

Batak Melayu Tapanuli Tengah; Historical and Sociological Study

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Abstract

Batak Melayu is the ethnic term in the West Coast region in North Sumatera, especially in Tapanuli Tengah region. Batak Melayu is historic and has its own sociology where this ethnicity was acknowledged to be one of ethnicity in North Sumatera, also known as Pesisir ethnic. Batak Melayu originally from Batak Toba which has widen to North Sumatera including Tapanuli Tengah. During the spread of Islam in Tapanuli region, many of Batak community embraced Islam and chose Melayu to show their Islamic identity. Batak Melayu also possesses cultures that have Batak, Minang, Melayu values and Islamic teachings which make it different from Batak and Melayu cultures and at the same time similar

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Introduction

Batak Melayu tribe, also known as Pesisir tribe, is one of the tribes in Sibolga town and Tapanuli Tengah. This community lives across the beach coast in West Tapanuli Tengah. Batak Melayu tribe originated from Batak Toba tribe, Mandailing and Angkola that have settled down in Sibolga and Tapanuli Tengah hundreds of years ago. After a while, the blending of the three tribes came immigrants from Minangkabau and Melayu from Timur Sumatera coast, hence the mixed marriage among the five tribes. From the mixed marriage of these five tribes, formed a community called Pesisir (coastal) tribe. Initially, they communicated using Batak language, but after centuries of mixture with Minang and Melayu cultures, eventually Pesisir language was created that they use till this day.

The customs and cultural practices that are practiced by Batak Melayu have a lot of influences from Melayu culture. Before, they preferred to be called Melayu Pesisir, however, lately they do not mind to be addressed as Batak Melayu.

Pesisir language is used by Batak Melayu community in *Tapanuli Tengah*, which is the language of conversation in everyday life. Pesisir language is quite unique since it is the combination of three languages; Batak Mandailing, Minangkabau, and Melayu languages. Therefore, Pesisir tribe is actually Batak people who speak Melayu language. This is ver similar to Batak community in Rokan Hulu, Riau province or Rao community in Pasaman district, West Sumatra.

Batak Melayu tribe has a few cultural arts that are quite popular among North Sumatra community, namely Dampeng and Tari Payung. The existence of this Pesisir tribe, may not be widely known by other people on the island of Java or other areas outside the province of North Sumatra. But in fact, this Pesisir tribe has existed for hundreds of years in Tapanuli Tengah region, and stand in line with other ethnic groups such as Toba, Mandailing, Angkola, Minangkabau and Melayu.

The History of Batak Melayu Community in Tapanuli Tengah

In the 14th century, many Minangkabau people migrated to Tapanuli Tengah. Their aim was to turn Barus into one of the ports in Pagaruyung Government, with Tiku and Pariaman, which is the gateway to trades in Sumatra Island (Cortesao A., 1944). Their arrival

in Barus led to the expulsion of Tamil merchants who had been trading in the city for hundreds of years before (Munoz, Paul Michel : 2006).

The next wave was a troupe led by Sultan Ibrahimsyah from South Pesisir. The troupe then set up Barus Sultanate who became one of the vassals of the Kingdom of Pagaruyung (Jane Drakard, 1988). The arrival of the Minang people continued after the formation of the town of Tapanuli in Sibolga. The Dutch government has hired them to fill the positions of teachers and in government. Since the mid-19th century, the people from the interior of Toba and Mandailing have begun to live in Barus, Sorkam, and Sibolga. They assimilated with Minangkabau community and formed a Pesisir community or Batak Melayu. In the 2000 population census, the Pesisir community or Batak Melayu was classified as its own ethnic. In 2008, most Pesisir community refused to join Batak Toba ethnicity to establish Tapanuli Province.

