

The Recalled of Disaster Memory on Sebesi Island: A Historical Perspective

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Abstract: Memories of disaster have its own uniqueness on humankind. These memories tend to be short of duration. From the victim's perspective, the memory of the disaster may remain alive, but it will be gradually fading away. The same case occurred to the inhabitants of Sebesi Island. History records that this island underwent destruction due to the tsunami triggered by the eruption of Mt. Krakatau in 1883. A period of 138 years seems to efface the memory of this catastrophic disaster. Again In 2018, a tsunami struck the Island due to volcano flank collapse caused by a continuous eruption of Mt. Anak Krakatau. The article uses *microhistory* approach with archival study and oral history to analyse several individual experiences in which memory of disaster recalled among the Sebesians after the 2018 Tsunami. The results point out that the 2018 tsunami had a significant impact in recalling the memory of disaster on Sebesians. The recalled of disaster memory build the awareness of disaster to the Sebesians in facing future hazards. This is in line with the aim of our government in succeeding the Sustainable Development Goals, principally point 11, as initiating a strength community to establish a sustainable settlement.

1 INTRODUCTION

On 22 December 2018, around 21:27 (Western Indonesian Time), the areas along the coastline of South Lampung, Pandeglang, and Tanjung Lesung were hit by tsunami. It was unprecedented by massive earthquake as previously occurred in Aceh and Palu. The casualties caused by tsunami in Sunda Strait were as many as 437 lives. As the consequence of the absence of the earthquake, the vagueness of disaster news was spread around. Meteorology Climatology and Geophysics Council or BMKG – as governmental institution in charge of weather forecast – had the opportunity to announce that it was not tsunami but more like tidal waves phenomenon during full moon. An hour after the occurrence, BMKG annulled the news broadcasted in their official page and confirmed that it was a tsunami (*Tsunami Selat Sunda: Korban Tewas 430 Orang, Krakatau Jadi 'Siaga', Hujan Abu Di Beberapa Tempat*, 2018).

To explore this incident, BMKG coordinated with the Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation Center or PVMBG and Geological Agency of The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources or ESDM. PVMBG detected that there was an increase in the

eruption of Mount Anak Krakatau since Friday, 21 December 2018 with its explosion up to 738 meters in height. Anak Krakatau's status was then declared as *alert*. Climatologically, BMKG also monitored the potential high tide on 22 December 2018 and gave the warning to the community. The intensive eruption activity, unwittingly, triggered flank collapse, then the landslide on the slop of Anak Krakatau. Based on the research, as wide as 64 acres of the slope at the south-western side incurred the landslide on Saturday at 20:56 Indonesian Western Time (Zengefinnen et al., 2020). The soil debris fallen into the sea triggered the tsunami as high as 10 meters from the area of Sebesi Island to the coastline of East Lampung, as well as four to five metres on the coastline of Pandeglang and Tanjung Lesung (*BMKG Paparkan Kronologi Tsunami Selat Sunda*, 2018).

Sebesi Island is only 20 kilometres away from Anak Krakatau, making it the first island to be hit by tsunami. This disaster uniquely only took one victim, that was the child of seasonal worker who resided on Sebesi Island. This five-year-old kid was hit by the wave after abruptly releasing from the parent's grasp (Hayun, personal communication, 3 August 2019). Nonetheless, several areas in this island were also

devastated, particularly Dusun Regahan Lada with its 50 houses, were swept away by tsunami. The isolated condition and geographical location which are close to the disaster source, Mount Anak Krakatau, had caused the panic in approximately 2700 residents of Sebesi and triggered the evacuation waves from Sebesi Island to Kalianda, South Lampung. With the governmental assistance through TNI-AL, around 1500 residents were evacuated to a multipurpose building in Kalianda, South Lampung. However, there were still 50 families who chose to stay in the island to safeguard the properties and the belief that Anak Krakatau would get better eventually (*BMKG Paparkan Kronologi Tsunami Selat Sunda*, 2018).

The tsunami disaster of Sunda Strait in 2018 has opened public and government's minds that there are Indonesian dwelling around small islands along the entire archipelago where they must deal with a disaster risk, one of which is Sebesi Island. Its width, which is less than 3000 acres, cause this island categorized as small island. A significant factor that distinguishes an island with the mainland is its characteristic; its smallness, and its remoteness, hence it generated vulnerability toward natural hazards (Lewis, 2009).

The presence of Anak Krakatau in their neighbourhood has extended the list of disaster risks on Sebesi Island. Born in 1930, Anak Krakatau is one of the 129 active volcanoes type A or the most active volcano (Mulyanto, 2013). As a highly active volcano, Anak Krakatau keeps growing. The growth of this mountain is commonly four meters high per year. Each year, since its birth until 2005, it kept erupting at least 80 times in the form of explosive or effusive eruption. With the interval between one to eight years, Anak Krakatau could erupt as many as one to six times annually. In 1993 and 2001, it was recorded to erupt almost every day (Sutawidjaya, 2006). This confirmed that Sebesi Island is disaster prone area, not only due to its characteristics as a small island, but also because of its surrounding environment.

