



The Birth of Batak Toba Community in Kotapinang

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Abstract: Toba Batak people believe that there is a rite that will be passed by all humans, namely: Birth, Marriage and death. When the process of birth, marriage and death take place then there is a belief that every time they pass through these rites, humans must hold a tradition that aims as gratitude for the achievement and to avoid disaster. The author takes the focus in the birth rite, because in this birth rite there is a belief in the Toba Batak community of supernatural powers that can interfere at any time than mothers and newborns. The Toba Batak people believe that every new mother and baby undergo surgery, both normally and through surgery in vulnerable and weak conditions so that efforts are needed to keep mothers and newborns away from the evil spirit's power. The Toba Batak community had long ago made various efforts aimed at keeping mothers and babies away from these evil forces, namely by making strings of leaves that had magical powers placed near the mother and newborn, installing fireplaces under the mattress in order to keep the evil forces unable to approach, because according to their beliefs, the evil forces did not dare to heat. From all these efforts, it turns out that the medical benefits of all these efforts can be explained, one of which is by placing a string of cereals, cereals can ward off mosquitoes, while the embers installed under the bed to keep mothers and newborns warm at night days and can recover immediately from the former operation of the birth process. All of these efforts have the aim of avoiding accidents, and this tradition has a path from the beginning of birth until seven days after birth, when arriving on the seventh day a thanksgiving event is known as Esek-esek. The author sees that there are many advantages to this tradition. Aside from keeping mothers and babies away from magical power, it can also be a place for community to gather, so that they can become a place of friendship between the far and near.

Keywords: Batak Toba; ritual; Esek-esek

I. Introduction

Kotapinang is a sub-district in South Labuhanbatu district, North Sumatra Province. Kotapinang is the capital of the Regency, initially only inhabited by two large tribes namely Dasopang and Tamba, the former power of the two tribes can be seen from the legacy of a grave. Since the opening of tobacco plantations in East Sumatra, by the Dutch East Indies colonial government which brought many contract coolies who were employed on plantations spread throughout the East Sumatra region. Then Labuhanbatu which became the forerunner of South Labuhanbatu Regency which is the place of the author in conducting research, the arrival of transmigrants from Java. Most of the migrants came from Javanese ethnicity, so the place where I did the research benefited a lot from the opening of various plantations during the colonial rule of the Dutch East Indies.

The condition of the tribes who inhabit Kotapinang until now consists of various kinds of tribes, among others, tribal people, Toba Bataks, Simalungun, Karo, Angkola, Tapsel, Mandailing, Malay, etc. In socializing among tribes, the people of Kotapinang prioritize tolerance, this can be seen clearly when one of the community will have a celebration, be it a wedding, religious holiday celebration, death, regency birthday ceremony, and also their birth always holds events with nature collective. For the Toba Batak people in Bona Pasogit, this is known as Robu or Crisis. Koentjaraningrat (1985: 59) concluded 'In Toba Batak beliefs during the crisis, residents of the village alternately gathered at the house of the baby's parents every night for seven days

and seven nights'. Generally for the Toba Batak community when the mother gives birth spontaneously, the community preaches by word of mouth. This news will quickly spread.

The essence of this ritual is that the newborns and mothers who have just experienced childbirth can be strong and detached from the forces of evil spirits, because in the Batak Toba belief, they are still in a weak state so that a ritual is needed to keep the child away newborn and his mother from the forces of evil by carrying out the process of Robu-robuan. Handling the birth process in the Batak tradition, usually handled by a shaman (sibaso), if the birth process goes a bit difficult, then the husband will break all the straps, then ring the rifle, or sometimes the husband hits the floor of the house just below where the wife lay. The purpose of all these actions is for the birth to take place quickly, because a shocking noise will cause a sudden birth. After the sibaso cut the umbilical cord with bamboo skin (shakes), and then cleaned the mother and baby, then she wrapped the baby with a blanket (Ulos Batak) and then laid beside her mother near the fireplace (tatarang) made specifically at the time of birth by the husband. Fireplaces burn all day slowly for several days to a week. The point is that the mother's body and the baby stay warm so they get healthy quickly.

The value of safety is reflected in what is done by the family whose members are pregnant and handled by the dukun beranun. When the womb has reached the age of seven months and nine months, the family concerned notifies the maternity shaman in his village. This notification is intended so that at the time (when giving birth) the shaman can help him, so that the birth process is expected to run smoothly. This value is also reflected in the placing of objects or items believed to contain magical, such as: kundur, strings of jeringo bangle (as an amulet), and a small knife. The value of conformity with the area of expertise is reflected in the division of duties of shamans. The female shaman is in charge of launching and welcoming the baby from her mother's womb. Meanwhile, male shamans chant the spells behind the veil (outside the place of birth), so that objects that have magical power can function as they should.

