

The Usage of Ulos in the Customs of the Toba Ethnic: Oral Tradition Study

Oktavia Manalu¹, Robert Sibarani², Jamorlan Siahaan³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: Oktavia Manalu

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ABSTRACT

In this research the author discusses the use of Toba Batak ulos in customs: a study of oral traditions. The problem in this research is the origin of Toba Batak ulos weaving and the use of Toba Batak ulos in customs. This research aims to find out the origins of Toba Batak ulos weaving, and the use of Toba Batak ulos in customs. The method used is a qualitative method with a narrative approach. The theory used is the oral tradition put forward by Sibarani. The research results found were: The stages in making ulos include: (1) mangunggas; (2) mangkulhul; (3) mangani; and (4) martonun. Apart from that, the use of Toba Batak ulos in (1). seven-monthly event (mambosuri); (2) birth ceremony (maresek-esek); (3) baptism (tardidi); (4) confession of christian faith (malua); (5) marriage; (6) new home entry ceremony (mamongoti bagas); (7) death events; and (8) bone digging event (mangongkal holi).

Keywords: Ulos, Batak Toba, Oral Tradition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Batak Toba is a sub-ethnicity of the Batak tribe that is found in North Sumatra. Ulos from the Toba ethnic became the typical fashion of the local community and developed in North Sumatra. In ancient times, ulos cloth was worn as a body warmer or known as "*mangulosi*" which means warming the body with *ulos* (Darmawan, 2022:14). There are guidelines that need to be followed for *mangulosi* from top to bottom depending on the relationship, among others: for example, parents can *mangulosi* their children, but not their

children cannot *mangulosi* their parents before marriage. Ulos is one of the oldest fabrics in Asia, dating back 4,000 years from the Batak culture.

Toba ethnic ulos are inseparable from the life of the Toba ethnic community. Because ulos are still worn at every wedding, birth of a child, having a new home, death and other events (Rumapea & Yohanna, 2019: 106). Also, used in events such as birthdays, thanksgiving for elderly parents (*saur matua*), invited guests who come will be given *ulos* as gifts or souvenirs.

Traditional ethnic Batak weddings have many rules and symbols that contain hopes and prayers. The ethnic Toba community has an ideology as a structure and system of society, namely what is called *daliha na tolu* in the Toba Batak language "three furnaces" known as the three functional signs of the ethnic Toba are: "*hula-hula*" (family of the wife's clan), "*dongan tubu* or *dongan sabutuha*" (clanmates), "*boru*" (daughter). The Toba ethnic customary marriage system is exogamy which is not symmetrical marriage must be with another clan (Hutagaol, 2021:143).

This culture can be called traditional culture because it is a legacy passed down by the ancestors of the Toba ethnic people for a long time or at least once since the Toba ethnic people grew up. In a village, let it be a tradition to symbolize love for the younger generation (Karmadi, 2007:4). If the current *mangulosi* tradition can be said to be a tradition that should be preserved by parents to their children, then it turns out that the

mangulosi tradition in ancient times was not just a gift given by parents to their children. In this activity, it does not run away from the name oral tradition which is an activity or process carried out as a tradition developer, so that the community is able to recognize traditions that have passed until now (Wibowo, 2022:386). Therefore, to understand the name of culture, the community must be able to understand the name of the oral tradition of the inheritors of cultural values and the concept can be conveyed clearly from ancient times to the present, because the oral tradition is a work or habit that is passed down from generation to generation.

2. THEORY BASIS

In this article, the author uses the theory of oral tradition proposed by Sibarani which states that it is a group that has a traditional culture of communicating orally and non-verbally which is an important component of the traditional cultural practices of the community passed down from generation to generation. (Sibarani, 2014:47). In addition, oral tradition has a form and content divided into three parts, namely: (1) Text, is a verbal element that has been organized with language in a narrative like a performance; (2) Cotext, which is a combination of factors that accompany the text such as elements that accompany the text; and (3) Context, which is something about the culture, situation, social and ideology of the oral tradition.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method is a way or process of doing something with a mature mind in order to reach a goal (Priyono, 2016:1). This study uses a qualitative research method with a narrative approach that aims to explain in detail the use of ulos in the Toba ethnic community.

In collecting data, the author collects with the data triangulation method (Susanto et al., 2023:55), namely: (1) observation; (2) interviews; and (3) literature. The data analysis carried out by the author, namely:

(1) recording of *ulos* weaving from the results of interviews with informants; (2) collect data obtained from the field; (3) classifying data according to the study; and (4) make conclusions and suggestions.

4. DISCUSSIONS

A. THE ORIGIN OF ULOS WEAVING

Ulos are a type of traditional cloth made by the Toba ethnic group. *Ulos* weaving is a job done by women that has long been owned by the Toba ethnic community in Meat Village, Tampahan District, Toba Regency.

Basically, ulos use cotton material that is colored by wetting cotton with natural plant dyes. Blue is taken from indigo, red from papaya and noni, yellow from turmeric, black from noni and indigo, and green from a mixture of indigo and turmeric.