History records that Sebesi Island is an area affected by devastated disasters. In 1883, precisely on 27 August 1883, when Mount Krakatau erupted, it caused tsunami waves which buried the entire island. A *controleur*, an assistant resident officer, wrote the horror of this catastrophic scene due to Krakatau eruption,

...Het vruchtbare eiland sebisjie eene bevolking van ±1000 personen en de ontgebreide peper en koffie aan plantingen geheel onder de asch bedolven. (The lush island of Sebesi, which has a population of about 1000 people and grows pepper and coffee

farming, is completely buried in the dust) (ANRI, 1884).

In addition, a poem recorded the Krakatau phenomenon illustrating the massive effects of the eruption that swept away the whole island.

*Orang banyak tentulah nyata
Bilangan lebih dari seribu
Mati sekalian orangnya itu
Ditimpa lumpur, api dan abu
Khabarnya tuan di pulau ini
Lebih dari dua hela tebalnya sini
Alangkah sakit makhluk kherani
Sedikit hidup banyak yang fani
Kata orang empunya peri
Kayu dan rumah hilang sekali
Pulaunya licin tiada ghari
Sudah takdir ilahi Rabbi
(Suryadi, 2009)*

Translation:

The crowds are, of course, real
Numbers over a thousand
Those people die
Overwritten by mud, fire and ashes
Reportedly lord on this island
More than two sockets thick here
How sick being kherani
A few lives a lot is mortal
Said the owner of the fairies
Wood and house were lost once
The island is slippery, there is no ghari
It is the Almighty's Divine destiny

This poem is compiled within *Syair Lampung Karam* written by a survivor of Krakatau eruption three months afterwards. It is written in Arabic-Malay, describing various areas affected by the eruption, including Sebesi Island.

After more than 138 years, the memory of this devastated event wiped out from the people of Sebesi. The reality of eruption in almost every year after the birth of Anak Krakatau could not recalled the memory. It is due to the perception that Anak Krakatau's eruption is always deemed as the wriggle of a growing child, not as a life-endangering threat. Subsequently, at the end of 2018, when tsunami struck Sebesi Island, the community seemed awakened that they live side by side with hazards. Furthermore, tsunami incidence in 2018 has seemed to recall the memory of calamity on the community that once hit them, where it has been buried under their daily routines.

This paper analyses the process of disaster memory recalled on the community of Sebesi Island,

as well as their perceptions on disaster by looking at the impacts on their daily basis based on the concept of *collective memory* which manifested in traditions of families and different social groups. This paper is organized as follows. First, I describe the methodology and research site. Then, I present the theoretical discussion about memory and perception on tsunami in correlation to their personal experience. After that, I present information about Pulau Sebesi, its inhabitants, and their socio-cultural features, including their memory regarding earthquakes and tsunami. Before the conclusion, I discuss the data gathered from field, as well as the relevant literature and theoretical points.

2 METHODS

As an empiric historical study, this paper aims to reconstruct how the people of Sebesi recall their memory on disaster, either from oral history or self-experience. This research employed microhistory approach with archival study and oral history. The approach enables to focus on individual's experience produced by humankind and connect them with the existent historical context. Microhistory uses narration as unit analysis or research method since it could represent the research findings, pointing out the process of conclusion, and demonstrating the gap in our understanding, as well as the subjective discourse. Therefore, microhistory adequate to illustrate broad generalization within a small dimension and an experiment (Levi, 1991). The study of micro history could open the variation of human behaviour in general patterns. Through this approach, the memory of human is treated individually as a means of 'explaining the culture,' as a historical episode which contains a kind of social and cultural DNA that when carefully analysed could revealed a whole design of a past society and its culture (Brown, 2003). Accordingly, the change of community structure as the result of natural structure recorded in the memory could be investigated through the approach (Schenk, 2017).

Primary data and secondary information presented in this paper were gathered during irregular visits to Pulau Sebesi for several weeks in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Data were gathered through interviews with older individuals and tsunami survivors that they remember, in search of stories about disasters in this island. Secondary data were gathered from the Internet and published reports. Academic papers, as well as relevant documents of governmental and non-governmental organizations, were studied and

evaluated. Some relevant reviews of selected literature and published stories about earthquakes and tsunamis were also analysed and elaborated in this paper.



Source: Geospatial Information Agency 2020 with location information from field research in 2020 and Topographic Data on Indonesian Java Island from BIG in 2017.

Figure 1: Map of Sebesi Island.

Sebesi Island is situated in Lampung Bay with coordinates at the position 05°055'37.43"-05°058'44.48" South Latitude and 105°027'30.50"-105°030'47.54" East Longitude. Having an area of 2620 hectares with a beach length of 19.55 km, this island has a diverse topography, ranging from lowlands to hilly. The highest hill reaches 884 meters from the sea level shaped in cone with three peaks. Climatologically, this island is categorized as tropical with an average of temperature of 20° C-28.5° C. The average amount of rain is estimated at 230 mm with an average number of rainy days estimated at 11 times (Wiryawan et al., 2002).