II. Research Method

To find complete data that is considered scientific in solving a problem. There is a concept about the type of research that researchers make reference. Namely qualitative research with an ethnographic research approach. James P. Spradley (2006: 35) the type of description of social science is based on observations, interviews, etc. which in essence can describe the point of view of the native population. "New ethnography" focuses its efforts on discovering how people organize their culture in mind and then use that culture in life. The analysis in this study is not based solely on the interpretation of the researcher but is an arrangement of thoughts from members of the public who are scraped out by the researcher. Because the aim is to find and describe the mind organization of a society, the understanding of researchers in language studies is very important in this research method. "Collection of curriculum vitae or a mixed strategy, language will appear in each phase in this research process.

The essence of Spardley's "New Ethnography" is an effort to pay attention to the meaning of the actions of events that happen to people we want to understand through their culture. In conducting fieldwork, ethnographers draw conclusions from human culture from three sources: (1) from what people say, (2) from the way people act, (3) from the various artifacts used. However, in this book, Spardley focuses specifically on drawing conclusions from what people say. Ethnographic interviews are considered more able to explore the structure of thought of the people being observed.

This type of qualitative research is appropriate to be used in this Literacy research. Because this research aims to find out the process of activities that will reveal logically, systematically, and empirically to the socio-cultural events that occurred in the Toba Batak ethnic group in Kotapinang. Research using this qualitative technique is essential to be able to reconstruct the truth and facts in this literacy research for all Batak Toba people in Kotapinang.

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method with an ethnographic approach, researchers use field studies, ie researchers go directly to the field to make observations of the traditions that occur on the object under study. In this case the researcher participates in the existing socialization activities on the object under study so that researchers get an understanding of what is being studied. In addition, a literature study (library research) was conducted to add literature relevant to the research conducted. The literature can be in the form of books, articles, and other scientific writings and the internet, such as books and other scientific writings on traditions and also the social systems of the community.

III. Discussion

In general, when the mother has given birth spontaneously, people who have come to visit the house of the mother who has just given birth will immediately preach to all relatives, distant and close relatives. This news will quickly spread from the mouth of the mouth. The question people have when hearing the good news is her Songon? Which means what gender? But if the one born is a girl and the unsok or the bursok if the one born is a baby boy.

In the book *coentjaraningrat*, Rite of human transition, when the pregnant woman had given birth, the husband dropped a large piece of wood from the roof of the house into the yard, then cut it into small sticks with an ax.

This ceremony is called *Manaho Saganon*, this ax sound is a sign for the whole Huta (village) that a baby has been born. The conditions in Kotapinang have experienced a slight shift, this is no longer found where the father threw a large piece of wood from the top of his house's zinc into his yard. But in the Toba Batak people who live in Kotapinang replace the charcoal that is sold in stalls and burned and then placed under a bed or bed from mothers and newborns.

These embers are placed under the bed then the evil spirits will not dare to approach. When the embers no longer emit heat, the person who is near the mother who is usually in-law or her parents heat the embers again. Cultural shifts also occur when the delivery process is usually handled by the village midwife or village shaman (*sibas*) through the normal process through vaginal delivery, after the delivery process will be reported to all residents by throwing large wood from the roof of the house and chopping the wood using an ax so the sound of an ax chopping wood is a sign for the whole village that the delivery process is going well, then the residents will come to the house.

But now the role of the *dukun* or midwife for the Kotapinang village area is very difficult to find because mothers prefer to give birth through a Caesarean delivery process rather than normal, in addition to the fast and painless process that is usually experienced in the normal process, it is considered by the mother to be more choose through normal labor.

From a cultural point of view, Clifford Geertz describes religion as a system of symbols that applies to establish strong, pervasive, and durable moods and motivations in humans by formulating concepts about a general order of existence and wrapping up concepts. This concept

with a kind of factuality, so that the moods and motivations look unique and realistic. Koentjaraningrat (2009: 204) explains that the cultural value system is related to the concept of meaning and orientation of cultural values.

Meaning is an important element in human life. Regarding feelings about what is wanted or not wanted, about what may and may not be done and about what is valuable and what is not valuable.

So that in life, humans cannot be separated from values. This usually relates to human behavior, customs, and everything that is done consciously or unconsciously. This can be seen from the moment the child is just born, then the father will rush to the homes of the community to inform the neighbors that his child has been born, and the neighbors will also ask what sex. Then the father will answer Ucok if the child born is a boy. If the child born is a woman, the father will answer questions from the neighbor, butet. The meaning of this is to inform the public that there are new family members in their family.