In the process of weaving ulos, weavers in Meat Village use traditional looms made of wood and bamboo. Currently, the making of ulos is more modern, namely by utilizing ATBM (non-machine loom). The stages in weaving ulos, namely:

1. *Mangunggas*

Mangunggas adalah is the activity of anointing or weaving the yarn to be woven so that it is hard and not hairy by using "*unggas*" equipment. The materials used in this *mangunggas* activity are three heads of rice, half a cup of water, two candlenuts, and enough rice water or *tajin*. The aim is to make the yarn strong, neat and shiny.



Picture 1. The Mangunggas Process

2. *Mangkulhul*

Mangkulhul adalah the process of spinning threads to weave them and sorting them by color and space. This spinning tool, called a *hulhulan*, is shaped like a circle made of two wooden slats tied together to form four

equal lengths. At each end of the 30-centimeter-long thread and a stick is placed vertically as a place to wind the thread into a circle. In the center of the beam there is a wooden circle as an axis.



Picture 2. The Mangkulhul Process

3. Mangani

Mangani is the activity of organizing and arranging the warp of yarn that lies lengthwise on the woven fabric by using *anian* tools where strand by strand of yarn is wrapped around the *anian* frame with positions and distances that can be adjusted as desired. *Anian* rounded from wooden planks and bamboo serves as a brake, which is a place to organize and install the warp.



Picture 3. The Mangani Process

4. Martonun

Martonun or weaving is the process of knitting yarn into a piece of cloth according to size and decorative variety or motif. In working on a product has a long time and each craftsman has a different time. The time needed to produce a product is also influenced by the number of ornamental varieties whose shapes and types are complex and have many variations, of course it will take a relatively long time.

Thus the length of working on a woven product is greatly influenced by the ability and skill of a craftsman as well as the motifs and ornamental variety of the weave.





Picture 4. The Martonun Process

B. THE USE OF TOBA ETHNIC ULOS IN CUSTOMS

In the life lived by the Toba ethnic community based on procedures in accordance with the customs or events carried out.

Since long ago, the ancestors of the Toba Batak tribe still maintain ulos as one of the important items and continue to be used according to the types and uses that will be described as follows:

Types of Ulos	Usage of Ulos
<p><i>Ulos Bintang Maratur</i></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Used in traditional seven-monthly events (<i>mambosuri</i>), given by the parents of the pregnant woman. Can also be called <i>ulos tondi</i>. Used in traditional birth ceremonies (<i>Maresek-esek</i>), which is bought by female parents to newborn babies. Can also be called <i>ulos parompa</i>. Used in baptism ceremonies (<i>tardidi</i>), given by the parents of the woman that is being <i>tardidi</i>. Can be called <i>ulos parompa</i>
<p><i>Ulos Mangiring</i></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Used in the event of a <i>sidi</i> (<i>malua</i>), which is given by the <i>tulang</i> 'uncle' to the <i>malua</i>. Used in the event of entering a new house in Batak customs. Can be called <i>ulos sampe tua</i>.





<p><i>Ulos Ragi Hotang</i></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used in weddings, given by the bride's parents to the bride and groom. Can be called <i>ulos hela</i>. 2. Used in traditional wedding ceremonies, given by <i>tulang</i> 'uncle' to the bride and groom. Can be called <i>ulos tintin marangkup</i>. 3. Used in traditional wedding ceremonies, given by <i>tulang</i> 'uncle' to the bride and groom. Can be called <i>ulos panogu</i>.
<p><i>Ulos Pinunsaan/Ragi Idup</i></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used in traditional wedding ceremonies, given by the tula of the girl to the parents of the groom. Can be called <i>ulos pansamot</i>. 2. Used in traditional death ceremonies that already have grandchildren (<i>saur matua</i>). Can be called <i>ulos tujung</i>. 3. It is used in the traditional <i>mangkokal holi</i> event, which serves as a place or container for the bones that have been cleaned.
<p><i>Ulos Sadum</i></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used in traditional wedding events, given by invited guests. Can be called <i>ulos holong</i>.
<p><i>Ulos Sibolang</i></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used in the traditional event of the death of children. Can be called <i>ulos saput</i> 2. Used in traditional death ceremonies for those who are married but do not have grandchildren.. Can be called <i>ulos saput</i>.

Table 1. Types and Usage of Toba Ethnic Ulos

5. CONCLUSIONS

Ulos is a type of traditional cloth woven by the Toba ethnic. *Ulos* weaving is a job done by women that has long been owned by the Toba Batak community. The stages in weaving *ulos*, namely: (1) *Mangunggas*; (2) *Mangkulhul*; (3) *Mangani*; and (4) *Martonun*.

In the traditional activities of the Toba ethnic community, the use of *ulos* is adjusted to the type of *ulos*, namely: (1). seven-monthly event (*mambosuri*) by using *Ulos bintang maratur*; (2) birth ceremony (*maresek-esek*) by using *ulos bintang maratur*; (3) baptism (*tardidi*) by using *ulos bintang maratur*; (4) confession of christian faith (*malua*) by using *ulos mangiring*; (5) marriage, by using *ulos ragi hotang*, *napinukaan*, *sadum*; (6) new home entry ceremony (*mamongoti bagas*) by using *ulos mangiring*; (7) death events by using *Ulos sibolang* and *pinukaan*; and (8) bone digging event (*mangongkal holi*) by using *ulos ragi idup* and *pinukaan*.

Declaration by Authors

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