

STUDIES OF SEVEN ANGELS

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Abstrak

Berbagai bangsa yang mempunyai peradaban besar mengenal kisah terkait persoalan “tujuh bintang”, demikian pula halnya bangsa Nusantara yang mewariskan peradaban besar kepada bangsa Indonesia. Jejak dongeng yang melegenda mengenai tujuh bintang terekam dalam cerita rakyat pada berbagai suku di Indonesia melalui gaya dan cara ungkapan masing-masing, pun hal tersebut terukir pada sebuah panel relief di candi Borobudur. Di Indonesia kisah tujuh bintang umumnya diungkapkan sebagai tujuh bidadari yang turun dari kahyangan menuju bumi. Tepatnya di masyarakat Jawa Barat tutur tinular mengenai perbintangan (astronomi) terkait persoalan tujuh bidadari (tujuh bintang) diungkapkan lewat cerita Mundinglaya Dikusumah dan Guriang Tujuh. Selain itu terdapat cerita buhun berjudul Ronggeng Tujuh Kalasirna. Gaya ungkap dalam bentuk metafora boleh jadi sudah kurang dipahami oleh masyarakat Indonesia secara umum. Dengan mengungkap cerita ini akan menjadi bukti bahwa kearifan lokal bangsa Indonesia terkait bidang ilmu astronomi sudah ada sejak lama. Artinya, dapat dipastikan bahwa ciri peradaban bangsa yang besar ditandai oleh adanya ilmu pengetahuan mengenai pola perbintangan. Melalui teknik eksplorasi semiotika dan komparasi data maka kajian ini mengarah pada pembuktian tentang kecerdasan leluhur bangsa Indonesia. Diharapkan kajian ini dapat meluruskan pemahaman umum mengenai legenda kearifan lokal pada ranah ilmiah.

Kata kunci : peradaban, legenda tujuh bidadari, astronomi, kearifan lokal.

Abstract

Various nations with high civilizations recognize stories related to the “seven stars” issue, as well as the Indonesian, pass down a great civilization to the Indonesian. The legendary fairy tale traces of the seven stars recorded in the folklore of various tribes in Indonesia through their respective styles and ways of expressing them, even these are engraved on a relief panel at Borobudur temple. In Indonesia, the story of the seven stars is generally described as seven angels who descended from heaven to earth. To be precise, in West Java society, the regular talk about astrology (astronomy) related to the problem of the seven angels (seven stars) is expressed through the stories of Mundinglaya Dikusumah and Guriang Tujuh. In addition there is a buhun story entitled Ronggeng Tujuh Kalasirna. The style of expression in the form of a metaphor may not be understood by Indonesian in general. Uncovering this story will prove that the local wisdom of the Indonesian people regarding the field of astronomy has been around for a long time. That is, it can be ascertained that the characteristics of a great national civilization are marked by the existence of knowledge of astrological patterns. Through semiotic exploration techniques and data comparison, this study leads to proof of the intelligence of the Indonesian nation’s ancestors. It is hoped that this study can straighten out the general understanding of local wisdom legends in the scientific realm.

Keywords: civilization, legend of the seven angels, astronomy, local wisdom.

INTRODUCTION

It can be ascertained that one of the benchmarks for the level of intelligence of a nation is determined by the existence of astrology or astronomy so that later it creates a very mathematical calendar system. The existence of astrology in a nation could not have happened instantly, because research on the cycles of the appearance of a particular star constellation must be closely observed in relation to the impact it has on life on planet Earth. Research on this ancient astrological system must have taken hundreds or even thousands of years and was passed down from generation to generation.

Not much different from today. People that have reached an established stage through their technology have launched satellites and spacecraft to observe celestial bodies, especially the stars. So it was with human civilization in the past, they did it in their own way.

In ancient times, research on astrological patterns was closely related to patterns of human activity in their respective terrestrial spaces, depending on the location of the nation in building its life location. The point is, reading the constellations for humans on planet earth is a guide for various activities both on a large and small scale.

Certain star arrangements or formations that appear in the sky become markers for the inhabitants of the earth, such as; a marker of the arrival of the planting season for agrarian nations or as a time marker for fishermen to go to sea to catch fish, even as a signpost.

Every era and every nation has its own way of recording important events such as; making paintings on stone walls, making reliefs, to writing in certain media and telling stories.

Especially with regard to the speech stories that have been passed down from generation to generation until now they have become legends which are classified as myths.

Regarding the mythical issue of the story of the Seven bidadari, it seems that they exist in various parts of the world, in various ethnic groups. As in the culture of Greece, Sumeria, Japan, India, China, and so on, including in Indonesia as the cultural heirs of the Indonesian nation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1.1 Intelligence Stores Symbolic Messages.

Based on the cultural patterns that prevailed in the world community in the past, especially in Indonesia, many important messages were conveyed implicitly and metaphorically. This is evidenced by the existence of folk stories with mythical nuances in various nations.

The method of recording incident data or the technique of storing messages and style of expression about a case in the past is very different from today. This means that the difference in technology greatly affects the recording and delivery of information systems.

In Indonesia, many important terms and messages are recorded and expressed symbolically through folk tales so that later these stories fall into the category of legendary myths. Like the story of the occurrence of Mount Tangkuban Parahu due to Sangkuriang being unable to complete the boat that Nyai Dayang Sumbi requested. Many examples of similar cases that do not make sense can be found in various regions in Indonesia as well as in the world.