Dominant culture refers to a community that has influence and ability to organize and implement culture in its activity. Whereas subculture culture has the basic assumption that dominant culture is never homogeneous. Every culture must have internal contradictions that accommodate people who have certain views of the dominant culture. Samovar said that subcultures are social groups or communities with the character of communication, perceptions, values, beliefs and actions that distinguish them from other groups and communities and also from the dominant culture.

The value of safety is reflected in what is done by family members whose members are pregnant and handled by dukun beranak. When the womb has reached the age of 7 months and 9 months, the family concerned notifies the dukun beranak in his village. This notification is intended so that at the time (when giving birth) the shaman can help him, so that the birth process is expected to run smoothly. This value is also reflected in the placing of objects or items believed to contain magical, such as: kundur, strings of jeringo bangle (as an amulet), and a small knife.

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So from the researchers' observations, the researchers saw that the safety values contained in this tradition were so prominent, and the Batak Toba community seemed to prioritize how to make their families safe. It is normal for all humans when in danger then spontaneously will look for ways to be safe.

"The creators of ornamental designs in ancient times turned out to not only create something beautiful to the eye, but also through this ornament contained educational teachings and morals, sincere and noble expectations, the social level of the owner and function as a repellent for the inhabitants" (Daulat, 2012: 69).

In the art of building alone the Batak Toba people pay attention to building art, which in the end the goal can refuse reinforcements, reflected that the Batak Toba people strive for personal safety with their families. This tradition will remain as long as humans still exist, because

humans cannot be separated from the traditions they have believed in "That the birth rite process will still be there because people try to always avoid disaster" (Agata, Ichwan, 2017: 189).

According to Budhisantoso (1984: 28) said that the function of an ideal traditional ceremony can be seen in the social life of the supporting community, namely the existence of social control (social control), social media (social media) and social norms (social alignment). So that the horizontal function of the Transitional Rite is to strengthen the relationship between humans and humans and vertically this can connect humans with their god or creator.

In this tradition the Toba Batak people residing in Kotapinang will take turns voluntarily alternating with each other at the *suhut* house or the person whose owner is *hajang* (*coentjaringanrat*, rite of human transition) to accompany the mother and *sibayi* when the mother gives birth, the process being handled by village midwife. When the birth process takes place, the father will faithfully accompany the mother to give birth and can directly encourage the mother.

Van Gennep states in the book of rites of human transition, that in the stages of growth as individuals, namely from birth, then childhood, through the process of becoming mature and married, becoming parents, until the time of death, humans experience biological and socio-cultural changes which can directly affect his soul and cause a mental crisis. So that it takes a regeneration or enthusiasm in entering a new life which in this case is when the mother gave birth to a child. This is where the father's role is to encourage the mother directly.

Fear as the mother is overtaking the baby or the ghosts can pick up or disturb the mother and the baby can be avoided. Because the real meaning of the arrival of the residents is that in any condition there are still sleeping. So a ceremony was held which for the Batak people was called *robu-robuan*. The universal nature of parties and ceremonies throughout the life-cycle is due to a general awareness among all humans that each new level throughout life-cycle brings the individual to a new and broader level of social environment.

The little baby lives in a social environment which consists mainly of his mother. If the baby is weaned or released from its mother, it will recognize its new world. In many cultures, there is also an assumption that the transition from one level of life to another level of life, or from one social environment to another, is a dangerous, serious, real or magical moment. In ceremonies in times beyond similar times of crisis often contain elements that intend to resist the dangers that threaten the individual and his environment. In anthropology the ceremonies are called *crisis-rites*, or *rites*

Robu-robuan and *Mamoholi* are not very popular sentences for the public to mention the birth of a child seven days and seven nights in the Kotapinang village. *Rajamarpodang* said the function of literacy is to look after mothers and babies, to be taken care of in order to stay healthy. Maybe while sleeping soundly, the baby's mother should not crush her baby, this is where the role of the people around the mother is to always remain awake so as to prevent the mother or baby from unwanted things. Or when the mother is breastfeeding her baby, because of fatigue the mother knocked and fell asleep, while *Sibayi's* mouth was still in her mother's body.

Enabling *sibayi* nose covered by her mother's breasts. So it can't breathe. To maintain that, the mother-in-law, the daughter of the princess or her *pariban*, including other women, are always close to changing the mother and baby. So as not to get sleepy, they hold a kind of game, whether it's playing chess or playing cards to make them fun, don't fall asleep.

IV. Conclusion

From the results of this study it can be concluded that humans always try to save themselves and their families, whatever they will do only for their families remains safe. So that the Batak Toba community that the authors make as research subjects make a tradition that remains bequeathed to their offspring. The purpose of all these rites is for safety and most importantly to be able to gather the Toba Batak people, even though they are overseas far from their hometowns, this *tardisi* can also maintain and foster kinship among the Toba Batak people, so that they do not forget their customs even though they were far from their hometown.

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