

Organological Study of *Canang Kayu* in Aceh Singkil

Junaidi Purba¹, Mauly Purba², Tasnim Lubis^{*3}

^{1,2,3}Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: tasnimlubis@usu.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 10 June 2024

Revised 10 October 2024

Accepted 21 October 2024

Available online 31 October 2024

E-ISSN: 2654-3591

P-ISSN: 2623-1999

How to cite:

Purba, J., Purba, M., & Lubis, T. (2024). Organological study of *canang kayu* in Aceh Singkil. *International Journal of Culture and Art Studies*, 8(2), 99-108.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International.
<http://doi.org/10.32734/ijcas.v8i2.16747>

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the organological aspects of making and playing the *Canang kayu* (wooden *canang*) instrument. *Canang kayu* is one of the local musical instruments from Aceh Singkil Regency. It is included as a percussion instrument and classified as an idiophone (a solid musical instrument whose sound comes from the instrument itself). This musical instrument is a form of xylophone (a percussion instrument consisting of a series of wooden blocks placed horizontally and struck with a unique beater). A qualitative method was applied in this study. Data were collected through observation participation, literature studies, and interviews with the *Canang kayu* makers, *Canang kayu* players, and staff in *Majelis Adat Aceh Singkil* (Aceh Singkil Traditional Council). The data source was pictures of *Canang kayu* and interview recordings with informants. The result of the study showed that the primary raw materials for *canang kayu* are bamboo and *tree wood/Terentang putih* tree (local people also call it *cupping wood*). *Terentang putih* tree (*Camptosperma auriculatum*) is a type of tree that grows in swamps. This tree can be found near Aceh Singkil forest. It is pretty difficult to find at present. The material for making *Canang kayu* should consider the size, tool used, raw material, and the making process. For playing technique, *Canang kayu* can be played by placing it on feet or a container. The *Canang kayu* instrument has a strong relationship with maintaining its material and local knowledge of making concepts that seize the cultural values of the Aceh Singkil people. It can be concluded that the making and playing technique is an effort to preserve one of Aceh Singkil's cultural heritages toward the identity and important insights in enriching knowledge about *Canang kayu* as an Aceh Singkil traditional art.

Keywords: *Canang kayu*, Playing technique, Aceh Singkil

1. Introduction

Each region has its unique type of art, which reflects and shows the existence of its own culture. Aceh Singkil has a rich repertoire of art forms of great variety and color, including elements of fine arts, dance, music, literature, and instruments. This study focused on describing one of the famous local musical instruments, namely the *Canang kayu* (wooden *canang*). *Canang kayu* is a traditional musical instrument with a unique shape, beautiful sound, and philosophical values for the people of Aceh Singkil (Hamdani et al., 2020). This musical instrument has a unique way of playing: extending the legs by placing four pieces of wood and then hitting them in the provided resonator box. *Canang kayu* is usually played with traditional dance at significant events in Aceh Singkil. Formerly, the people of Aceh Singkil played this musical instrument in the rice fields to comfort themselves during break time. This musical instrument is played at significant events such as weddings, traditional parties, and circumcisions (Tausya & Lubis, 2023; Lubis & Lubis, 2024). In its classification, this musical instrument is classified as an idiophone, a source instrument. The sound is the body of the musical instrument, producing sound through sound vibrations earned by his blow (Banoe, 2003).

Based on the observation, nowadays, *Canang kayu* instruments in Aceh Singkil are rare to find related to the maker and the local knowledge about the specific material and making technique. Looking at the current era of technology, many people are starting to forget and learn interesting things from the arts in Aceh Singkil, especially the *Canang kayu* musical instrument. The fast-growing developments in technology and information greatly influence the culture that has been owned (T. Lubis, 2019a). The researchers hope that the research will become a source of insight in the field of arts and culture, especially in Indonesian government

agencies, the Aceh provincial government, and Aceh Singkil Regency, as well as a learning medium in schools and arts institutions.

The problem, such as the raw material chosen, namely the *Terentang putih* tree (*Camposperma auriculatum*), only found in the Rawa Aceh forest, also becomes an issue for making *Canang kayu*. It is essential to pick the suitable material for *Canang kayu* because it is related to the sound produced. *Canang kayu* is usually played together in an ensemble with several other musical instruments such as the Gung, Double-sided Drum, and *Gendang Rabana*, and the song that is performed is usually the Singkil song to accompany the *Ambe-Ambaken* dancers and the *Dampeng* Dance.