Sebesi Island is bordered by Lampung Bay and Sebuku Island on the north, Indian Ocean on the west, the complex of Krakatau Island – including Anak Krakatau – on the south, and Sunda Strait on the east. Based on its administration, Sebesi Island is included in the administrative area of Tejang Village, Rajabasa sub-district, South Lampung Regency. It currently is dwelled by 787 families with total population is as many as 2795 inhabitants spread around fifteen neighbourhood associations of Tejang Village. In this village, there are four *dusun* or hamlet, the smaller part of a village, namely Dusun I Bangunan, Dusun II Inpres, Dusun III Regahan Lada, and Dusun IV Segenom (TB Firdaus & Andi, personal communication, 14 April 2021).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Community in Sebesi Island: A Brief History

After the eruption of Krakatau, Sebesi Island became uninhabited. The first visit in 1884 described that this island only consisted of tall weed and bushes and full of desolation (Een Bezoek aan Krakatau," *De Locomotief*, 17 Maart 1885). Nevertheless, in 1888, the colonial government started to look upon the small islands around this area as a business opportunity for plantation. Therefore, also in 1888, Sebuku Island—the closest one to Sebesi—was rented to private parties by the local government to be utilized as agricultural land (ANRI, 1889).

In contrast with Sebuku, Sebesi was not necessarily rented at that time due to ownership dispute of this island.¹ Under the ownership of Hadji Djamiloeidin since 1896, the island was closed and the community around Katimbang area were restricted for farming. This had put local rulers to take legal action to colonial government, demand them to open the island for local agriculture. However, the demand was abandoned since the colonial government respected property that was legally proved by law. Under the ownership of Hadji Djamiloeidin, the island turned into coconut plantation in 1901 (ANRI, 1940).

To maintain his plantation, Hadji Djamiloeidin brought with him workers to pick up the coconut, where most of them came from Banten area. They stayed temporarily then returned to mainland. Along with time, many of the workers decided to reside and permanently stayed at the island with the permission from Hadji Djamiloeidin. In 1948, a report from a Netherland researcher who conducted research on Krakatau, stated that he stayed in Sebesi island and described that the island was inhabited and turned

into a massive coconut plantation, where many cattle available, from goat, buffalo, chicken, and horse, which probably brought by Djamiloeidin during early 1900 (Thorton, 2002).

Additionally, the elders of Tejang Village also mentioned that based on the information from their parents, the island began to repopulate during the period of 1930s (Fauzi, 2017). However, only after 1940s the wave of dwellers mainly from Kalianda, South Lampung and Banten to Sebesi sharply increased. This was due to Japan occupation and economic hardship during that period. As a result of this, the culture and language developed was mainly Lampung and *Jawa Serang* or Jaseng. Opening these two islands for agriculture has reopened the gateway for the community to inhabit them. As if obtaining a bliss in disguise from Krakatau misfortune, the land of Sebesi became very fertile so that the agricultural products kept increasing. In line with this, not only those who came from Kalianda and Banten, but also from as far as Bugis, Batak, and Nusa Tenggara stayed on the island.² Thus, the current community of Sebesi are immigrants, namely those who came in waves since 1932.

3.2 Tsunami 2018 in People's Memory

Tsunami in 2018 has become a turning point of disaster memory on Sebesi community. This memory tends to be short, along with the normal activities on daily basis and the dimmer information from the mass media. Even though the memory of the devastated disaster will keep alive in victims' minds, yet it will fade away over time.

Memory refers to individual process, but it has a role in constructing "collective memory" within the community by forming specific behaviour. Halbwachs explains that human memory was divided into two, namely social and collective, where it limited to specific community, location, certain area,

¹ Prior to Krakatau eruption, the local community around Katimbang residency were still able to do farming in Sebesi Island. Nonetheless, after the eruption, this island was claimed as a property of a prince called Minak Poetra. Then in 1896, it was sold to a merchant called Hadji Djamiloeidin. Under the ownership of Minak Poetra, Sebuku Island was rented to *Lanberg law firm* for pepper and wood plantation with the permission of the colonial government. (See ANRI, K.33 No. 17, r.17290). Later, these two islands were offered to Hadji Djamiloeidin, a head of kampung Kalianda in 1896 and registered by law called *besluit* Gubernur Jenderal in 1900. For further information see *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 30-11-1926, "De Koning Van Sebesi," hal. 9.

² Interviews with Bapak Busyri (The Village elders from Dusun Segenom) on 15 October 2020 and Bapak Hayun, unofficial staff of tourism and BMKG Sebesi island conducted on 30 Juni 2020 at 19.30 WIB. The grandparent of Bapak Busyri, Hadji Abdoellah, was one of the first wave that came to Sebesi along with Hadji Djamiloeidin to open coconut plantation, at around 1920s. Hadji Abdoellah was came from Kalianda and established first settlement called Segenom. While Bapak Busyri himself was born in 1948. Meanwhile from bapak Hayun explain that his grandparent came to Sebesi in 1940s as a coconut picker and decided to bring all the family into the island. Bapak Hayun himself was born in 1974. Interview with Bapak Hayun during stayed in Sebesi island 13-18 October 2020 and 11-18 April 2021.

and time (Halbwachs, 1992). He concluded that a shared framework for a memory is a result or combination of individual's memory from people in the same community (Tulius, 2020). Thus, collective experiences could form into 'collective memory'. It is in line with disaster memory. In memory, there is also a concept of *cultural memory* which was introduced by Assman. Cultural memory is explained as outermost dimension from human memory, supported by the media and encompasses the knowledge that regulates our behaviour altogether (Pfister, 2011).

