

The Symbolic Meaning of Ulos in The Implementation of Weddings in The Toba Batak Community in Banda Aceh

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Abstract

Ulos in the Toba Batak community has a very important meaning in all traditional activities, regardless of where the events are held, either in Toba or outside the Batak's Land. Ulos is a symbol and identity of Batak people and one of the highlighted traditional festivals using Ulos is during the wedding ceremonies. This research aims to describe and analyze the implementation of giving us at a wedding, the symbolic meanings of cloth in the traditional wedding process of the Toba Batak community and the shift in the implementation of giving ulos from the Toba Batak region of origin to that in Banda Aceh. This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. This research was conducted in three sub-districts in Banda Aceh, namely Kuta Alam District, Jaya Baru District, and Kutaraja District by interviewing three informants. Based on the research results, it is known that 1) Ulos is used as an intermediary to show love, affection and prayers or hopes from the giver to the also recipient. Ulos is used in all traditional events of the Toba Batak community, both joy and sorrow. 2) The meaning of giving us to the bride and groom is as a symbol that the bride and groom are legitimate in the eyes of tradition. 3) Maintaining and caring for the ulos itself depends on each family that owns the ulos. At weddings, both in the native Batak Toba area and overseas areas, there is no difference in conducting the pinning process of the ulos. Batak people living in Banda Aceh also hope to be able to carry out traditional activities openly.

Keywords: Symbolic meaning; ulos; wedding.

INTRODUCTION

Ulos is a cultural symbol to show the identity of the Toba Batak people. It is made according to the rules in the form of certain sizes and patterns, so also can be used as a guide in life. Generally, the making of us is the same, what makes it different is the name, style or motif, of worn ulos that must follow the type of traditional ceremony when it is given. For example, ulos..... used for,....ulos.....Even though there are differences, giving ulos is always interpreted and connected to the meaning of the symbols. Ulos is considered a concrete thing as a "seal" so that the request is approved by God Almighty, along with the use of umpasa (rhymes) which contain the request so that the request can be accepted by the tondi (spirit) and flesh (body). (Astuti, 2019).

Ulos is a symbol of blessing, affection, and unity, according to the Toba Batak proverb which reads *ljuk pangihot ni holding, ulos pangihot ni holong*, which means that if the fiber is the binding of the midrib on the stem then the ulos is the binding of love between people. (Erlana, 2016). The traditional Batak wedding ceremony process is a process that is carried out repeatedly.

Each stage contains symbols, values, or cultural meanings such as the mangulosi process and the marhata sinamot process which are related to the results of the communication process carried out. *Mangulosi* (Giving ulos) cannot be done by just anyone, which means that giving ulos can only be done by Toba Batak people who have a high position to parties who have a lower position in the functional structure of Toba Batak customs. An example can be taken, namely, from the hula-hula (female giver) to the male party (Vergouwen, 2004).

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY, PROBLEMS AND TARGET SOLUTIONS

General description

For the Toba Batak people, Ulos has a very important meaning. The high value of ulos for the Batak people is not seen in the price, but in how much hope and prayer the ulos giver has for the ulos recipient. Moreover, in marriage, the value and meaning of ulos are very high because the giver of the ulos hopes that the recipient of the ulos will have a long life, there will be no separation except death and they will soon be able to have children.

Problem

No	Problem	solutions	Indicators of goals
1	Knowledge: What is the process of giving us? Character : The symbolic meaning of ulos cloth	Describe the process of giving us Ulos cloth empowerment	Increase civic knowledge and character
2	Shift in the implementation of giving us	Analyze the implementation of giving us	Increase participation

Target solutions

1. Describe and analyze the implementation of giving us at weddings
2. Describe and analyze symbolic meanings of cloth in the traditional wedding process of the Batak Toba community
3. Describe and analyze the shift in the implementation of giving us from areas of Toba Batak origin to those in Banda Aceh

METHOD

The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative that aims to describe clearly the implementation of giving us at weddings, the symbolic meanings of cloth in the traditional wedding process of the Batak Toba community and the shift in the implementation of giving ulos from areas of Toba Batak origin to those in Banda Aceh. The data collection was conducted by interviewing three informants. The location of this research was carried out in the districts of Kuta Alam, Kuta Raja, and Jaya Baru in the city of Banda Aceh from 22 May 2023 to 28 May 2023.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the custom of Toba Batak weddings, the process of giving ulos (mangulosi) is very important and takes the longest time. Because it will involve everyone present at the wedding. The giving of us or pinning of ulos is done by the woman's family for the bride and groom. Research conducted by Khairunnisa Butar Butar (Butar Butar, 2018) said that ulos was only given by certain parties such as Hula Hula also known as a man's uncle to a woman's family. It is also believed by Batak people that pinning ulos or mangulosi to the bride and groom is a form of good hope and prayer from the ulos giver to the bride and groom.

