

Gotong (Men's Head Cover) for the Batak Simalungun Ethnicity

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ABSTRACT

Writing this article is to reveal the rich meaning of the men's head cover or *gotong* for the Simalungun Batak community. The use of *gotong* or head cover for men and what their meaning and function for millennials today, especially those living in urban areas, have a lack of understanding. Therefore, the author created this article to describe the history of *gotong*, the types of *gotong* and what the function and meaning of *gotong* for the Simalungun Batak ethnicity. This research uses a qualitative approach and descriptive method and uses semiotic theory by Charles Sanders Peirce and data collection is done by observation, interviews and literature study. As for data analysis, it was carried out of using data reduction, translation and drawing conclusions and suggestions. There were found 4 types of *gotong* namely *gotong salalu* or *gotong parhorja*, *gotong dihar*, *gotong porsa* and *gotong potik/gotong somba*. The functions of *gotong* as a head cover and also as a means of identity. The meaning of using *gotong* is as a symbol of maturity and being able to become a good leader and be responsible for the house that he leads as well as in community life.

Keywords: Ethnic Simalungun, *Gotong* and Semiotics

INTRODUCTION

Simalungun Batak ethnicity is an ethnic group that inhabits the Simalungun Regency area which is one of the provinces in North Sumatra. Simalungun Regency has very

wide boundaries, while the boundaries of Simalungun Regency are as follows:

- To the North it is bordered by Serdang Bedagai Regency
- To the West it is bordered by Tanah Karo Regency
- To the South it is bordered by Toba Regency
- To the East it is bordered by Batubara Regency

Geographically, Simalungun Regency is located between 2° 36' -3° 18' North latitude and 98° 32' - 99° 35' East longitude area 4,386.60 km or 6,12% from the entire Province of North Sumatra and the number of existing sub-districts is 32 sub-districts (Batubara Nirwansyah).

The Simalungun Batak ethnic group has a wealth of culture, customs, religious rituals, art, architecture, traditional house buildings, traditional objects and traditional clothes. One of Simalungun's cultural assets that discussed in this article is about traditional clothing. According to Koten (1991:2) traditional clothing is one of the identities or identification characteristics of the people who wear it. Traditional clothing is a pride of the community that concerned and an identifying characteristic of the community. The Simalungun Batak ethnic group also has traditional clothing which called traditional *paheian* (traditional clothing) (Purba, Jomen 2009). *Paheian adat* is usually worn or used in traditional ceremonies of joy and sorrow. The

Simalungun traditional *paheian* has differences between the Simalungun traditional *paheian* that used by men and women.

There are 3 (three) parts of the Simalungun traditional *paheian* for men, including:

1. *Gotong* (headband)
2. *Toluk balanga* (clothing) to cover the chest
3. *Abit* in the form of *hiou*, which is a woven fabric typical of Simalungun to cover the bottom.

Along with the times, many Simalungun people, especially the millennial generation, do not know and do not understand the traditional *paheian* even though the adat *paheian* is full of meaning contained in it. One of the traditional *paheian* parts is *gotong*. *Gotong* will always be present in every Simalungun traditional celebration, both of joy and sorrow celebrations. *Gotong* has many meanings that contained in it. In the Simalungun - Indonesian dictionary *gotong* is defined as a head cover or headband. *Gotong* is part of the completeness of Simalungun traditional clothing, *gotong* is more precisely called as a head cover (hat) for men, *gotong* is interpreted as a symbol or form of maturity for a boy. If you have used *gotong* then all the life behaviors must be mature, the meaning of mature in body as well as mature in faith in The Almighty God (Purba, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach, that making a picture or description of the object to be studied and then systematically describing the data that found in the field.

SEMIOTIC THEORY

Semiotics or semiology is a term that refers to the same science. Semiotics comes from the Greek word *semeion* which means sign. Semiotics is defined as knowledge about signs (Zulkifli.2007 Jurnal Seni Rupa Edisi 2006 page 25). Pierce who mentions the sign is something else, because he is similar

to something that is taken. Something that is taken means the form of the properties of the object which evokes the same sensation in thought because of its similarity with Umberto Eco. Meanwhile, the term of semiology is widely used by Barthes. From some of the comments above, it can be concluded that semiotics is the science of signs that leads to the development of signs, the use of signs and ideas as general philosophical theories that systematically communicate the information or messages that contain on it.

According to Pierce (1996) there are 3 types of signs based on the relationship between the sign and the signifier, namely:

1. Icon, which is a sign that inherently has the same meaning as designated. For example a photo with the person being photographed, or a map with the geographical area;
2. Index, which is a sign that contains a causal relationship with what is signified. For example, smoke indicates a fire, cloudy indicates that it will rain;
3. Symbols, which is a sign that have a meaningful relationship with what is marked is arbitrary, in accordance with the conventions of a certain social environment. For example, the white flag is a symbol of death.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The History of *Gotong*

Men's head cover (*gotong*) originally entered Simalungun in the XIII century, it shaped like a headband that made of dark cloth and white in color for ceremonies of misfortune or mourning. But then Tuan Bandar Alam, who is the Dolog Silau King, became a fan of the Malay-style head cover that trend in the form of a tengkuluk that made of batik material. From this hobby, the Simalungun tribe today likes to wear a head cover that called *gotong* in the form of a batik tengkuluk. The basic ingredients for making this *gotong* are made of typical Javanese cloth, namely batik, the use of batik on the head is a manifestation and respect of the Simalungun ethnic community

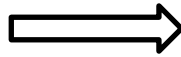
for migrants who come from Java because batik was once become a gift from the king in Java to the king of Simalungun (Batubara. Nirwansyah) *Gotong* that made from batik is usually used when there is a traditional ceremony in the form of joy.

