

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323707376>

Actualization of Local Wisdom in Simalungun Ethnic Daily Life

Conference Paper · January 2018

DOI: 10.2991/icosop-17.2018.35

CITATION

1

READS

146

4 authors, including:



Hisarma Saragih

Universitas Simalungun Pematang Siantar

6 PUBLICATIONS 27 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Subhilhar Subhilhar

University of Sumatera Utara

24 PUBLICATIONS 30 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



R. Hamdani Harahap

111 PUBLICATIONS 211 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Actualization of Local Wisdom in Simalungun Ethnic Daily Life

Hisarma Saragih, Subhilhar, R.Hamdani Harahap, Amir Purba

(Faculty of Political and Social Science, University of North Sumatera)

Abstract–Simalungun is an ethnic group in North Sumatera, known as one of Batak sub ethnic. As an ethnic group, they have their own internal interaction to begin with and since 19th century they have external contact guided by local wisdom. Because of migration, Simalungun people has consider "us" as our culture and "not us" not as our culture, and live harmoniously, guided by believed philosophy of life. As the problem how well Simalungun ethnic can live harmoniously in the midst of multiethnics? What and how the actualize their philosophy of life?

The aim of this study is to explain how well Simalungun ethnic can live harmoniously in the midst of multiethnics, guided by their philosophy of life. By using qualitative research method, the reasearch conducted by collecting research sources from literatures, archives, and continued by in-depth interview by choosing key information, person who is able to understand and carry out the society philosophy of Simalungun ethnic.

In reality Simalungun people has life philosophy which still actual and carried out together, with local terms as: *habonaron do bona*, (honesty), *tolusa hundulan lima saodoran*, (relatives), *sapangambei manoktok hitei*, (togetherness), *system marga*, (family identity), *marharoan bolon*, (cooperation), *marsialopari*, (sharing), *marsombuh sihol*, (remember hometown), and *hopuk* (shared savings).

The conclusion of the research shows that Simalungun people is very tolerant toward new comer yet the new comer can even be "us".The research recommendation is that the existance of local wisdom can give development contribution in the frame of unitary state of Indonesian Republic.

Keywords: *local wisdom. actualization, Simalungun ethnic.*

INTRODUCTION

Simalungun is one of those six Batak ethnics in Simalungun regency (Payung Bangun in koentjaringrat1981 : 108). There are 849.405 people live in Simalungun regency in 2015 (BPS Simalungun Lakip, 2016 : 2). Most of them work on farming and plantation. Geografically this area divided to Simalungun atas and Simalungun bawah.

Since long ago Simalungun ethnic in their social – culture live by guidance of life philosophy inherited from ancestors. Adapted life philosophy has guided this ethnic to live in harmony. But since the beginning of 20th century, foreign culture has been in touch with local culture so that will affect the origin of their life philosophy.

It creates a question, for sure, how far the philosophy of ancestor become guidance in interacting between the attack of foreign culture in Simalungun ethnic? Does the ancestors philosophy of life still exist? Will it be a harmony, or in contradiction will be a disharmony in the frame of Indonesia Republic when it preserved.

This dialogue is trying to review or to reflect the life of philosophy in Simalungun ethnic life nowadays. The life philosophy of Simalungun ethnic which become topic are :*habonaron do bona* (honesty), *tolusahundulan lima saodoran* (brotherhood), *sapangambei manoktok hitei* (togetherness), *Sistem*

Marga (family identity), *marhorooanbolon* (cooperation), *marsialopari* (sharing), *marsombuhsihol* (remember the hometown) and *hopuk* (shared fund).

In methodology, this research use a qualitative approach, with the source from document, literatures, and observing also in-depth interview with the source whom undertand and carry out the philosophy of Simalungun ethnic.

DISCUSSION

A.History of Simalungun ethnic

It is unknown definitely yet the origin and the beginning, the existance of Batak ancestor. To answer about the origin and the beginning of it, Batak mythology is always related to this and affect the Batak custom system. In this case each Batak ethnic hasit's own myth yet all are the same : the birth of Si Raja Batak whom became the ancestor of all Batak people.

The seen difference between among Batak ethnics is natural, because of the influence from the outside which occured to them for hundred years is different (AndarLumbantobing, 1992 : xii). Basically Batak ethnic has similarity in genealogy, patrilineal, clan tradition, and the triangle relation of relatives (*tungku non tiga*) as the effect of marital relationship with exogamy clan, for Simalungun people called as *Tolu Sahundulan*, *Lima Saodoran* (PayungBangun in

Koentjaraningrat, 1981 : 109-110). Simalungun ethnics has a basic belief about human spirit of that is :*tonduly* for the spirit of person alive ; and *begu*, for spirit of deceased. Beside that they also have alphabet and dialect (Harry Parkin, 1976 : 6)

To trace the origin of Simalungun ethnic, writers try to draw lines about the development of human distribution to the starting direction, P.Sarasin and F.Sarasin brothers, express about the origin of ancestor of Indonesian people who came from Asia land, started from Yunan in South China in Mekong river headwater, as the effects of Certain Socio-economy factors they left the place to move toward Back Hindia (Campa, Cambodia and Thailand), then spread to Indonesian. The migration of these people happened in two waves : (1) Proto Malay which happened around year 3000 bc, and (2) Deutro Malay which happened in between year 300-200 bc (Vlekke, 2016:8-9).

