



Ethnozoology in Traditional Marriage Ceremony of Mandailing Tribe in North Sumatra

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ABSTRACT

Ethnozoological studies can make an important contribution in the introduction of animal natural resources, especially the use of animals based on local wisdom in the traditional marriage ceremony of the Mandailing tribe in North Sumatra. The Mandailing tribe is one of the tribes that has a uniqueness in traditional marriage ceremonies. Mandailing customs, both in everyday life and in certain traditional ceremonies, are still used by the Mandailing people based on *dalihan na tolu*. The traditional Mandailing wedding procession begins with a *markobar* event, an event to bring the bride and groom to the building's highway, awarding titles, and *upa-upa*. In the ceremony, there are five types of animals used, namely (*Bubalus bubalis*), Goat (*Capra aegagrus hircus*), Chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*), Goldfish (*Cyprinus carpio*), and Shrimp (*Caridea*). The five types of animals have their own meaning.

Keywords: *Dalihan na tolu*, ethnozoology, Mandailing, marriage

INTRODUCTION

North Sumatra is one of the provinces in Indonesia which has various ethnic groups such as Malay, Karo, Simalungun, Batak, Mandailing, Javanese and others. The Mandailing tribe is one of the ethnic groups in North Sumatra, has strong customs and respects local socio-cultural values. The Mandailing tribe is one of the ethnic groups that has uniqueness and character that can be characterized by language, script, and customs, as well as in daily life and certain traditional ceremonies. Mandailing is traditionally and culturally led by a king who has ruled for generations. Customs have strict and binding rules (Luthan *et al.*, 2014; Dewi, 2018).

Mandailing people have an important element in marriage in the form of tradition, namely preserving Mandailing culture and traditions. In general, indigenous peoples prefer to show their social status through traditional marriages, meaning that the bigger the party that takes place, the higher their social status in the surrounding environment. The splendor of the Mandailing traditional wedding ceremony can be divided into three parts, namely *horja godang* (the biggest celebration and required to slaughter buffalo), *horja menengah* (intermediate celebration and required to slaughter a goat), and *horja kecil* (smallest celebration and required to cut a chicken). This tradition is still carried out by indigenous peoples to date, and some people still consider it as an obligation (Pohan, 2018).

The science that studies the use of animal species in society related to ethnic customs and culture is called ethnozoology. Through the local wisdom of the local community,

ethnozoology can make an important contribution to the introduction of animal natural resources in an area (Dewin *et al.*, 2017; Anwari and Tavita, 2018). Animals that are always used in traditional Mandailing activities, especially marriage ceremonies, include buffalo and goats, while chicken, fish and shrimp are accompanying dishes in the ceremony. In general, these traditional animals are used as a sign or sign of their social status, depending on the type of animal used.

The use of animals in the socio-cultural activities of the community is important for the Mandailing tribe. Therefore, it is important to investigate information about what types of animals are used by the Mandailing tribe in traditional marriage ceremonies and the meanings of each type of animal.

METHODS

This study is based on an online literature review and involved two traditional leaders as key informants which were carried out offline. The method used was a descriptive qualitative method by conducting direct interviews with key informants. The results of the interviews were recorded and recorded directly, then analyzed descriptively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Mandailing community in carrying out their customs and customary law uses a general structure called *Dalihan Na Tolu* (three furnaces). It means that the Mandailing community adheres to a social system consisting of *Kahanggi* (relatives of the same clan), *Mora* (giver of girls) and *Anak Boru* (recipient of girls). These three elements are always integrated in every traditional activity, such as *horja siriaon* (happy activities such as marriage); *horja siluluton* (death ceremony); and *horja siulaon* (mutual cooperation). If one of the elements of *Dalihan Na Tolu* does not support it, then the traditional ceremony cannot be carried out (Aisyah *et al.*, 2019; Lubis *et al.*, 2019; Priyono and Siregar, 2021).