In the meantime, *forgetting* is a natural process occurring to human's mind. Nonetheless, range of time, social, culture and politics are also influential to this process. Referring to Drever (as cited in Chussurur et al., 2011) forgetting is a failure in remembering one experience or doing an act of learned things. Furthermore, *forgetting* could emerge because the materials stored inside the memory are not frequently resurfaced within consciousness so that it causes a process of forget to an individual (Chussurur et al., 2011). It can be explained with the theory of *decay* or *atropi* (waning) which states that the information that is stored will weaken thus it is difficult to restore from the storage and even missing as memory if it is not used over time (Pudjiono, 2008). Hence, it is crucial for human being to restore their knowledge. The reviving or restoring process of memory, knowledge, or past experience in order to prevent a process of forgetting is called as *recalled memory* (Chussurur et al., 2011). This was happened to the Sebesi community, who seemed to forget their memories of the disaster. They re-experienced the process of recalled memory which was triggered by the 2018 tsunami disaster.

It was Saturday 22 December 2018, the life in Sebesi went normally. People were doing their daily routines, even though not far from their location, Mount Anak Krakatau continued to show its activity which tended to increase, through booms and puffs of smoke. Nonetheless, they did not notice them as a dangerous sign. Dusk fell and Anak Krakatau seemed to flare up in vermillion shade. Some people

questioned why this mountain was in such colour, yet most of whom seemed indifferent. It even challenged the tourists visited Gubuk Seng – the area with the clearest view of Anak Krakatau on Sebesi Island – only to capture this rare natural phenomenon.³

The night was getting late, most of the people were relaxing in their homes. However, some of whom, especially youths and gentlemen from Dusun I Bangunan and Dusun II Inpres spent their Saturday night at Tejang Harbor for fishing, or just chatting by the beach. It was 9 o'clock at night when suddenly the sea water receded about 10 meters from the shoreline. The anglers who saw this phenomenon were confused, so were those who were sitting on the beach, or those who were clustered on the pier. It was unknown who started it, many of them started muttering about the tsunami disaster in Aceh which was started by low tide. At that time, they saw a lot of fish floundering at the bottom of the pier and the beach. However, no one dared to take them. Some started shouting *tsunami* and running away from the pier. The gentlemen who were relaxing at that time did the same thing, running away from the beach to Mount Sebesi while continuing to shout the word *tsunami*. The community responded by immediately running out of the house and flocking to Mount Sebesi.⁴



Source: Personal document taken on 13 October 2020.

Figure 2: Mount Sebesi as an evacuation point of Sebesi residents during Tsunami 2018.

³ An interview with Iwan, tour guide, who guided approximately 30 local tourists from Jakarta. The 'reddish' state of Anak Krakatau exactly became an attraction for tourists to get closer. Their plan was to visit Gubuk Seng, which has a watchtower owned by South Lampung Government, after dinner. It was fortunate that they had not gone to this area due to the postponement of dinner schedule, because Gubuk Seng was highly impacted by tsunami tide. No fatalities were found in there because it was uninhabited.

⁴ An interview with Mr. Rozali (Secretary of Tejang Village in 2020), Mr. Andi (head of administration affairs of Tejang Village), the head of Dusun Tejang, Mr. Hayun (disaster task force and BMKG in 2020), Mrs. Lilis and Mr. Hamsari (residents of dusun Bangunan I), Mrs. Jamilah, Mrs. Maemunah, and Mrs. Ruhamah (the mothers of Dusun I Bangunan residents), Andi, Hasmy, and Ateng (youths living in Dusun Segenom). The interview was done randomly and conducted from 13-16 October 2020.

After 20 minutes there was a strong roar, which later revealed that it was a tsunami that destroyed part of the Tejang pier. Fortunately, the waves did not sweep the residents' houses because the houses in Dusun I Bangunan were about 200 metres-500 metres apart and up to 1 km from the shoreline at Dusun II Inpres.⁵ It is different with Dusun Regahan Lada, where the houses are very close to the coastline, which is only around 2-3 metres, so that many of the houses were destroyed by the tsunami. There were no casualties from this. At that time, the residents were responsive, as when they saw the water rising and the waves were harsh compared to the usual days. They immediately reported to the local apparatus and the head of the dusun (Kadus) to check the beach. In addition, communication was established via WhatsApp and telephone among dusuns, especially with their relatives so that the news about the tsunami was immediately spread and they flocked to Mount Sebesi (Syahrul, personal communication, 14 October 2020).

3.3 Rolled up in the Tsunami Waves: The Experience of Mr. Karta and Mrs. Sinta⁶

Mr. Karta and Mrs. Sinta, a husband and wife who were late in saving themselves, so they had to experience the harshness of the 2018 tsunami. However, they were lucky that they were still able to save themselves even though they had to feel the rolling waves that swept away the land and crashed far into the plantations. They lived in a less crowded area, namely the Teluk Baru area. It is included in the administrative area of Dusun Regahan Lada, but the position of the settlement is in Rt. 11, where it quite far from the center of Dusun Regahan Lada. Their

house in Teluk Baru is only 2 meters from the shoreline. Their residence was the last settlement in the area before reaching Gubuk Seng. Therefore, Anak Krakatau was clearly visible from their home.