Batak Melayu Traditional Ceremony in Tapanuli

The Birth Custom (Turun Karai)

The birth custom or *turun rumah*, also known as *turun karai* or *turun mandi* is a custom practiced by Pesisir community in Tapanuli Tengah to show gratitude towards Allah SWT for the birth of a child that is done after forty days of the birth of the child. The philosophy of traditional ceremonies of *turun rumah*, embracing the custom of the Pesisir in Tapanuli Tengah is to introduce children to their surroundings.

The Circumcision Practice

Circumcision ceremony (*sunat Rasul*) is part of Rasul's *sunnah* that is never delayed by the community of Pesisir in Tanapuli Tengah. This is because in it there are ritual and sacred values embedded in the heart of Pesisir ethnic. Together with the circumcision ceremony, slaughtering sheep or chicken, depending on the parents' financial status, is to show their gratitude towards Allah the Almighty. Besar kecilnya, upacara syukur sunat Rasul ini tergantung pada kemampuan ekonomi orangtua, bagi yang mampu ada yang menyembelih kambing atau ayam. Even with three chicken eggs to reward the circumcised sons.

Wedding Ceremony

In Kota Sibolga's customs and culture, there is a customary very well known to pesisir customs, called '*Adat Sumando*'. This culture, even centuries long, this Sumando coast custom is still exists in coastal rasion of Tapanuli Tengah. Accultured from Minang and Batak customaries as well as Islamic teachings gave birth to the coastal community of Tapanuli Tengah.

Sumando is an addition to the family member with Islamic marital ties using Pesisir custom (Radjoki Nainggolan, 2018: 46). For the Sibolga coastal community, *Sumando* is considered a strong family relationship and one of the lines in bridging the relationship that it is appreciated and respected in the Sibolga coastal community. Therefore, to solve any dispute within the family, family meetings is always the solution. Generally, the conducive climate is the reason to the success of the development of Sibolga City. The Sumandos own to their motto; "*Bulek ai dek Pembulu, bulek kato dek mufakat, Saiyo sakato, dek sakato mangko sapakat*" which basically means a collective decision is all you need to decide on things.

The practical practices and customary provisions of Sumando include engagement where the future grooms present dowry money called *Jimanu* as engaged sign. There was no such thing as *Tuhor* like marriage in Sumando custom like in the Batak customary. In Sumando customary, the males are responsible towards the household and the descendants to be born follow the clan or tribe of male parents, different from the Minang custom.

In accordance with the understanding of the Sumando custom above, then to bind the kinship and brotherhood, a wedding ceremony or so-called baralek. Traditional marriage of

the Sibolga coastal community according to tradition, can be carried out through several stages, viz;

1. *Risik-risik* is an observation and preview stage by doing '*dialog telangkai*' which is done by *Talangke* from the male side to the female's family who will be proposed.
2. *Sirih tanyo* is betel as a confirmation answer from the female side.
3. *Maminang* is a continuation of the response of the girl's parents' willingness to be proposed by the young man who wants her, who at the same time negotiates dowry giving
4. *Manganta kepeng* is to deliver an agreed presents or gifts and at the same time confirm the wedding day that has been agreed upon by both parties
5. *Mato karajo* is a wedding day that will be held in accordance with Islamic law, which is believed by the grooms and brides accompanied by coastal customs commonly referred to by the Sibolga coastal community by the name of *Sumando*
6. *Mato karajo* adalah hari pernikahan yang akan dilangsungkan sesuai dengan hukum Islam yang diyakini oleh kedua calon pengantin disertai dengan adat pesisir yang lazim disebut oleh masyarakat pesisir Sibolga dengan nama *Sumando*.
7. *Manjalang-jalang* can be interpreted as visiting parents, relatives, and relatives of the bride and bridegroom. *Manjalang-jalang* ceremony runs with a simple and full of family that is equipped with a meal together.

