



SINAMOT TRADITION IN TRADITIONAL TOBA BATAK WEDDINGS

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Abstract:

Marriage holds great significance for the Batak community, which follows the traditional Dalihan Na Tolu system. In the Toba Batak tribe, a gift called Sinamot is given as a tribute to the bride-to-be's family. The research conducted for this study utilized various data collection methods from relevant and up-to-date journal sources. The findings of the study suggest that the Sinamot tradition within the Toba Batak tribe serves as a means to reinforce the connection between two kinship groups. This tradition is a necessary condition for the legitimacy of marriage under the custom and involves various objects and stages. This event is marked by the presence of various objects that hold significant meaning, such as goldfish, meat, money, and ulos cloth. The preparation process involves various stages, including Marhori-hori walls and Marhusip, which are designed to ensure the continuity and success of the event. The implementation of Sinamot requires careful planning and discussion from both the bride and groom's families, and it is viewed as a way to pay tribute to traditional Batak kings and their families. Ultimately, Sinamot is a symbol of respect for Batak culture and traditional family values.

Keywords: sinamot, Batak Toba, tradition, wedding

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a social and legal bond between individuals that establishes kinship relationships and formalizes interpersonal relationships. It is an institution recognized in local cultures and signifies the acceptance of a new status with a new set of rights and obligations. By getting married, an individual's status is elevated, which is acknowledged not only by their partner but also by society. Marriage is a union of two or more people who commit to sharing their lives. Creating an ideal marriage involves a series of processes with the ultimate goal of bringing two families together. Each region's customs and traditions influence the steps taken to create a family. Generally, traditional marriage ceremonies involve an exchange of gifts or a dowry known as a Mahar. The Batak tribe is one of the largest tribes in Indonesia and is known for its strong cultural identity.

The Batak kinship system, known as Dalihan Na Tolu (Tungku Nan Tiga), serves as a code of conduct to regulate, control, and guide the behavior and actions of the Toba Batak people. The Batak people value this system as it guides their orientation, perception, and definition of reality. The Batak people strongly uphold and preserve their cultural values, as failure to follow customs would lead to being called an uncivilized person (maradat) (Achmad et al., 2020; Simanungkalit, 2021). Marriage is significant for the Batak community; they follow the traditional Dalihan Na Tolu system. According to their beliefs, marriage is not only about bringing a man and a woman together in a holy union, but it also involves creating new family bloodlines that can continue the legacy of their ancestors. The Dalihan

Na Tolu system includes three essential elements that are crucial for the success of the marriage. If one element is missing, the marriage is considered incomplete. However, in some cases, one element may be omitted during the marriage ceremony (Siahaan, 2018; Pane, 2022).

In the Toba Batak tribe, Sinamot payments (price) are given during the marriage, impacting the woman's social status in the family. The position of the husband is considered higher than that of the wife. The dowry (Sinamot) holds deep symbolic meaning and is an essential part of the culture, reflecting the hereditary values of the community. The most crucial aspect of Sinamot is the process of "*pemberian dan penerimaan*", or "giving and acceptance." In the Toba Batak tribe, a gift known as Sinamot is considered a tribute to the female family. Providing Sinamot to a woman's family is crucial, as without it, the marriage is not regarded as legal in the tribe's customs (Manurung, 2021). At first, the gift is not in the form of money but in the condition of objects considered meaningful. Sinamot is often given in the form of cattle that are considered expensive, like buffaloes, cows, horses, and pigs. The amount depends on the agreement and ability of the male party or female request. It can be 30 buffalo tails, but it can also be one outside cattle to be slaughtered for party needs (Lumbanraja, 2022).

Obtaining a high education, position, and economic status can affect the level of Sinamot's greatness in a woman's marriage. In some societies, a woman's education is considered an important factor in determining her value as a potential spouse. This is because education is often used as a benchmark to assess a woman's worth and determine her "selling price." The payment of Sinamot (dowry) affects the position of women in the family, particularly in relation to their husbands. The term 'unbalanced' refers to the fact that husbands are traditionally regarded as having a higher status than their wives. Sinamot has a deep symbolic meaning that is passed down from generation to generation and reflects a value system that shapes the lives of its people.