The duties and obligations of the three elements of *Dalihan Na Tolu* are: (1) *Kahanggi* plays an important role in this kinship system because various life issues, such as marriage, death and earning a living, are first discussed with *kahanggi*, (2) *Anak Boru* serve as worker in one custom and must please the *mora*. *Anak boru* has an obligation to his *mora* with the term *sitamba na urang siorus na lobi* (the adder is less, the subtractor is more); *na manorjak tu pudi juljul tu jolo* (which lunges backwards and protrudes forward), meaning that it is the obligation of *anak boru* to honor his *mora*; *si tastas nambur*, meaning that *anak boru* is obliged to be the pioneer (front line) to solve the problems faced by the *mora*, (3) *Mora* does not have a special task in one custom, but has an obligation to his *anak boru* in the term *elek mar anak boru* which means always loving the *anak boru* (Hilda, 2016; Ahmad *et al.*, 2018).

In the Mandailing custom, the kinship tied by *Dalihan Na Tolu* forms a bond of feelings of *sahancit sahasonangan* or *sasiluluton sasiriaon* (pain/difficulty being felt together). Therefore, in responding to the various problems they face, the Mandailing people are required to be *sahata saoloan satumtum sapartahian* (one word united in consensus to agree). Also known as *mate mangolu sapartahian*, or life and death in consensus (Lubis *et al.*, 2019).

The procession of the Mandailing traditional wedding ceremony begins with a customary deliberation called *markobar*, which is defined as an official conversation held in the Mandailing traditional ceremony. *Markobar* has a procedure that has been agreed with the Mandailing community. However, in practice, there is some variation in the narrative process

and oral content. Therefore, cultural heritage is considered as one of the sacred cultures that is still carried out in traditional Mandailing ceremonies (Khairani, 2014; Nasution *et al.*, 2020).

After finishing *markobar*, before the bride is given a title and in an *upa-upa*, a *marudur* procession (process) is carried out to the *tapian raya* building to perform a *marpangir* ceremony for the bride and groom. This procession means sending the bride and groom to the building's *tapian raya* with the aim of washing away the *habujingon* (girlhood) and *haposoan* (single period). It is known as a building *tapian raya*, but depending on the situation and conditions, ceremonies can be held on the streets, especially for people who live in cities where it is difficult to find rivers. Generally, the distance between the house and the *marpangir* ceremony is usually about 300 m from the house, depending on the ability of the bride and groom to walk. Arriving at the *building tapian raya*, the bride and groom are seated on a bench that has been prepared, then the preparations for bathing are placed in a bowl containing chopped kaffir lime (*Citrus hystrix*) and enough water. *Pangir* is sprinkled on the bride, it means shampooing symbolically. The types of leaves used for sprinkling water are *hanjuang* leaves (*Cordyline sp.*), and *gandarusa* leaves (*Justicia gendarussa*), the two leaves are tied together. After the procession is complete, it is closed with a prayer and the next traditional procession is *mangalehen gorar* (giving a customary title) (Nurhidayati *et al.*, 2012; Amri and Syahputri, 2020).

Giving the name (title) shows that the bride and groom have left their youth and are undergoing the *matobang* (family period) custom. This name is used to call the person concerned, especially in traditional ceremonies. Giving the name (title) is done after the *marudur ketepian raya* building. In Mandailing, the titles of the king, Sutan and Mangaraja are placed at the beginning of the name. The awarding of this title was carried out by the king of *panusunan* (leader of the session/event) at the suggestion of *namora* (wealthy/rich) and *natoras* (elderly people) in front of other traditional kings, elements of *dalihan na tolu* and the whole family. After awarding the title, the next procession is *upa-upa* (Nofiardi and Rozi, 2017; Nasution *et al.*, 2021).

Upa-upa or *pangupa* are certain types of complementary foods, each of which has a symbolic meaning and is specially offered to one or more people through a traditional ritual called *pangupa*. The traditional ceremony of *Mangupa* or *Mangupa Tondi Dohot Badan* is carried out to restore or strengthen the spirit and body. The ingredients for *Mangupa* are called *Pangupa*, namely dishes whose presentation varies depending on the number of participants or invitees (Krisna and Desti, 2015; Amri, 2018). In general, *upa-upa* activities use five types of animals in the Mandailing traditional marriage ceremony, namely Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*), Goat (*Capra aegagrus hircus*), Chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*), Gold fish (*Cyprinus carpio*), and Shrimp (*Caridea*). Each type of animal used has its own meaning based on the philosophy of the ancestors as a symbol or symbol to express the meaning of the dishes served at the Mandailing traditional wedding ceremony.