That afternoon, Mr. Karta, who was sick, asked his wife to visit the village midwife who was on Rt. 9 of Dusun Regahan Lada. As they were about to start their journey, they still heard the roar of Anak Krakatau, which had been rumbling since Friday. Before leaving, Mr. Karta was a little uneasy when he saw whole Anak Krakatau— from the bottom to the top — painted in reddish orange shade. In fact, the mountain is usually black, and only the top is red. His uneasiness was ignored since the belief that it was the form of the growth of the mountain. He departed by using a motorbike driven by his wife, which took about 15-20 minutes (Mr. Karta, personal communication, 2021).

After being treated, the clock showed around nine in the evening, people started roamed about the rising waves, and they heard people repeatedly shout *tsunami*. Instead of going to the mountains, Mr. Karta and Mrs. Sinta spurred their motorbikes back to their homes in Teluk Baru. At that time, according to Mrs. Sinta, the roar of the waves sounded like the sound of boiling water, that was rumbling and popping. They had not reached their destination, only about five minutes of driving, in the middle of the coconut farm, the waves swept them away. Mr. Karta was knocked off the motorbike and dragged 30 meters to the land toward the mountain. In the water, he tried to keep swimming while following the current. After several times feeling the rise and fall of the whirlpool, Mr. Karta was finally able to stand up. He immediately got up and ran while shouting his wife's name and pointed to the top of the mountain.

⁵ In 1982, at the suggestion of the third descendants of the island owners, Mr. Hasanudin, asked all the residents of Dusun I Bangunan to move from their houses which were only a few meters from the beach to the forest away from the beach. The new residential site is located about 200m-500m away from the coastline. Mr. Hasan's main goal was to align with the Provincial government's decision to develop Sebesi Island for tourism activities. The beach location will be reserved for tourists and resorts. By relocating residents, tourists will not be disturbed by the local activities. Likewise, residents will not be disturbed by tourist activities, especially foreign tourists who are likely to wear bikinis and sunbathe. In the new location, each resident gets a land area of 10X20 M2 with the road in the middle and flanked by residents' housing. When currently viewed, the composition of the new housing for the residents of Dusun I is like the current housing

complex. Apart from dusun I, dusun Inpres has also undergone a rearrangement of settlements. However, Dusun Regahan Lada and Segenom did not. They did not want to follow the direction of house relocation recommended by Mr. Hasan on the grounds that they felt comfortable and safer living by the beach. The act of relocating houses saved the villagers of Dusun I Bangunan and Dusun Inpres from the waves of the Tsunami.

⁶ Mr.Karta(not a real name), currently around 45 years old, comes from Banten and arrived in Sebesi in the 1980s, working as a farm laborer on a production sharing system with the owner of the garden. He goes to sea occasionally for fishing by learned autodidact. Meanwhile, Mrs. Sinta (not a real name), around 45 years old, is local Sebesian who was born in Sebesi and her parents come from the Kalianda coast. She works to help her husband by becoming a farm labourer too.

It was different with Mrs. Sinta, after being swept away by the waves, she was separated from her husband and dragged further to the plantation. In her memory, she saw that the water was very dark and dense. She tried to grasp what she could hold. Unfortunately, her first attempt failed, causing her to continue to be carried by the waves that hit the land. According to her, the water that submerged her body was not like sea water in general but was like water mixed with mud and oil, so it felt very slippery on her skin. As far as Mrs. Sinta remembered, the water returned to the sea and pulled herself up, fortunately she managed to grab a banana tree and held it as hard as she has could. At that time, she was only able to surrender to the situation. Luck sided with Mrs. Sinta because she managed to escape the pull of the waves that returned to the sea. She vaguely heard her husband's scream and tried to answer the call. With all her strength, Mrs. Sinta got up and walked towards Mount Sebesi. It was there that Mrs. Sinta was reunited with Mr. Karta (Mrs. Sinta, personal communication, 2021).

A few days after the arrival of evacuation aid from the Indonesian Navy, they went to Kalianda. However, the inconvenience of staying at the multipurpose building and worrying over the house and property left behind made them determine to return to Sebesi after only 3 days of evacuating in Kalianda. At that time, the Sebesi's atmosphere was still tense and quiet, without lighting and many ruins of houses scattered along the road from Regahan Lada to their house in Teluk Baru. They took a Ship to Sebesi which would transport refugees to Kalianda. Their actions prompted questions from the authorities because when people wanted to leave the island, they wanted to return to the island. The absence of a motorbike had made them walk from the port of Tejang to their house in Teluk Baru, which was 6-7 kilometres away. With the belief and hope that Sebesi would get better, they were determined to go back and start cleaning the house even though that fear still lingered in their minds.

Until now, the horror of the tsunami remained in their minds. However, it did not dampen their determination to stay in Sebesi Island. Livelihoods, families, and their assets are strong reasons for them to stay there. Moreover, the belief that life is just waiting for *death* as a form of submission to God seems to strengthen them to continue and survive. Currently, the awareness of the dangers in their environment is being formed. For Mr. Karta and Mrs. Sinta, they keep on vigilant by frequently looking at Anak Krakatau, trying to be introspective by sleep not too well as a form of alertness.

Meanwhile, at the community level where they live, namely Teluk Baru, awareness is established by restart night patrols in maintaining environmental security and monitoring the surrounding natural conditions.