The previous study on *Canang kayu* in Aceh Singkil was conducted by several researchers related to the *Canang kayu* as an instrument to accompany dampeng dance, the effect of using the local musical instrument on students' character in terms of local identity, and the story of *Canang kayu* (Alfadla et al., 2021; Wati et al., 2024). The researchers focused on describing the aspects of the making process and playing technique of *Canang kayu* as the cultural arts heritage in Aceh Singkil.

2. Method

A method is a way of understanding the object that is the target of the science in question (Koentjaraningrat, 1993). In this research, the researchers used qualitative research. Qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally relies on human observation in its own area and in contact with other people (Moleong, 2005; Shaumiwaty et al., 2020). The study was conducted in Aceh Singkil Regency, Aceh Province, as shown in figure 1.

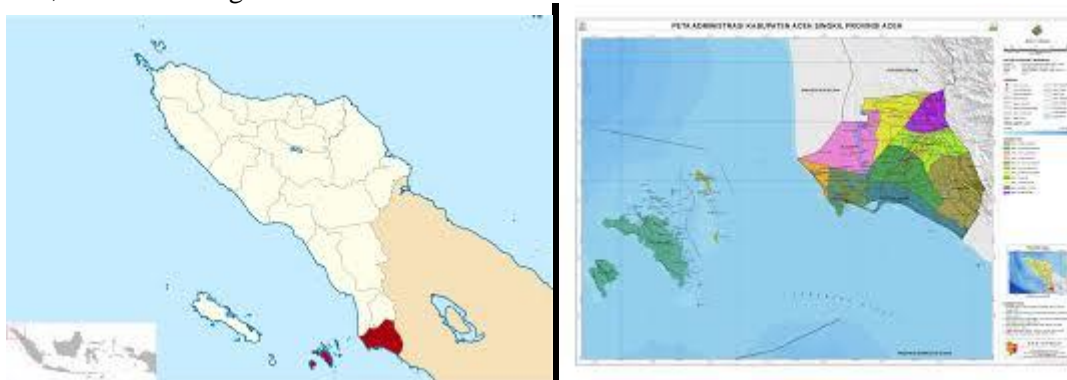


Figure 1. Aceh Singkil marked by red color (left) and Aceh Singkil Regency (right)

The data were collected through approximately three months of participatory observations and semi-structured interviews with seven informants, including *Canang kayu* makers, players, and staff from the Majelis Adat Aceh Singkil. Interviews followed a set of predetermined questions focusing on the material used, making, and playing techniques, allowing flexibility to explore relevant insights as they arose during discussions. The informants were people who had criteria as good informants (Spradley, 1979; 1980). The figures who play a role in maintaining a language always apply the language in their daily lives (Lubis & Abus, 2020; Daulay & Lubis, 2022). Nettl (1964) said that two things are essential for conducting ethnomusicology research activities, namely fieldwork and laboratory work. Lubis (2019b) also expressed that Ethnomusicology is a field discipline and a laboratory discipline. Namely data collected by investigators is ultimately analyzed in the laboratory, and the results of both methods become the center of study. Observations and diaries can also be used to complete data collection with a list of questions and interviews (Andriany et al., 2022).

3. Results and Discussion

To understand the problems found in making and playing Wooden *Canang*, stages are required: the stage before going to the field (pre-field), the fieldwork stage, data analysis, and report writing (Moleong, 2005). Nettl (1964) said that two things are essential for conducting ethnomusicology research activities: *fieldwork* and *laboratory work*.

3.1. Techniques for Manufacturing Wooden Shells

3.1.1. *Canang kayu* Classification

In the *Canang kayu* classification, this *Canang* musical instrument is included in the *Idiophone Classification*, where the author refers to Curt Sachs and Erich Von Hornbostel's theory. The Sachs and Hornbostel musical instrument classification system is based on the primary vibrating source of the sound

produced by a musical instrument. Furthermore, Sachs-Hornbostel classifies various musical instruments into four large groups, that is:

- a. Chordophone, where the main vibrator producing sound is a stretched string. Examples are guitar and violin.
- b. Aerophone, where the main vibrator producing sound is air. For example, a flute, trumpet, or saxophone.
- c. Membranophones are where the main vibrator that produces sound is the membrane or skin. Examples are drums and drums.
- d. Idiophone, where the main sound vibrator is the body or body of the musical instrument itself. Examples are gongs, wooden casings, cymbals, or percussion tools.