1. Buffalo/orbo (*Bubalus bubalis*). This animal is used for the special *margondang* marriage custom "King". Orbo is served in a "pangupa" (*upa-upa*) procession at the wedding. Orbo is usually used for weddings for the groom's family / descendants of kings and is often called as *adat Besar* = *horja godang* = *margondang*. The meaning of buffalo based on the Mandailing traditional philosophy is as a mighty animal (male) which was once only owned by kings as livestock, it indicates that in marriage a husband (male) must be strong and responsible for his family. Buffalo animals served in *pangupa* are the whole head, meat, liver, spleen which are cooked, and then placed in a traditional winnowing.
2. Goat/ambeng (*Capra aegagrus hircus*). This animal is used for wedding customs of ordinary people who are not family/descendants of the king. This goat animal is also served in the *pangupa* procession, the animal parts presented are the whole goat's head, meat, liver,

spleen and tail. Goats as pangupa are served in winnows, just like buffalo. Based on the traditional philosophy of Mandailing, goats have the nature of looking for food outside and eating at home/in the cage, it indicates that in married life, a husband who earns a living outside and is intended for his family.

3. Free-range chicken/manuk (*Gallus gallus domesticus*). This animal is commonly used as a companion dish in wedding ceremonies. There are two meanings and uses for this free-range chicken:
 - a. The rooster is served as a pangupa, but the meaning is taken from the nature of the hen, namely the mother always loves and protects her children. So it indicates that in the household a wife/mother is expected to protect, love and guide her children in the future until she can be independent on her own.
 - b. The female free-range chicken that was carried at the time of the bride and groom was brought to the in-laws' house (male's parents). The free-range chicken used is called jara-jara which means native chicken that has never laid eggs. The meaning is to indicate that the bride who is still a girl after marrying is expected to produce many descendants.
4. Goldfish (*Cyprinus carpio*). This animal is also served in pangupa dishes. There are two types of fish that can be used in serving pangupa, namely mera fish (jurung) or goldfish. Both types of fish live in clear and flowing water, meaning that fish are mighty animals capable of challenging the current. It states that the meaning of fish in marriage is that it is hoped that the bride and groom will always go hand in hand in navigating the household, without conflict.
5. Shrimp (*Caridea*). This animal is seen from its bent shape and has antennae / tentacle. Shrimp symbolizes the strategy of life, with back and forth movement is a shrimp character, meaning that it is expected that the bride and groom can maintain their household until they are old, if there is a problem it can be solved properly and never give up. Tentacle is defined as security in life.

Chicken eggs are one type of dish that is always available in *Pangupa*. Judging from its shape, chicken eggs are round and consist of egg yolks and whites (Krisna and Desti, 2015). Egg white means clean, pure, white and sincere, which means that in marriage, the bride and groom must really live it sincerely, pure and clean in heart. The egg yolk which shows the yellow color is gold which means prosperity. Overall, the meaning of chicken eggs is to reflect the integrity of the *tondi* and body. So it is better to eat chicken eggs both (white and yolk) so that the meaning contained in the egg is perfect, that in navigating married life it must be clean, pure and sincere so as to produce a prosperous and happy family.

All types of animals that are used are presented in the "mangupa" event which is interpreted to strengthen "tondi" or return "tondi" into the body so that the bride and groom become strong and strong in facing the challenges of married life (Krisna and Desti, 2015; Harahap, 2017; Dewi, 2018).

Based on the description above, the Mandailing people preserve this culture through traditional Mandailing marriages, so that future generations can know the efforts of their ancestors, can empathize, and so that the use of Mandailing culture is not adopted by other nations. The desire to preserve the Mandailing tradition itself must be created in such a way that a sense of love for the Mandailing tradition arises in the younger generation, so that the tradition remains sustainable and is not destroyed by existing modernization.

CONCLUSIONS

The traditional knowledge of the Mandailing people, especially regarding the use of animal species for customary marriages, indicates that the Mandailing tribe has a close relationship with the surrounding environment. The Mandailing tribal community has local wisdom in the use and management of animals, including choosing the right animal to serve in the mangupa event. There are 5 types of animals that are commonly used in traditional marriage ceremonies, namely buffalo, goats, chickens, fish, and shrimp. The Mandailing tribe has a good understanding of the diversity of animal species and their meaning in traditional ceremonies, especially marriages. This knowledge is obtained from generation to generation through the inheritance of knowledge from parents or family.

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