Men's head cover in the form of a white cloth headband are also known as *gotong porsa*, this *gotong* is commonly worn when there is a ceremony of sorrow. (Purba, 2011)

Kind of *Gotong*

Gotong in the Simalungun community is distinguished by several types depending on its use, there are 4 types of *gotong*, including:

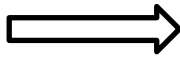
1. *Gotong Salalu/Gotong Pahoja*. *Salalu* in Simalungun language is always used every day. *Gotong Salalu* is a daily *Gotong* (daily head cover) which is often used in daily activities such as being used to go to the fields or often called *Gotong hu juma* in Simalungun language, even recently it is very trendy to be worn by young people so that it looks more elegant.



Gotong Salalu/ Gotong Parhoja

2. *Gotong dihar, dihar* in Simalungun language, namely Pencak dance which is decorated with regular movements that performed by two men, they are wearing a pencak cloth. *Gotong Pandihar* (head

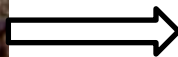
cover for male pencak dancers). *Gotong pandihar* is a *gotong* that worn by pencak silat dancers to welcome guests of honor.



Gotong Dihar

3. *Gotong Porsa/Tikal* is a term in the Simalungun language which means a traditional party. *Gotong Porsa/Tikkal* (traditional head cover/passing away) is a male head cover in the Simalungun

custom which is used during traditional party events and when the traditional event and at the time of the customary event died using *Gotong Porsa* with certain rules.



Gotong Porsa

4. *Gotong Potik/Gotong Somba, Potik* in Simalungun language is the groom. The *Gotong Potik* (a cone-shaped bridal head cover is on the front or right on target) *Gotong* that used by the groom at weddings. In *gotong* there is an accessory called *doromani* which is a

decoration that is attached to the left side of *gotong*. The use of *doromani* depends on the wearer's social status, only royal descendants can wear 7 *doromani*, and non-royal descendants may only wear a maximum of 5 *doromani*.



Gotong Potik/ Gotong Somba

The Function of Gotong

Gotong function is not much different from caps, except that what distinguishes between caps and *gotong* is in terms of shape and material, the mutual angle is conical in front of the *gotong*. *Gotong* is part of the structure of the Simalungun traditional clothing, originally this head cover served as a head cover from the hot sun and *gotong* also served to give a sense of identity of the wearer. *Gotong* is often used by grooms to function as a hat (cap) which symbolizes maturity or leadership for the wearer. *Gotong* also has a function as an encouragement for the wearer. *Gotong* also serves as a symbol of status change, from nothing to having, from *garama* (youth) to *paramangon* (parents).

Gotong is a Javanese product that has a historical connection with Simalungun; and the crown that was usually worn by the kings and great people of Simalungun, in the past every married man (*marhajabuon*) was put on the inheritance of his ancestors from generation to generation by his parents, and so on and it was entrusted to be kept by the oldest child from the male lineage without interruption so that there was so old *gotong*.

The Meaning of Gotong

Gotong which is a tie or head cover have meaning, not all ages can use *gotong*. The head cover or headband (*gotong*) is used to

cover the head of men has meaning, the meaning of using *gotong* is as a symbol of maturity and being able to become a good leader and be responsible for the house that he leads as well as in community life.

Another meaning of *gotong* is if the *gotong* is used when a boy gets married, the use of *gotong* means that a man has changed his status from *garama* (youth) to *paramangon* (parents). *Gotong* is interpreted as attitudes and actions during *garama* (youth) that must be abandoned. *Gotong* is interpreted as parents that must have responsibility, authority and have leadership qualities.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the description of the Simalungun men's head cover (*gotong*) there are several conclusions: *Gotong* is a men's head cover for the Simalungun community which is used when there are joy and sorrow. *Gotong* is divided into 4 types, namely *gotong salalu/gotong pahorja*, *gotong dihar*, *gotong porsa /tika*, and *gotong potik / gotong somba*. *Gotong porsa* is used when there is a sorrow ceremony in the form of death and *gotong potik* or *somba* is used when there is a joyful ceremony in the form of marriage. Whereas *gotong salalu* is a head cover that is used for work while *gotong dihar* is used when playing the *dihar* or Simalungun martial arts. The functions of *gotong* as a head cover and also shows ethnic identity,

while the meaning of *gotong* is a symbol of maturity.

Suggestion

1. The younger generation, especially the Simalungun youth generation, has recently been eroded by times so that they do not understand and love their culture, especially about *gotong*, therefore it is necessary to provide continuous guidance from the Simalungun Regency government so that the younger generation understands and loves their culture by incorporating local content curriculum for high schools about culture.
2. Recently, many young people do not understand the names of *gotong* Simalungun, therefore it is necessary to make a kind of book or catalog that contains various types of *gotong* Simalungun.

Declaration by Authors

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