For Mr. Karta and Mrs. Sinta, the 2018 incident was their first time experiencing a tsunami. However, Mr. Karta remembered that his grandmother had told him about a catastrophe of rising sea water because of *rakata*—the ancient people's addressing for Krakatau. However, the knowledge of *tsunami* was only obtained after the Aceh tsunami because of the massive coverage from the television. Mr. Karta never expected to experience disaster from *rakata*, he himself even forgot his grandmother's story by not telling his children and grandchildren anymore. He recalled his grandmother's fairy tale as a memory trajectory after the disaster. Another case with Mrs. Sari, although born in Sebesi, throughout her life, she never experienced a major disaster, except the 2018 tsunami. She did not even get any stories about the 1883 Krakatau disaster from her grandmother or parents. What she remembered was the Aceh tsunami in 2004, whose news had put word *tsunami* in her mind.



Figure 3: Mr. Karta (45) and Mrs. Sinta (45) in their renovated yard after the 2018 tsunami (Private Collection, 16 April 2021). The picture on the right is a view in front of their house which is only 2 meters away. It is clear from this point to see Anak Krakatau (on the right with a small size that is currently emitting smoke) and Old Krakatau (Private collection, 16 April 2021).

Referring to the *recalled memory*, it seems that tsunami succeeded in reviving Mr. Karta's disaster memories. Another case with Mrs. Sinta, tsunami built her disaster memory. Meanwhile, at the community level, post-tsunami night patrols, even though it lasted only a few months, served as a representation for the awakening of disaster knowledge for residents of Teluk Baru, as well as a *recall* of disaster memories for others.

3.4 Surviving on Sebesi Island to Preserve Tradition: Mr. Mochtar's Experience

Reminiscing about the times of the 2018 tsunami, the Sebesi community did not seem to believe that their island would be hit by such a devastating disaster. Throughout his life on this Island, Mr. Mochtar, born on Sebesi Island in 1952 (currently around 69 years old) and spent most of his life there, never imagined that he would see and experience this disaster. For him, Mount Anak Krakatau has become like God's creatures who live side by side with them.

That night, Mr. Mochtar was relaxing at his home, which is only 300 meters from the Sebesi pier. Given the close distance between his house and the pier, the commotion at the pier immediately caught his attention. Mr. Mochtar went out of the house and saw the people, mostly boys and men, running around shouting *tsunami*. Their faces looked very scared and tense. Amid panic, people began to flock to Mount Sebesi. Together with his wife, children, and grandchildren, Mr. Mochtar also fled to Mount Sebesi. That night, the rain poured down on the Sebesi island, accompanied by successive thunder and lightning added up a tense atmosphere. Moreover, from the top of Mount Sebesi, the sound of thunder and lightning was heard very clearly and the roar of Anak Krakatau seemed to have shaken Mount Sebesi. At that time, the people who had fled to the mountains became increasingly panicked and scared. As a person who is recognized as an Islamic tutor, Mr. Mochtar tried to calm the people by asked

people to recite and remember God, asking for His safety and forgiveness. As dawn fell, nature began to calm down, the rain gradually stopped and the roar subsided, although it was still often heard.⁷

The morning after tsunami, some people returned to their homes to secure their belongings. However, in the afternoon they returned to the mountain because they were still afraid to stay at home and were worried about a further tsunami. The same thing occurred to Mr. Mochtar, who for two days after the tsunami was still commuting between the house and the mountain. On the third day, assistance from the Indonesian Navy arrived with a large ship to bring them to evacuate to Kalianda. Mr. Mochtar insisted to stay on the island, even though his children forced him to come to Kalianda. As a traditional and religious leader, Mochtar felt responsible for protecting the island, one of his way in guarding the island by preserves religious traditions and values on the island of Sebesi through teaching Islamic religious education. According to him, if he evacuated, then as a role model, the community would follow him, which could leave the island empty. This could invite ignorant hands who wanted to take advantage of themselves (Mochtar, personal communication, 14 April 2021).

Since 2016-2017, Mr. Mochtar has been active as one of the participants in earthquake and disaster training initiated by the South Lampung Province BKSDA. During this program, he gained a lot of knowledge and often held discussions with forest rangers who guarded Anak Krakatau, so that he pretty much knows about disasters, tsunamis, and other natural phenomena that could threaten their island. Equipped with his knowledge, Mr. Mochtar felt he had a responsibility to calm the residents by believing that there would be no further tsunami. As a respected figure, some people believed in him, so they decided not to go to Kalianda. At that time, there were 47 families from Dusun Bangunan, the dusun where Mr. Mochtar lived, who chose to stay on the island to protect their belongings. Meanwhile, there were 23 families from Dusun Inpres, 13 families from Dusun

⁷ Mr. Mochtar is a highly respected person because he was the head of the village from 1988 to 2000. Previously, he was the principal of the only elementary school in Sebesi, named SD Inpres, and was active in teaching religion. In addition, he was an agent of change related to rituals and religions on the island. His parents are also known as elders, namely the leaders of workers in Sebesi. At his own request he studied religion at an Islamic boarding school in Java for ten years. On his return to the island, Mr. Mochtar tried to gradually change the rituals that

were not in line with Islamic teachings. He mobilized recitation and congregational prayer activities, encouraged the construction of the great mosque of the island of Sebesi, and gradually changed the bancakan or thanksgiving of sea alms which was usually filled with dances and performances into recitation and religious lectures. In addition, he always associated that disaster would only come if Sebesi residents began to move away from religion. Interview with Mr. Mochtar on 17 April 2021 and 14 October 2020.