3.1.2. Wood Canang Size

The canal kayu's length and the wooden casing's thickness are also significant. The size also really influences how the wooden casing is played. It is also challenging to play if the wooden casing is too long.

3.1.3. Length of wooden canang

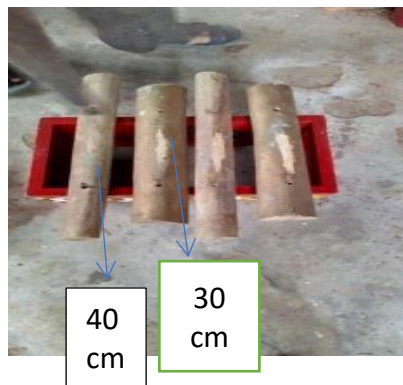


Figure 2. Size of *wooden canang*

From the figure above, the length of the wooden *canang* measures 30-40 cm. Two slats measure 30 cm, and 2 more slats measure 40 cm.

3.1.4. Measurement of the Thickness of the Wood Cane



Figure 3. Measure the thickness of *the wooden canang*

From the figure above, the diameter of the wooden *canang* thickness is 3-4 cm; 2 slats are measuring 3 cm thick, and 2 slats are measuring 4 cm thick.

3.1.5. Size of Wooden Cane Beater



Figure 4. Size of the wood hammer hammer

The wooden casing beater measures 20 cm in the figure above. The hitting tool for wooden casings must have 2 pieces for hitting casings made from tree branches, wood with a handle, or bamboo.

3.2. Technique for Making Wooden Canang

To make this *Canang*, he does everything by hand, even though technological developments are increasingly advanced. For example, he uses several machine tools to help ease the manufacturing process so that it is faster and more efficient. The following will explain the materials, equipment, and techniques for making wooden canning.

3.2.1. Raw materials used

Bamboo is a grass-type plant with cavities and segments in its stems. Other names for it are buluh , aur, daneru (<http://wikipedia.com>). Bamboo is used to make *canang* beating tools.



Figure 5. Bamboo

Trep wood comes from the white teranteng tree or usually in Latin *Camposperma Auriculatum* , people usually call it *Cuping wood*, because This wood has leaves that are lobed at the base. This wood is usually found in forests near Singkil and also in paddy areas near Community Farms. This wood is very difficult to find now, trep wood is usually heavy when exposed to water, but when it is dried in the sun this wood is very light.



Figure 6. Trep Wood

3.2.2. Equipment used

The equipment used in making *canang* musical instruments consists of measuring instruments (meters), machetes, and saws.

3.2.2.1. Measuring Instruments (Meter)

A meter is a measuring tool and drawing tool for drawing straight lines. In this case, a meter is needed to measure the length of the wood that you want to cut, so before cutting it, we should first measure the length of the wood according to the correct size.



Figure 7. Measuring Instruments

3.2.2.2. Saw

A saw is a tool in the form of thin metal with sharp teeth that is used to cut materials to certain sizes. In this case the saw is used to cut bamboo and trep wood. The saw used is a simple and traditional hand saw.



Figure 6. Saw

3.2.2.3. Machete

A machete is a sharp cutting tool made of iron. A machete cleans the trep bark and then splits the trep wood into two parts. Apart from that, machetes are also used to cut down trees when entering the forest and cutting them down.



Figure 9. Machete

3.2.2.4. Knife

A knife is a cutting tool for cutting objects made of flat metal with sharp edges. It is used to smooth and scratch the body of the canning and pry it to align the desired tone. The knife used must be sharp, pointed, and medium-sized.



Figure 10. Knife

3.2.2.5. Sand Paper

Sandpaper is used to smooth tree wood, especially on the body of the trip, so that the trip tree is smooth and nice, with no skin remaining on the wood.



Figure 11. sand paper

3.3. Making process

In making the wooden *canang*, once all the materials are available, the next step is the process material formation. The process of making wooden *canang* has stages that must be followed to achieve maximum results. Because maximum results can produce good *canang* musical instruments, the manufacturing process must be given more attention.

3.3.1. Material Retrieval

At this stage we have to take trep wood from the forest or fields, because usually this wood is difficult to find. Then after we went to the forest and had to travel quite a long distance, around 2 hours and had to pass through forests and quite steep fields. and we find the tree, then we cut it down and take it by measuring and cutting which part we want to cut, usually we cut down the tree at around 1-2 years of age, because at the age of 1-2 years the tree has grown quite well and can be used. in *canang* making. and is usually cut from the base at a distance of around 50 cm to be cut. And the middle body of the teranteng tree is cut and will be taken home. After arriving home, the trep wood is dried in the sun and dried so that the wood can be cut and measured easily. Then the wood is used as a *canang*, and bamboo or wooden twigs are chosen to be used for the bat.



