cultural diversity and richness inherent in traditional folk dances. Examining the distinct features of Tarek Pukat and *Soran Bushi* provides a deeper understanding of the traditions and values of these

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dances, contributing to the cultural identity of Indonesia and Japan.

1 Introduction

Indonesia and Japan are two countries known for their deep connection to marine culture. Both nations have a rich history and strong reliance on the ocean, which has shaped their traditions, economies, and way of life. Indonesia and Japan are also two countries known for their rich cultural heritage, including a wide variety of traditional folk dances. Being marine cultural nations, Indonesian and Japanese folk dances have a strong connection to the ocean. The movements and rhythms of these dances often mimic the waves of the sea and draw on stories of fish and fishermen. Example of these folk dance is Tarek Pukat from coastal Aceh and *Soran Bushi* from Hokkaido.

Tarek Pukat, deeply rooted in the coastal communities of Indonesia, is a celebratory folk dance that finds its origins in the livelihood of fishermen. The sea is the source of life for the people of coastal Aceh as they depend on the sea to fulfill their lives and needs. Tarek Pukat is a portrayal of coastal community activities with a sense of beauty (aesthetics) borne out of movement, poetry and music. Meanwhile, *Soran Bushi* originally developed as a work song by the fishermen of Hokkaido in the late of 19th. In this time, migrant workers work for herring fishing industries and *Soran Bushi* serves as moral booster during labour.

Both countries have evolved significantly over time, and folk dances have changed accordingly. There is a development in each dimension because they have different emergence origins. Despite this, they remain a popular part of the culture, enjoyed both by locals and tourists, since folk dances also describe the socio-cultural life where communities grow, exist, and evolve [1]. They help to keep traditions alive and also bring people from different backgrounds together.

This research paper aims to provide a qualitative comparative analysis between two variables [2]. The variables used are the traditional Indonesian dance Tarek Pukat, and the Japanese folk dance *Soran Bushi*. By employing the qualitative comparative method, this study seeks to identify similarities and differences in terms of cultural significance, historical background, and choreography. The research uses semiotic theory, a study of sign whatever their substances and limits, by Roland Barthes. Barthes divide semiotic theory into two stages consists of

denotation and connotation [3]. Denotation is a meaning that has a direct character and is a description for a sign, meanwhile connotation is a word that has another meaning behind it. A message from the extension of connotation is myth.

The findings will contribute to a better understanding of the unique characteristics of these cultural dances and offer insights into the cultural heritage of Indonesia and Japan.

2 Result and Discussion

2.1 The Origin

1.1.1 Origin of Tarek Pukat

Originally from Aceh, Tarek Pukat originated in Indonesia's coastal regions. According to history, Tarek Pukat dance was inspired by the tradition of *menarek pukat* or the tradition of pulling nets done by the people of Aceh [4]. This is especially the people in coastal areas who mostly work as fishermen. The dance is a representation of this tradition and shows the movements of pulling nets, throwing nets, and catching fish accompanied by the melody of *serune kala* as well as *Gendrang* and *Rapa'i* beats as traditional as Acehnese culture [5].

Due to the nature of fishermen who work on the sea, the image of the tough fisherman also influences those who live in harsh societies in terms of attitudes and conduct. Acehnese who speaks loudly and roughly are often equated with the behavior of *awakmeupukat* /*awakmeulaot* which means that people gone fishing or sea-faring [6]. For the Acehnese, Tarek Pukat functions as a form of appreciation for the culture and traditions of the coastal people, especially when catching fish at sea.

1.1.2 Origin of Soran Bushi

In Japan, herring have been fished for mainly on the coast of Hokkaido since before the fifteenth century. Following that, this fishery was steadily enlarged, and as a result, the landing volumes also rose, ushering in a golden period at the end of the nineteenth century. Herring fishing has been bringing thousands of migrant laborers to Hokkaido's west coast

every spring for almost a century [7]. The fisherman would work for hours in afternoon till night, singing along fishing for herring.

Each step of the herring fishing process was accompanied by a specific song, including rowing, hauling up the large set net, dumping the fish into another net attached to a large seagoing boat, transferring the catch from that net to smaller taxi-boats for rowing to shore, beating the fish roe off the nets, and so on. The laborers divided up the heavy lifting, and when they weren't working, they sang a lot and beat the gunwales with sticks to keep the beat. *Soran Bushi* was sung to accompany fishermen's work distributing the fish to smaller boat and later on the song evolved to unique Hokkaido style. The song's major repeated vocable, *soran*, inspired the name "*Soran Bushi*," where *bushi* is for 'melody'.

However, in 1958, herring just disappeared from ocean of Hokkaido, leaving the collapes of herring fishing at the time [8]. Therefore, folk song or *min'yo* of Soran Bushi only existed as a working Hokkaido labor song for a brief period of time, but then the group of Preservation Society or *honzonkai* keeping them alive as cherished local culture. With adjustment through time and remakes to modern version, *Soran Bushi* become much widely known and brought to stage, being a hit after Ito Takio arrangement, which is became the popular version of *Soran Bushi* until today.