Regahan Lada, and one family head from Dusun Segenom who chose to stay on Sebesi Island.⁸

In fact, Mr. Mochtar was aware that the island they live have had experienced of destruction after the eruption of Krakatau in 1883. He remembers the story told by his *dato* (grandfather) regarding the magnitude of the eruption. However, he did not expect to experience a disaster like this even though he was still grateful because the intensity was smaller than the 1883 events. This incident seemed to bring back stories and tales that he used to hear from his *dato*. After the disaster, when the recitation activities had reopened, he began to share stories of the 1883 Krakatau and the 2018 tsunami to his students. Until now, he often tells the story of the eruption and the waves that buried Sebesi to the students who came to learn from him (Mochtar, personal communication, 14 October 2020). Therefore, in line with his actions, Mr. Mochtar, whose memory of disasters re-emerged because of the tsunami, became the agent that built disaster memories in the Sebesi youth through the culture of tale in his recitation class.

Hazards did exist on Sebesi Island, yet it did not make him intended to move and leave his homeland. His life is dedicated to developing Sebesi, by becoming the Head of Tejang Village, continuing to become a religion teacher after completing his tenure until now is a way in materialising of his love for Sebesi Island. Mr. Mochtar believes that if the people of Sebesi Island still protect nature and maintain their obligations to God, this island will still be protected. Although it must be admitted that the horror of tsunami still caused trauma and anxiety, he responded by sharing his religious knowledge with the children and young generations of this island. Furthermore, it awakens his awareness to pay more attention to nature and its conditions and summon his family and students to do the same. Thus, the disaster memory that came back to life in the people of Sebesi Island slowly develop awareness among the people.



Source: Private Collection, 17 April 2021.

Figure 4: Mr. Mochtar is recounting his memory related to the disaster and the history of the island of Sebesi.

3.5 On Humanitarian Duties: Midwife Sari's Experience

As a midwife, Mrs. Sari has the responsibility to standby at the health post located in Dusun Regahan Lada. She started her job placement on Sebesi Island in 2011. Sebesi became her choice because she saw the lack of health facilities on this island. She believed that her knowledge and presence would be beneficial for the people of Sebesi Island. Mrs. Sari understood this condition when she visited her uncle's house on Sebesi Island. The uncle has lived there since the 1980s until now. When she started working there, she saw that the main problem of public health was the lack of awareness of a clean lifestyle, so that people often came to her for diarrhea, chills, and wounds caused by sharp objects or being bitten by reptiles. On Sebesi Island, Mrs. Sari does not only handle pregnancy and childbirth, but also other common sickness, except for toothaches which require special treatment (Sari Midwife, personal communication, 16 October 2020).

Mrs. Sari still clearly remembers the tsunami that damaged her medical equipment. At that time, she had finished serving a patient from Teluk Baru. The clock showed around 20 PM in the evening. For some reason she had the urge to buy snacks for watching

⁸ During their absence, Mr. Mochtar and the remaining residents always monitored their village by going around their hamlet to maintain the safety of the assets of the people who fled. Although there was confusion over whether there was an act of looting the empty houses, he implicitly confirmed this. According to him, the items being targeted are generators and gasoline because these are related to lighting problems. After the tsunami, Sebesi Island practically lost its electricity supply, causing it to

become completely dark, therefore the residents who still lived there are looking for various ways to fulfil the lighting, including taking gasoline from motorbikes left by residents. Interviews with Mr. Rozali and Mr. Andi on 13 October 2020; interview with Mr. Mochtar on April 17, 2021; interview with Mr. Karta and Mrs. Sinta on April 16, 2021.

TV. She felt very uneasy to see the high waves behind her health post. She has not at all have any feeling about disaster, but she had a dream that an old grandmother had asked her to always carry her little son with a warp. Despite the logic, Mrs. Sari felt that her dream was a message that reminded her and made her alerted. In addition, Mrs. Sari has a habit of always providing a bag containing children's clothes. According to her, she is indeed a person who is sensitive to natural sign, and this is a fortune for her.

At nine o'clock in the evening, there was a commotion and many people looked towards the bridge, which is right next to the *posyandu* (integrated healthcare center). A relative in Dusun Bangunan immediately reported about low tide at the pier and people started shouting the word tsunami over and over. Mrs. Sari tried not to panic, immediately carried her child in a warp, the snack bag and bread she had bought earlier and took the clothes bag. In fact, the bag turned out to be a helper when taking refuge in Mount Sebesi because the clothes helped reduce the coldness of the children. Luckily, she had time to shop for snacks because it turned out that the food was useful for sharing with other refugees.

After the disaster, when ship assistance arrived to bring the refugees to Kalianda, Mrs. Sari took refuge to save her two children. However, considering that she is a health worker whose strength is needed by the Sebesi community and there were still around 40 families who survived, she chose to return to the island and entrusted his children to his parents in Kalianda. In addition, a decree from the Mayor of South Lampung was issued requiring village officials, health workers and educators to remain on the island to protect the community. Therefore, Mrs. Sari took turns with her husband, who is an elementary school teacher in Regahan Lada, to remain on the island. Within a week, Mrs. Sari would be on duty for three days, then for two days she would return to Kalianda, and so would her work cycle during the period of recovery after tsunami disaster.