Death Customary

The people of Pesisir in Tapanuli Tengah also have specialties in relation to the customs of death. When a male or female baby dies, his or her grave will be guarded by the local youth consecutively. This is done because it is feared the grave will be dismantled by people who behave stray. Every time someone dies from a baby to an elderly, according to the custom of Tapanuli Tengah Pesisir, it must be buried immediately, without waiting for a long time, because of extended family and so on. The whole family agreed to hasten the implementation of the obligatory *fardhu kifayah*. After the bodies have been buried, some of the community of Pesisir customary in Tapanuli Tengah will perform *tahlil* for 3 nights consecutively, on the 7th night and on the 40th night. However, there are also those who do not, it really depends on whether they are in the group of the elderly or young people.

Arts

Cultural arts such as dance, singing, *pantun rande* and *talibun* as well as theater, poetry, martial arts, *pencak silat* and others in Sibolga Tapanuli Tengah Coastal Coast of West Coast of North Sumatra is *gayung bersambut* by showing the personality of the Coastal Ethnic people who have a subtle feeling. Tapanuli Tengah coastal art known as SIKAMBANG, which has its own characteristics, rose in the form of musical instruments, rhythm, and song lyrics. Sikambang art is generally displayed in traditional ceremonies in the Sibolga coastal community played by *anak Alek*. *Alek* is the name for music players and sikambang dancers in traditional wedding events. One of the traditional ceremonies often used as a means of performing Sikambang art is a wedding ceremony. Where in Sikambang itself in every presentation is always accompanied by singing

Some traditional dances of the Pesisir community in this case dances and chants accompanied by several musical instruments are an inseparable unity and from this merging makes this Sikambang art the main art of the Tapanuli Tengah Coastal community. Besides other arts that have their own forms and characteristics which are also the colors of the arts of the Tapanuli Tengah Coastal society such as the Talibun and Pantun arts.

In the Tapanuli Tengah coastal community there are various forms and types of dance commonly exhibited in traditional events in the Tapanuli Tengah coastal community such as custom wedding events and other traditional events. Following are types of dances that exist Pesisir community in Tapanuli Tengah:

1. *Tari Saputangan* accompanied by Kapri song
2. *Tari Payung* or *Tari Lagu Pulo Pinang*, where the dancers are dancing using umbrellas.
3. *Tari Selendang* accompanied by Duo song, the dancers are of a couple of male and female.
4. *Tari Pedang* accompanied by Sikambang Botan song.
5. *Tari Kipas*, tari ini accompanied by Perak-perak song.
6. *Tari Pahlawan* accompanied by Simati dibunuh (a murdered man) song.
7. *Tari Adok* or *Tari Kain* accompanied by Adok song.
8. *Tari Anak* accompanied by Sikambang song.

Music in the Pesisir community in Tapanuli Tengah in general is Sikambang, where Sikambang is an art whose main part consists of dance and music which in its development are inseparable from the marine/fishermen community group. Where from some information through books and interviews about the existence of Sikambang music in this case the beginning of the emergence of Sikambang vocally began with the sailing of a sailor who sang rhymes poems by hitting his boat as a musical instrument and here began to be known by Sikambang vocally and subsequently developed by the community of fishermen who are familiar with the song of Sikambang so that in subsequent developments Sikambang became one of the arts in the Pesisir community in Tapanuli Tengah.

In Sikambang's own the songs that are the theme song are the following, Song Duo, Pulo Pinang, Silver Song, Adok Song, Killed Soul, Song Bamboo, and Kapri Song or as known by (Sikambang Lawik). Sikambang Lawik is the oldest repertoire where its existence was originally one of the poems that are usually sung by a shaman to control the wind so that no storms occur while in the middle of the ocean.

Customary House

Customary house in Pesisir Tapanuli Tengah is a kind of house with staircase and a balcony (veranda). There are similarities with the customary house of Bengkulu and Riau. It's just that the Pesisir custom in Tapanuli Tengah the traditional house is not preserved because understanding of preservation of relics is still lacking. What remains is only in the form of the debris of buildings that still remain around the Tapanuli Tengah region such as: Barus, Jago-jago and Sorkam.

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