1.2 Movement

1.2.1 *The Movement of Tarek Pukat*

Tarek Pukat features vigorous and dynamic movements that depict the actions of fishermen during their daily activities. Tarek Pukat dance is usually performed by 7-9 female dancers and 4-5 male dancers. Basically, this dance consists of female dancers sitting while stringing ropes into fishing nets, meanwhile male dancers behind the female dancers demonstrate rowing and fishing movements. The movements in Tarek Pukat dance consists of: *surak* or shouting, *meulinggang* or waltzing, *meukayoh* or rowing, *peugotpukat* or making nets, and *tarekpukat* or pulling fishing nets [6].

One of the interesting things in the dance is that at the end of the dance, when finished hooking the ropes to each other, the dancer will pull the rope. This will become a chain of nets. This is done to symbolize the

strength of a community, and the idea that by joining together, people can create something more powerful than they could have alone. The rope is also believed to represent the connection between generations, and the dancer's pulling of the rope is meant to show that the community is strong and will endure.

Denotation	Connotation
Surak	Symbolizes the enthusiasm of fishermen to look for fish in the sea
Meulinggang	Portrays the excitement and joy of Aceh's coastal communities in the activity of making trawls (pukat).
Meukayoh	A sign of the people of Aceh always try and never give up to pass the waves of the ocean.
Peugot Pukat	Illustrating cooperation in making tools for the coastal aceh community's livelihoods
Tarek Pukat	Symbolizes togetherness in gaining the result of fish caught in the trawl (pukat)

Tarek Pukat connotation's myth is through the symbols in the dance movement, people have the ability to know the process of making a trawl which is a tool for the livelihood of coastal Acehnese people. Tarek Pukat illustrates the process of making trawls or nets and reflects of mutual cooperation to make fishing tools. It establishes communication between people and make social values in the community.

1.2.2 *The Movement of Soran Bushi*

Meanwhile, the movements of the *Soran Bushi* depend on the song used to lead the dance. There are currently about ten variations of *Soran Bushi*, each of them has their own uniqueness. The current modern *Soran Bushi* using Ito Tokio's arrangement gives the impression of a dance full with burning passion, while the *min'yo Soran Bushi* gives the traditional flavor of old-time herring fishing. Modern *Soran Bushi* features energetic and lively movements, reflecting the strength and unity of the fishing community. The dancers perform synchronized steps, jumps, and arm

movements, resembling the hardworking fisherman along with shouting repeatable chants [9].

Although they may look different, both types of *Soran Bushi* have similar movements consists by the actions of pulling ropes, lifting heavy nets, and rowing boats. Dancers also use their bodies to mimic the waves of the sea, creating a sense of fluidity and rhythm. The dance requires coordination, precision, and physical stamina, making it a challenging and captivating performance to watch.

Denotation	Connotation
Pulling ropes	Portrays fishermen pulling in their nets after throwing it into the sea
Gathering nets	Shows the fishermen pulling and collecting nets filled with fish, then throwing them behind the body.
Breaking sweat	Symbolizing the fishermen who have worked hard all day catching fish.

The myth after analysis *Soran Bushi* dance is the dance originally created by migrant workers who work in Hokkaido during the busy herring fishing season. The fisherman would sing this song while transferring herring from nets to small boats. The worker would work for days without sleep and they would sing sea shanties, *Soran Bushi*, to stay awake. In most cases, the lyrics are improvised, based on what is on the fishermen's minds at the time.

1.3 Cultural Significance

Tarek Pukat holds immense cultural significance within Indonesian society. It serves as a medium for preserving and promoting Indonesian cultural heritage, passing down traditions from one generation to the next. The dance form not only entertains but also educates the audience about the values and beliefs of Acehnese. One of the key aspects of Tarek Pukat is its ability to foster a sense of community and togetherness. The dance is often performed in groups, symbolizing the unity and cooperation among individuals. This communal spirit is an integral part of Indonesian culture and is reflected in various aspects of daily life. Through Tarek Pukat dance, Acehnese have the ability to figure out the process of making tool for the survive in coastal environment. The dance describes how the process of making pukat or nets and reflects the nature of mutual

cooperation or mutual cooperation to make fishing tools. These can establish communication between people and make social values within the community.

Soran Bushi is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, highlighting the values of spirits, hard work, and resilience. Despite the history of the herring fishing tradition that the dance shows has faded away, *Soran Bushi* has become a Hokkaido culture that remains alive today along with the hit popularities around the world. The dance is nowadays performed during festivals, celebrations, and cultural events to showcase the enduring spirit of the fishing community.

3 Conclusion

Both Indonesian Tarek Pukat and Japanese *Soran Bushi* are traditional dance forms that celebrate the fishing heritage of their respective countries. While Tarek Pukat focuses on the fishing activities of Indonesian fishermen, *Soran Bushi* represents the strength and unity of Japanese fishermen. Through their unique origin, movements, and cultural significance, these dances provide a rich insight into the traditions and values of Indonesia and Japan. These traditional dances are not only a source of entertainment but also an important part of each culture's identity. They represent a shared history and serve as a reminder of the importance of preserving traditional arts.

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