

= Drama dari Krakatau =

Drama dari Krakatau ( [ dr?ama da?ri kra?katau ] ; Drama of Krakatoa ) is a 1929 vernacular Malay novel written by Kwee Tek Hoay . Inspired by Edward Bulwer @-@ Lytton 's 1834 novel The Last Days of Pompeii and the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa , the sixteen @-@ chapter book centres on two families in 1920s Batam that are unknowingly tied together by siblings who were separated in 1883 . The brother becomes a political figure , while the sister marries a Baduy priest @-@ king . Ultimately these families are reunited by the wedding of their children , after which the priest sacrifices himself to calm a stirring Krakatoa .

First published as a serial in Kwee 's magazine Panorama between 7 April and 22 December 1928 , Drama dari Krakatau was written over a period of two months after the author was asked to prepare a " sensational " story for a film . Before the final instalment had been published , the novel had already been adapted for the stage . Although Kwee was known as a realist and researched the volcano before writing , Drama dari Krakatau is replete with mysticism . Thematic analyses have focused on the depiction of indigenous cultures by Kwee ( himself ethnic Chinese ) , as well as geography and nationalism . As with other works of Chinese Malay literature , the book is not considered part of the Indonesian literary canon .

= = Plot = =

In 1883 , Krakatoa begins stirring for the first time in 200 years . In the nearby village of Waringin , Sadidjah confides to her husband , village head Tjakra Amidjaja , that she has had a bad dream about the volcano ; she fears that it will be the death of them . Tjakra Amidjaja consoles her , and tells her that they will leave the village in two days . In the meantime , the volcano grows increasingly violent and Tjakra Amidjaja and Sadidjah stay behind to manage the evacuation . They send their children , Hasan and Soerijati , to stay with family in Rangkas Gombong . Krakatoa erupts several hours later . The village is wiped out in the resulting tsunami , and Soerijati is lost after she falls out of the carriage she is in ; Hasan , however , arrives safely in Rangkas Gombong .

Forty @-@ four years pass . Moelia , the son of the Regent of Rangkas Gombong and Assistant Wedana of Sindanglaut , hears of a Baduy priest , Noesa Brama , who is curing the sick and injured . Moelia travels to Mount Ciwalirang to interview him , and finds Noesa Brama an intelligent and well @-@ spoken man . Over lunch Moelia falls in love with the priest 's daughter , Retna Sari . He learns that she must marry a man of equal standing to her father , one who is " no less than the Sultan of Yogyakarta or the Sunan of Solo " . Upon returning home , Moelia realises that Noesa Brama must be the last male descendent of the Hindu kings of Pajajaran , and that both Retna Sari and her mother bear a striking resemblance to his own grandmother . Several days later , he returns to the mountain and overhears a group of men from Palembang planning to kidnap Retna Sari . He chases them away , then briefly visits Noesa Brama before returning home . Though he attempts to forget Retna Sari , he is unable to do so .

The following week , the men from Palembang lie to the police , leading to Noesa Brama 's arrest for planning a rebellion ; the men then persuade Retna Sari and her mother to follow them to Sumatra . Learning of this , Moelia arranges for Noesa Brama 's release . The priest returns home to find that his wife and daughter have gone ? seemingly willingly ? with the men from Palembang , while Moelia takes a steamboat and chases the kidnappers . Before he can stop them , Krakatoa erupts again , overturning the fleeing ship . Moelia barely has enough time to rescue the women before the mountain erupts a second time , killing the fugitives .

Moelia informs his father , revealed to be Hasan , of the eruptions , and the older man comes to his son 's home . There he meets Retna Sari and her mother . They discover that Retna Sari 's mother is Soerijati , explaining the familial resemblance . She reveals that she had been found and raised by Noesa Brama 's father ; she also tells of a statue of Vishnu in a cave atop Mount Ciwalirang with the inscription " At the time when I am damaged , the land and all your descendants will be destroyed , cursed by Rakata 's anger " , damage to which the priests believe caused the Krakatoa eruption . Unknown to them , Noesa Brama ? enraged at the thought of his daughter marrying a

commoner ? has deliberately destroyed this statue by throwing it down a well , causing the eruption which stopped the fugitives .