Based on the author's explanation, in the Toba Batak community, the dowry paid by the groom is called Sinamot, which means honest money paid for the bride's hand in marriage. Therefore, the authors raised the title "Sinamot Tradition in Traditional Toba Batak Weddings."

METHOD

The research conducted in this study utilized various data collection methods from relevant and updated journal sources. Specifically, a qualitative research method was employed to describe analytical data narratively. The authors acted as data collection and interpretation instruments, gathering information from different research journals. The qualitative approach was chosen to describe the matters related to the problem studied: the sinamot tradition in the marriage of Toba Batak Custom.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing data from several relevant journal sources, the results obtained are as follows: The Sinamot tradition in the Toba Batak tribe is a way to strengthen the bond between two kinship groups. It is an integral part of the Toba Batak community's marriage customs and helps maintain their social integrity. The tradition is carried out to reinforce the relationship between the Natolu pretext relations that have already been established (Saly et al., 2023). In the Toba Batak tribe, sinamot secures women's rights by providing them with property as bridal capital upon marriage. The number of sinamot is decided during the marhata sinamot event. Over time, the tradition of giving sinamot has changed, and today, it is no longer exclusively intended for women but is also given to parents.

Preserving the Sinamot tradition, a unique cultural heritage of Indonesia, is of utmost importance. It holds high cultural and spiritual values that inspire the younger generation to continue preserving the local cultural heritage, thus building awareness of cultural diversity in the country. Sinamot is the foundation that must be fulfilled in traditional Toba Batak marriages (Sitohang, 2021). As such, families

are selective in choosing a mate for their child with the appropriate number of synamots. This tradition is still practised today as it helps meet life's needs and adapt to different environments and cultures.

The purpose of giving sinamot is critical for the Toba Batak community. In traditional Toba Batak marriage ceremonies, sinamot is a requirement for the validity of a marriage in custom (Siregar, Syakban, & bin Rosele, 2023). For women, what their parents have given them will be seen during their Sinamot marriage because, for the Batak Toba community, Sinamot is considered "family pride" (Tantri & Asmarani, 2021). The purpose of this sinamot is to balance the position between men and women. Batak women who have higher education tend to have a higher social status in their society. In the Marhata Sinamot tradition, Sinamot money is given as a symbol of appreciation or respect to the bride-to-be's parents (Marbun, 2023). The amount of Sinamot money is not specified but agreed upon by both parties. Sinamot is not only determined by the social or economic status or degree of the parents but also needs to be adjusted to the abilities and talents of men. In addition, there are objects prepared for the implementation of the Marhata Sinamot Tradition and should not be missed for the continuity of the event, including:

1. Goldfish and meat

According to Marhata Sinamot tradition, goldfish are an important food item in the event. The goldfish is later prepared for the bride-to-be by the women in the family, while meat and pork are cooked and prepared separately. The portions are neatly placed in a large container that is prepared by the male members of the family for the female side. This food holds great significance as it symbolizes respect for traditional families and kings from ancient times until now. It represents their coming together as one big family.

2. Money

In the Marhata Sinamot tradition, money plays an important role. Sinamot money is not solely determined by its nominal amount. Instead, it serves as a symbol of appreciation or tribute to the parents of the bride-to-be. The amount of Sinamot money, also known as dowry, is not fixed and is later agreed upon by both parents during the Marhata Sinamot event. The administration of sinamot, given by the groom's family to the bride's family should not only be viewed from an economic perspective, but also from social status or the degree of parents of the bride and groom. The amount of sinamot should also be based on the groom's financial ability, which will be mutually agreed upon by both parents of the bride and groom (Purba & Pasaribu, 2017).

3. Ulos cloth

Ulos cloth is a type of woven cloth that originates from the Batak tribe. It is not mandatory for all guests and invitees to wear ulos cloth at Marhata Sinamot events. Still, traditional Batak kings or those who hold older positions in the clan usually wear it (Hasibuan & Rochmat, 2021). This is because the Batak people believe that every traditional event created by their leaders or traditional kings of the era should incorporate ulos cloth. Using ulos cloth is considered a form of respect for the traditional King who created it.