Ulos is a symbol for the Batak people which is woven by Batak women and takes quite a long time. According to Geertz regarding interpretive theory in the book translated by (Hardiman, 1992) said that culture is something related to icons or symbols that are commonly known by the local community. With the meaning of ulos which is a symbol for the Batak people, it is also a cultural product of the Batak people which plays a very important role in every traditional event. Ulos is an icon and character of Batak society itself. However, the high value of us for the Batak people is not just seen from the shape or type of cloth. Behind the ulos cloth, there are many prayers and hopes conveyed from the ulos giver to the ulos recipient. Giving ulos is also used as a container or form of love from the ulos giver to the ulos recipient. Herbert Blummer in symbolic interactionism also explains that communication through symbols has the meaning of being able to analyze correlations or relationships between individuals (Harwanto, 2021). Ulos itself has symbols, motifs, and shapes that have existed since ancient times. These motifs and shapes also have very important meanings and are of very high value to the Batak people.

Banda Aceh is an area lived by Acehnese as the majority, while Batak people who stay there are regarded as a minority and immigrants. Batak people living in Banda Aceh must respect the Aceh culture and be able to adapt environment they live in. Through the decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 270/P/2014 concerning Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Indonesian Government has determined that Toba Batak Ulos Woven Cloth is a National Intangible Heritage. Regarding the care and maintenance of the ulos cloth itself, it is becoming the responsibility of the family who cares for it. The Ulos's giving celebration is still the same, regardless of the region where it is held, either in Aceh or in Toba. The pinning of the ulos is done sequentially starting from the first, namely ulos passamot, second is ulos hela, third is ulos pamarai, fourth is ulos sihutti appang and the last is ulos titing marakkup. This agrees with previous research conducted by (Johannes Budiman, 2019) who said that the ulos used to bind the two large families in the traditional wedding ceremony activities of the Toba Batak community are the first, the ulos passamot, the second the ulos hela, the third the ulos pamarai, the fourth the ulos sihutti appang and the last one is the ulos titing marakkup. Usually in the Batak Toba area, the process of mangulosi or pinning ulos is accompanied by Batak or gondang music. However, if we look back at every traditional event in Banda Aceh because the Batak people are a minority, the gondang music and dancing are less performed in the process of embedding the ulos.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that also was initially only used as a body warmer. However, as time progressed, ulos was used as an intermediary

form to show love, affection, and prayers or hopes from the giver to the recipient of the ulos. Ulos is used in all traditional events of the Toba Batak community, both joy and sorrow. The mangulosi process at a wedding is very important and takes a long time because it involves all the family members present. In the process of pinning the ulos, the person who gives the ulos also conveys their hopes and prayers to the bride and groom. However, giving ulos is only done by certain people, especially people who are older than the recipient of the ulos.

Secondly, it was also concluded that the symbolic meaning of ulos can be seen from the shape and motif of the ulos cloth itself. The high value of ulos is not only seen from the price or type of cloth but also because this ulos is a form of love and hope from the ulos giver to the ulos recipient. The types of ulos given at weddings are hotang yeast ulos and idup yeast. Where Ragi Hotang means hope for the bride and groom to remain one in God and Ragi Idup means that the bride and groom will have a long life. The meaning of giving the ulos to the bride and groom is as a symbol that the bride and groom are legitimate in the eyes of Batak customs and have been sealed with the hope that the wishes submitted will soon come true.

Third, maintaining and caring for the ulos itself are handed back to the family who owns the ulos. For additional information, Ulos cloth cannot be washed like ordinary cloth, because ulos will be dried in the sun or immediately stored again when it has been used. In wedding ceremonies, both in the native Batak Toba area and overseas areas, the process of pinning the ulos is no different, because the order of pinning the ulos at the wedding starts with the passamot ulos, the second is the hela ulos, third is the pamarai ulos, fourth is the sihutti appang ulos and the last is the titing ulos marakkup. Batak people in Banda Aceh also hope to be able to carry out their traditional activities openly and can be one of the members of the Acehese traditional council to introduce and preserve Toba Batak customs in Banda Aceh.

As a suggestion from researchers, it is hoped that the Batak people who live in Banda Aceh can continue to maintain their customs by introducing their culture to the people of Banda Aceh. It is also expected that the Aceh government can facilitate or provide space for the Batak people to be able to introduce and preserve the Batak customs and culture itself.

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