It seems that intelligence storing data in the past through mythology as an information wrapper is the best solution in the past so that stories can be passed down from generation to generation.

The weakness of data storage techniques through myth stories is that if there is a misperception of a generation, the message cannot be dissected or even ignored.

1.2 The Myth of the Seven Bidadari

The legends of the stories about the seven bidadari that exist in almost all nations of the world are generally told into a tale that is interesting to hear, of course in different versions of the story.

Every nation gives a name to the bidadari. Like The Seven Sisters in ancient Greek culture; Maia, Alcyone, Celaeno, Electra, Merope, Taygeta, and Sterope.

As for the indigenous peoples in Indonesia, precisely in West Java in the realm of Sundanese culture, in the story of Ronggeng Tujuh Kalasirna, it is stated that the seven bidadari are in Heaven with the names as follows:

1. Nyai Dewi Maia Indung
2. Nyai Dewi Maia Kayangan
3. Nyai Dewi Arum Sinayungan
4. Nyai Dewi Mayang Mangarang
5. Nyai Dewi Mayang Mangsaweuhan
6. Nyai Dewi Arum Tineung
7. Nyai Dewi Arum Wiyaga

In another story telling, the seven nymphs that are widespread in West Java society are recorded in a legendary folklore entitled Mundinglaya Dikusumah from the Pajajaran kingdom who was assigned to prosper the kingdom by taking the heirloom of Layang Salaka Domas in the sky controlled by Guriang Tujuh (Guru Hyang Tujuh) or also known as Sapta Resi.

In addition, on the island of Java, there are also folklore legends; Jaka Tarub and Dewi Nawang Wulan or Dewi Nawangsih. Tells the seven bidadari from heaven who came down to earth and bathed in a lake. Then Jaka Tarub stole the scarf of one of the seven angels so that Dewi Nawang Wulan could not return to Heaven with her six siblings.

The existence of the mythology of the seven bidadari has inspired many modern painters to put it on canvas. One of them is like what Basuki Abdullah did in 1956.



Fig. 1. “Joko Tarub” by Basuki Abdullah (1956) (<https://silviagalikano.com/2015/10/07/dalam-lena-rayuan-basoeki-abdullah/>)

1.3 Facts of the Seven Sisters

In the space of Indonesian culture, especially the people of West Java, the meaning of the story of the seven angels seems to be further away from its true value, so that the utterances are only included in the mythical folklore group.

Through evidence from various artifacts and archetypes as a source of reference, it can be traced that what is meant by the seven angels is a collection of the Pleiades (M45) star cluster, which is closest to the planet Earth and is in the constellation Taurus.

The depiction of the arrangement of the seven Pleiades stars was recorded in Mesopotamian culture.

On the island of Java, people often refer to the Pleiades star as Lintang Kartika (Kartikea), which generally marks the season for planting and sailing. It is possible that Lintang Kartika is one of the stars who are adored and favored by the agrarian and maritime society.

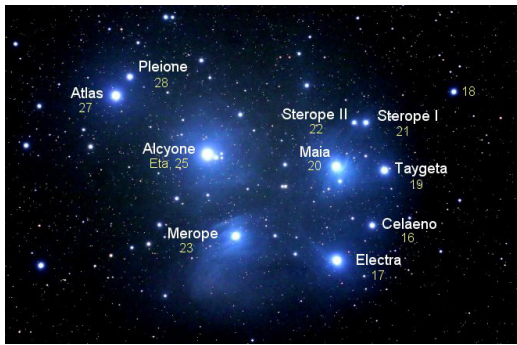


Fig. 2. Pleiades – Seven Sisters
 (<http://stars.astro.illinois.edu/sow/pleiades-t.html>)



Fig. 3. Pleiades - Mesopotamia
<https://norcohumanities.wordpress.com/2014/01/28/the-slaying-of-humbaba-9th-c-bce/>

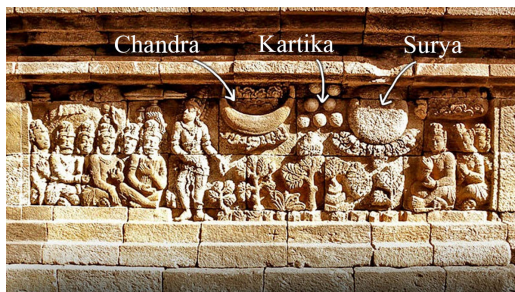


Fig. 4. Candi Borobudur Relief

In one of the fragments in the reliefs of Borobudur temple, the arrangement of chandra (moon), kartika (pleiades) and surya (sun) is depicted.

CONCLUSION

Basically, not all folklore can be classified as mythology without meaning or having no scientific value. Because how to communicate or how to store data in the past has its own wisdom as a solution.

The myth about the story of the seven nymphs circulating on the island of Java in various ver-

sions is an illustration that the Indonesian people, especially in the Sundanese cultural space, are familiar with astrology which will later be used as a calendar of activities in the living space.

The public’s lack of understanding of the message behind the mythical story is the result of the Indonesian nation as the cultural heir of the Indonesian nation, having lost many ways and styles of reading and interpreting symbolic messages.

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Images:

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