Although there are no strict rules on the use of ulos cloth in Marhata Sinamot activities, it is recommended to use bright colors such as red, yellow, or orange as they symbolize positivity and prosperity meaning of joy and excitement for the Batak people.

4. Betel leaves rice and money on a plate.

In the marhata sinamot tradition, this thing is a characteristic because it was in the marhata event synamot these objects later it will have meaning especially for the bride and groom. During the Marhata Sinamot tradition, a plate is prepared containing betel leaves, rice, and money, which will be presented at the end of the activity. If the candidate's family agrees,

the bride and groom will be ready to carry out a traditional marriage. The plate will be held together by the bride, groom, and their families. King Parhata will then give an umpasa (rhyme) to the invited guests, bride and groom, indicating that the event has been completed. After the King has given his pardon, the rice on the plate will be thrown up, symbolizing the joy about what the event will be like when it progresses to marriage, just like the joy when rice plants are harvested.

Sinamot Cultural Procession

In the process of implementation, there are various stages that must be completed. These stages will be explained:

1. Marhori-hori walls

In the Batak language, there is an expression that means "groping on the wall" or "exploring". This phrase is also used in various customs related to marriage in Batak culture. Initially, this custom was used as a way for men to show their seriousness in marrying a woman. Men and their families would visit the woman's family and simply ask if she was ready to get married. Nowadays, the custom has changed slightly. Instead of just asking about the woman's desire to marry, the focus is now on discussing the preparations for the wedding ceremony, known as "marhata sinamot". The term "marhusip" is now used specifically to discuss the implementation of "marhata sinamot". At the same time, the "marhori-hori wall" has become more of a formality (Rambe et al., 2022).

2. Marhusip

Marhusip is a stage where the male family approaches the female family to discuss their plans to marry their daughter. These discussions are private and take place between representatives of the prospective groom's family and representatives of the prospective bride's parents. At this stage, the male representative will visit the bride's house and usually bring food and fruit as a gift. During the marhusip stage, the initial amount of sinamot (bohi ni sinamot) that will be given by the groom's family to the bride's family is discussed, which makes this stage very important (Simarmata & Pradoko, 2020). It is also useful for avoiding conflicts later during the marhata sinamot procession. During this stage, matters related to the implementation of the marhata sinamot procession and other provisions relating to it are discussed as well.

CONCLUSION

Based on data from previous studies, the authors conclude that marriage, in general, means legally uniting two human beings of opposite sexes to have offspring. However, marriage in the Batak tribe is more than that. Marriage in the Batak custom not only binds the two brides in a relationship, but the Batak customary marriage also tightly binds the two sides of the family of each bride and groom. The Batak tribe also adheres to a postulate, "Dalihan Na Tolu". Nevertheless, before Dalihan Na Tolu is formed, there must be such a thing as "Sinamot". Sinamot is one of the customs carried out by the Batak tribe before carrying out the wedding. Sinamot has a meaning as a means or medium used to bind between two family groups, namely the paranak family (male) and the parboru family (female). In addition, sinamot is seen as tangible evidence that radiates the seriousness of the man towards the woman he proposed to, especially for the extended family. Marriage is a union not only between a man and a woman but also between their respective families. The higher the value of the "sinamot," the greater the honour bestowed upon the woman's family. However, if the woman's family holds a position of equal standing, they can also give gifts to the man's family. Conversely, suppose the woman's family is from a less affluent background. In that case, the woman's position will be the same as that of the man's family. This tradition includes several objects and stages, such as goldfish and meat, money, ulos

cloth, betel leaves, rice, and money on a plate, as well as Marhori-hori walls and Marhusip. The tradition is a way to show respect for traditional families and kings from ancient times until now, and it symbolizes the coming together of two families. The amount of sinamot money is not fixed and is later agreed upon by both parents, and it should also be based on the groom's financial ability. The use of ulos cloth is not mandatory. However, it is considered a form of respect for the traditional King who created it. The Marhata Sinamot tradition is a beautiful way to celebrate love and marriage, and it plays an essential role in preserving Batak culture and heritage.

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