Figure 12. Trep Wood

3.3.2. Wood Measurement

In this second stage, we have to measure how long the trep wood will be made into a wooden *canang* and how thick it is, as well as measure the bamboo that will be used as a wooden *canang* beating tool. Because this measurement is in accordance with the provisions that we will make. According to the measurements that have been determined, the time after the measurement and entering the next stage of cutting, the measurements must match the lines marked.



Figure 13. Trep wood measurements

3.3.3. Wood Cutting

After we measure how long the Trep Wood is and how long the Bamboo is (a bat) then we cut it using a saw. In this stage we have to cut perfectly, usually this cutting only takes about 10-15 minutes.

Because if it is not cut properly, it can produce *canang* that is not optimal, so you have to be slow and careful.



Figure 14. Trep wood cutting

3.3.4. Bark Scraping

At this stage, the trep wood has been cut, then the skin is cleaned by creasing it until it is clean so that the *canang* becomes good. In this stage we only need 10 minutes, because we have to really clean the wood that has been cut, so that it is clean and there is no more skin left, so that when you hit it the sound is good using a stick.



Figure 15. Trep bark cleaning

3.3.5. Wood Splitting

At this stage, after the trep wood that has been creased is clean, then at this stage, the trep wood is split into two pieces, the aim is to produce a good tone and the thickness is not too big. Then the wood that has been split into 2 parts, then the wood It becomes a *canang* musical instrument that produces beautiful notes.



Figure 16. Slitting of Trep Wood slats

3.3.6. Wood Cracking

After the wooden blade has been split into 2 parts, then before playing. The *canang* that you want to play and the one that will be arranged on the leg is usually searched for the desired note first, and usually Mr. Bahauddin P. cuts the Trep wood which is gouged to a depth of 1-2 cm, in order to get a different tone. And smooth it with sand paper, so it is very easy to rustle the wood you want to make.



Figure 17. Wooden slats that have been crated

3.3.7. Canang Preparation

At this stage, after the wooden block is split, it emits a note and then places it at the foot. Then it is played, although now there are also places that can be used to play *Canang*, it is said that the feet can cure rheumatism. This manufacturing process only takes 30-45 minutes, but the longest part of this process is when taking trep wood from the forest, it takes almost half a day.



Figure 18. *Canang* preparation process

3.3.8. Tone Alignment

In this last stage is the process of playing *canang*, which is usually played by 2 *canang* players. And put it on your feet properly parallel, then extend your feet forward and place the *canang* blade, then hit it using both sticks, play it very gently and appreciate the aesthetics of the beautiful sound that permeates the game, it will give rise to a feeling of joy. The feelings that started from sadness became joy. There is a special joy when we play *canang* and comfort the pain of a wounded heart.

3.4. Wooden Canang Game Techniques

3.4.1. Body Position in playing *Canang kayu*

In this article, the author will explain the body position in playing wooden *canang*. In general, according to Mr. Bahauddin P., there are two ways to play *Canang kayu*, namely by placing the *Canang kayu* on your feet and placing the *Canang kayu* in a container. The first thing is to put the wooden *canang* on the feet, we take 4 pieces of wooden *canang*, then we place them on the feet where we have to extend our feet first. Then the wooden *canang* is hit or played. According to Mr. Bahauddin P., this method is also useful for eliminating rheumatism. And the second way, we can place 4 *canang* blades in the container provided, then we sit cross-legged and hit the *canang*.

3.4.2. Basic Techniques in playing *Canang kayu*

When playing *Canang*, there are several techniques that we need to know about the beating technique. According to Mr. Bahuddin.P, we have to understand from the sound or from the dance that we want to accompany *Canang*. Because if we want to accompany the dance, we must already understand how the beating and the sound will be in harmony and in line with the movements of the dance. Likewise with the bat according to the idiophone sub-classification, *canang* is played directly (*idiophone struck diaretmi*) or indirectly (*idiophone struck*).

3.4.3. Good presentation of wooden *canang*

According to Mr. Bahuddin P., a good presentation of *Canang* is usually played complete with other supporting musical instruments, such as gongs, drums and rabana drums, so that the sound produces a good tone and matches the beat of the song to be played. And you have to know how to beat it, and you have to play it slowly and with a calm soul, so that it creates beauty and harmony.