Moelia and his family depart for Ciwalirang the following morning , hoping that Noesa Brama will consent to the marriage of Moelia and Retna Sari . The priest accepts the proposal , but expresses regret over the destruction of the statue after he discovers that Retna Sari and Soerijati had not gone willingly with the men from Palembang . He weds Moelia and Retna Sari and has them promise that their first son will be raised a Hindu and become king of the Baduy ; he then surrenders all his power to his daughter . Later , hoping that his spirit and those of his ancestors can control the volcano , Noesa Brama secretly commits suicide by jumping into the well . Several weeks later , activity at the volcano drops , although it remains active .

= = Writing = =

Drama dari Krakatau was written by the journalist Kwee Tek Hoay . Born to an ethnic Chinese textile merchant and his native wife , Kwee had been raised in the Chinese culture and educated at schools that focused on preparing students for life in a modern world , as opposed to promoting tradition for its own sake . By the time he wrote the novel , Kwee was an active proponent of Buddhist teachings . He also wrote extensively on themes relating to the archipelago 's indigenous population , and was a keen social observer . He read extensively in Dutch , English , and Malay and drew on these influences after becoming a writer . His first novel , *Djadi Korbannja " Perempoean Hina "* ( *The Victim of a " Contemptible Woman "* ) , was published in 1924 .

In 1928 Kwee was asked by a friend , who was hoping to establish a film company , to write a " sensational " story which could be used as the basis for a movie . Ongoing activity at Krakatoa was foremost in the author 's mind and , after reading Edward Bulwer @-@ Lytton 's 1834 novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* , Kwee asked himself " is it impossible for one to write a drama about Krakatoa ? " Owing to the length of time between the 1883 and 1928 eruptions , Kwee decided to begin his story with the separation of two young siblings . Further elements of the story were inspired by the mountain @-@ dwelling Baduy , a group which tended to avoid outsiders and claimed to be descended from the Hindu kings of Pajajaran .

Kwee thought himself a realist , considering it " better to say things as they are , than to create events out of nothing , which although perhaps more entertaining and satisfying to viewers or readers , are falsehoods and lies , going against the truth . " He was highly critical of contemporary writers who relied more on their fantasies than logic and truth . Hoping to keep his story grounded in reality , Kwee researched the history of the Baduy , the geological formation of Krakatoa , and the events of 1883 and 1928 ; in total he consulted 15 books , all in English or Dutch . Writing began on 19 March 1928 and was completed on 28 May of that year . Drama dari Krakatau consists of sixteen chapters , which were spread over 125 pages in the first printing .

= = Themes = =

Although Kwee was a staunch supporter of realism in literature , Drama dari Krakatau includes a degree of mysticism , as evidenced by the apparent connection between the statue in the cave and the eruption of Krakatoa . Indeed , in many of his writings ( both fiction and non @-@ fiction ) , Kwee exhibited an interest in the occult ; this includes writing detailed depictions of Therese Neumann , a fasting girl from Germany ; and Omar Khayyám , a Persian Sufi mystic , philosopher and poet . The Indonesian literary critic Jakob Sumardjo finds the mystical elements ( and the fact that no Hindu @-@ era statues with inscriptions have been found ) detract from the overall value of the novel .

Kwee 's work is the earliest of three Chinese Malay novels which were inspired by volcanic eruptions . The second , Liem Khing Hoo 's *Meledaknja Goenoeng Keloet* ( *The Eruption of Mount Kelud* ) , was inspired by Kelud in East Java and was published in the monthly magazine *Tjerita Roman* in 1929 . The third , Kwee 's *Drama dari Merapie* ( *Drama of Merapi* ) , was inspired by Central Java 's Mount Merapi and was published as a serial in *Moestika Romans* from March to September 1931 . Volcanic eruptions also featured in contemporary Chinese Malay poetry .