The tsunami disaster had successfully brought trauma to Mrs. Sari. As a midwife, she realizes that her duty in Sebesi is mandatory, but as a mother with two children, she also wants a safe life from hazards. For the sake of saving lives, Mrs. Sari stayed in Sebesi during the relief and recovery period. Until now, if the waves started to sound loud and the smell of sulfuric was strong, then the image of a tsunami would bother her again. Usually when it occurs, she will try to calm herself down, see the situation, if there are no patients, she will choose to standby at her house, which is right in front of her *posyandu*. The habit of preparing emergency bags, which initially

was only for traveling purposes, now seems to be required for her. Every month, she will check and replace the contents with new ones, then she will enter several types of canned food that are preserved. This is a new memory for Mrs. Sari which is useful for increasing her vigilance.

Regarding disaster memories, Mrs. Sari did hear and read the history of the eruption of Mount Krakatau in 1883, however, she never used it as a reference in terms of disaster awareness. It was only after the tsunami 2018, she realized that disaster memories should preserved to build awareness and community preparedness. According to her observations, the Sebesi people tend to forget disasters easily, even though they have experienced a tsunami disaster. They did not prepare anything except for the consciousness to flee to Mount Sebesi as an act of evacuation (Sari midwife, personal communication, 13 April 2021).



Source: private collection (16-10-2020)

Figure 5: Interview with Mrs. Sari and several of her medical equipment damaged by the 2018 tsunami.

4 CONCLUSIONS: TSUNAMI AS *RECALLED MEMORY* IN SEBESI COMMUNITIES

The tsunami at the end of December 2018, for elderly people in Sebesi has reopened the memory of Krakatau obtained from tales and stories that are often told by *dato* (*grandfather*) and their parents. However, it must be realized that the Sebesi people

today are immigrants who entered and settled in Sebesi long after Krakatau erupted, which is around the 1940s. Furthermore, the absence of a major catastrophe on Sebesi Island for 138 years after Krakatau in 1883 caused them to forget that the area where they lived was vulnerable to natural dangers. During this period, the continued eruption of Anak Krakatau, the boom, the ash rain, and the pungent smell of sulphur were considered harmless. These phenomena are considered as normal things from a growing mountain. Long period of time, different perceptions of seeing Anak Krakatau, as well as social, economic, and cultural life, make them fail to remember disaster information learned from their grandparents, as well as their parents. Disaster knowledge that was formed in the elderly generation on the island of Sebesi through oral tradition in the form of tales and stories was lost due to erosion of the times. This faded information seems to be processed again from its storage area to be brought to the surface due to the tsunami event. Therefore, tsunami is an important factor in the process of *recalled memory* for the elderly generation on the island of Sebesi.

For Sebesian youths, the 2018 tsunami has become important factor in shaping disaster memory where information was based on self-experiences. Their elders have discontinued recounting their past stories, hence resulting to the missing of disaster memory. However, tsunami-related knowledge among young people has previously been formed both by learning at school and the media. In the past, people were more familiar with rising tides as *rajuh* or rising water. It was only after the Aceh Tsunami in 2004 that the public became familiar with the word *tsunami* due to the very intensive media coverage. Subsequently, the condition in Sebesi confirmed with the concept of cultural memory where the media plays an important role in shaping memories and further regulating people's behaviour.

Disaster memories that have returned and been formed in the Sebesi community consciously develop awareness on the disaster, such as knowing the exact direction of the evacuation, starting to watch the waves and the surrounding environment. Along with this, various fears emerged in the community, such as a severe tsunami, Anak Krakatau would erupt again, and strong earthquake that triggered a tsunami. At present, people's views are slowly but surely changing, seeing the nature around them — including Anak Krakatau — from a growing mountain to a source of natural hazards.

Despite the growing fear, the people of Sebesi Island remain reluctant to leave their homeland. Most of them believed that the disaster was over and that

they would rebuild their lives in Sebesi. There was no acute trauma for the Sebesians in responding to the 2018 tsunami disaster. All the interviewees even revealed that they would remain in Sebesi for the rest of their lives.



Figure 6: The remains of houses destroyed by the 2018 tsunami in the Regahan lada and Teluk Baru area (Private Collection, 3 August 2019).

The tsunami disaster was a blessing in disguise for the people of Sebesi. It succeeded in recalling the memory of the disaster and creating awareness of the threat. The return of disaster memories to

communities on this island provides an opportunity for the development of disaster-aware communities, namely people who already have knowledge, understanding, skills, and concern with matters relating to disasters (Prihatin, 2021). In response to this, one important step should be considered is to maintain sustainability of disaster memory.

Dissemination, memorising, and raising awareness of verbal historical account are some actions should preserve to pass the message of past event and reminder for future events (Yogaswara & Yulianto, 2008). Socialization and trainings are also an effective approach from the local government to the community, where the support from the regional and central governments are needed. Thus, the people of Sebesi Island can adapt and participate actively in reducing the impact of impending disaster. This is important step since it is in line with the aim of the government to fulfil the world's Sustainable Development Goals. Following point 11 of SDGs, by strengthening the awareness of the Sebesians community will initiating a strength community to establish a sustainable settlement.

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