3.4.4. Wood *Canang* Care

Caring for musical instruments is very necessary and important, in fact people really pay no attention to caring for musical instruments, because it is considered unimportant. However, we have to know how we care for ourselves, as well as how we care for musical instruments so that they remain good and long-lasting. For *Canang* itself, a good way to care for it is by painting it with Flitur. Usually if *Canang* is in Flitur it only takes 1 day to dry. The goal is to ensure that the wooden planks are maintained so that they do not rot easily or are not eaten by termites. So the wood remains strong and the sound remains good.

3.4.5. The tone produced by *Canang kayu*

There are 4 tones produced by *Canang kayu* that the author knows about, namely: DO , RE, MI, SOL . However, according to Mr. Bahuddin P. himself, the notes produced by *Canang* itself can be anything, but we need to know that if we want to accompany different dances, the notes produced will also be different, so the notes depend on the dance we want to accompany. However, to raise and raise the tone we have to cut the wood. If we want to raise the tone of the *canang*, then we cut the middle of the *canang* using a machete, and if the sound is not raised, then only a little bit of the wood is cut in the middle of the wood

4. Conclusion

Based on the study's results, the Wooden *Canang* plays an important role in the cultural activities of the Aceh Singkil community. While it has minimal functions, its significance lies in the skill required to play it effectively. Although the techniques may seem simple, achieving the correct sound demands a calm and focused approach. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the genuine artistic value that originates from human creativity, as exemplified by the use of the Wooden *Canang* in various ceremonial customs of the Singkil community.

References

- Alfadla, T. Z., Syai, A., & Ramdiana. (2021). *Canang Kayu Dalam Tari Dampeng*. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Seni Drama, Tari Dan Musik*, 6(3), 159–170.
- Andriany, L., Lubis, T., Amalia, Abus, A. F., & Delima. (2022). Shaping ethnobotanical tourism on the coastal landscape through Halobanese oral traditions at Banyak Island. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 1115(1), 012103. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1115/1/012103>
- Banoë, P. (2003). *Kamus Musik*. Kanisius.
- Daulay, E., & Lubis, T. (2022). The Revitalization of Mandi Marpangir Tradition in Matondang Village, Padang Lawas Regency. *Tradition and Modernity of Humanity*, 2(3), 43–49. <https://doi.org/10.32734/tmh.v2i3.10149>
- Hamdani, Syai, A., & Ismawan. (2020). *Canang Kayu di Kabupaten Aceh Singkil*. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Seni Drama, Tari Dan Musik*, 5(1), 32–49.
- Koentjaraningrat. (1993). *Metode Penelitian Masyarakat*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Lubis, M. A. Z., & Lubis, T. (2024). Sound Change of Batahan Language as Malay Dialect in Mandailing Natal Regency. *Tradition and Modernity of Humanity*, 4(2), 36–43.
- Lubis, T. (2019a). Learning Nandong in schools as a medium to inform the Simeuluese local wisdom: An anthropolinguistics approach. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 6(2), 262–272.
- Lubis, T. (2019b). *Tradisi Lisan Nandong Simeulue: Pendekatan Antropolinguistik*. Universitas Sumatera Utara.

- Lubis, T., & Abus, A. F. (2020). Revitalisasi Tradisi Lisan Melayu dalam Mempertahankan Eksistensi Kebahasaan: Pendekatan Antropolinguistik. *Seminar Nasional Bahasa Dan Sepeda Bangsa*.
- Moleong, L. J. (2005). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nettl, B. (1964). *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*. Free Press of Glencoe.
- Shaumiwaty, S., Lubis, M. A., Lubis, T., Dardanila, Purba, A., Nasution, T., Ramlan, & Hasrul, S. (2020). Teacher performance toward students' mathematical literacy in teaching linear program mathematical models. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1663, 012066. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1663/1/012066>
- Spradley, J. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Spradley, James. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. Rinehart and Winston.
- Tausya, R. S., & Lubis, T. (2023). Performance Participation of Peucicap in West Aceh. *Tradition and Modernity of Humanity*, 3(2), 11–19.
- Wati, E., Kigo, J., & Inthaud, K. (2024). Positive Impact of the Local Wisdom Module on the Canang Kayu Musical Instrument: Building the Character of Love for the Homeland. *Schrödinger: Journal of Physics Education*, 5(1), 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.37251/sjpe.v5i1.905>