Claudine Salmon records one syair , Ong Tjong Sian 's Sair Petjanja Goenoeng Krakatau ( Syair on the Eruption of Mount Krakatoa ; 1929 ) , as dealing with the community 's fears after Krakatoa resumed activity .

Unlike many contemporary works by ethnic Chinese authors , Drama dari Krakatau features no Chinese characters in major roles ; the only such characters are mentioned in passing , shopowners who provide emergency food supplies to the regent . Historically , Malay @-@ language works by ethnic Chinese authors centred on Chinese characters , to the point that terms such as tanah @-@ air ( homeland ) were often understood to mean mainland China , rather than the Malay Archipelago or Dutch East Indies . Chinese Malay works which featured exclusively indigenous characters had only developed in the 1920s . Uncommonly for ethnic Chinese writers of this period , Kwee attempts to centre the novel around indigenous people and present it from their perspective , " impersonating " these indigenous cultures through his narrative .

As with many stories with predominantly indigenous casts , Drama dari Krakatau is set in a rural area , far from the cities where the ethnic Chinese populace were concentrated . Geography plays a major role . The novel starts on a macro scale , depicting the origins of the archipelago from rising sea levels caused by the sinking of Poseidonis , then progresses increasingly towards the micro scale , passing through views of Java , Sumatra , and Krakatoa , before focusing on the home of Tjakra Amidjaja and the beginning of the plot . A later passage details the view from Mount Civalirang , showing Java , Krakatoa and Sumatra .

The Indonesian literary scholar Melani Budianta argues that this " geographic panorama " , combined with the sympathetic depiction of other cultures and religions , shows elements of nationalism in the novel ; such a theme has also been found in Kwee 's Drama dari Boeven Digoel ( Drama of Boeven Digoel ; 1938 ) . She writes that the panoramic views of the archipelago " help the readers to imagine the geography of a nation yet to be united " , whereas the " impersonation " presents a " region of theosophy where religious difference is unified in the belief of goodness . "

= = Publication history and reception = =

Drama dari Krakatau was first published in serial form in Kwee 's magazine Panorama , between 7 April and 22 December 1928 . This serial was then published as a novel by Hoa Siang In Kiok in 1929 . A new printing , adopting the 1972 spelling reform , was included in the second volume of Kesastraan Melayu Tionghoa dan Kebangsaan Indonesia , an anthology of Chinese Malay literature . This volume also included Kwee 's novella Roema Sekola jang Saja Impiken ( The Schoolhouse of My Dreams ; 1925 ) and the novel Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang ( The Rose of Cikembang ; 1927 ) .

As with Kwee 's earlier work Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang , an adaptation of Drama dari Krakatau was performed on stage before its completion . On 28 March 1928 , the Moon Opera performed Drama dari Krakatau at Pasar Senen in Weltevreden , Batavia ( now Senen , Jakarta ) . The troupe performed the story again on 31 March and 5 April , the latter at Mangga Besar , Batavia . Kwee prepared the story for the performances , abbreviating and simplifying it for the stage . One of the main difficulties , he wrote , was presenting Krakatoa on stage : it was a technical challenge , yet could not be abandoned as " performing this play without showing the eruption of Krakatoa would be like performing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark . "

As with all works written in vernacular Malay , the novel has not been considered part of the Indonesian literary canon . In his doctoral thesis , J. Francisco B. Benitez posits a socio @-@ political cause for this . The Dutch colonial government used Court Malay as a " language of administration " , a language for everyday dealings , while the Indonesian nationalists appropriated the language to help build a national culture . Chinese Malay literature , written in " low " Malay , was steadily marginalised . Sumardjo , however , sees a question of classification : though vernacular Malay was the lingua franca of the time , it was not Indonesian , and as such , he asks whether works in vernacular Malay should be classified as local literature , Indonesian literature , or simply Chinese Malay literature .

= = Explanatory notes = =