Simalungun ethnic include into proto Malay, and the latest coming wave (Deutro Malay) mostly live by the beach and joining themselves into the inland with old Malay. Most likely these who came into Simalungun divided into two waves. First wave come from Campa or Cambodia in back Hindia, and they called proto Simalungun. This proto Simalungun group during their life evaluation has created a social system called *huta* which then developed into larger socio group unity called *urung*. During year 1000 bc, Batak tribe has already exist in Batak area started from Gayo and Alas which have the same clan as in Batak land. The possibility of those who arrived in Simalungun in two periods, first called proto Simalungun and second is DeutroSimalungun which came from Toba area (BataraSangti, 1977: 148).

Society or Proto Simalungun created Nagur kingdom (500-1295), where the center of kingdom predicted around Simalungun Kingdom, riverside of Bah Bolon around Perdagangan City. Borders of Nagur kingdom are : East with Malacca Strait, and West with Toba Lake (Simalungun people called Toba Lake as Laut Tawar "Plain Sea"). Nagur Kingdom later become Silou Kingdom which built by Commander Indrawarman (Parkin, 1978:80) from Damasraya Jambi in 1292. King Nagur came from Damanik clan.

Because of Sappar epidemic outbreaks (contragious and deadly disease) and long dry, Simalungun people (proto Simalungun) then moved to the eastern bank of Toba Lake, Samosir island until PusukBuhit area, then spread out to the neae area of Batak Land. Other proto Simalungun half of them migrate to Malay area in east coast Sumatera, where ost live as fisherman. And some still withstand in Simalungun land.

When Sappar epidemic ended, the refugee come back to Simalungun, Social interaction and marriage with local resident during migration caused an assimilation and intergration between Proto Simalungun and Toba Samosir residence and also Malayan. This proved by the similarity of culture, characterization and dialect, especially in Upper Simalungun with Toba Samosir residents and also the cohesion with residents of malayan culture in lower Simalungun. Those who came back and stayed in their homeland Simalungun called Deutro Simalungun.

That kind of journey caused the existence of Simalungun clan and also other clans in Toba Samosir. The four main Simalungun ethnics are :Sinaga, Saragih, Damanik, Purba also known as "SISA DAPUR" (Henry Guntur Tarigan, 1978:15:wolfgang Clauss, 1982:42) : JahutarDamanik, 1974:16)

First, Sinaga Clan originally came from Urat village in PuloSamosir. This clan include Sinaga Simalungun with its sub-clan :Sinaga Nadi Hoyong Hataran and Sinaga Nadi Hoyong Bodat, Sinaga Toba include Sinaga Sidahapintu, Sinaga Sidasuhul, Sinaga Porti, Sinaga Mandalahi, Sinaga Simanjorang, Sinaga Sidanlogan, Sinaga Sidagugur, those live in Girsang Simpangan Bolon Villages, and Parapat (Tideman. 1926:91)

Second, Saragih Clan, which divided into sub-clans :Saragih Garingging, Saragih Sumbayak, Saragih Turnip, Saragih Sitio, Saragih Dajawak, Saragih Daramunthe, Saragih Sitanggang, Saragih Dabalok, Saragih Simarmata. In this case clan Sitanggang, Sidabalok, Simarmata, Turnip, are also exist in Toba Samosir. Instead of Saragih, Batak Toba people call them Saragi (Tideman, 1926 : 199)

Third, Damanik Clan, include of :Damanik Tomok, Damanik Ambarita, Damanik Gurning, and Damanik Malau. Sub-clan Tomok, Ambarita and Gurning are the name of villages in Pulo Samosir. Damanik Clan in Toba Samosir is called Manik. This Damanik clan lived and became king in Siantar, forced out the Sinaga Clan which originally lived in that area to move out to Tanah Jawa (Tideman, 1926:90)

Fourth, Purba Clan, allegedly originated from Bakkara Samosir island, then moved to PakPak Dairi and then come into Simalungun land. The sub-clan of purbaclan :Purba Dasuha, Purba Sidadolog, Purba Girsang, Purba Tambak, Purba Sidagambir, Purba PakPak, and Purba Bawang. Out of this group Purba PakPak became king in Purba Kingdom. Purba Dasuha became king in Pane Kingdom. Purba Dasuha became king in Pane Kingdom. In the further development later in Simalungun, other clans also encountered

such as :SipayungSihaloho, Munthe, Lingga, Sitopu, Simanjorang etc.

The similarity of Simalungun and Toba clan, created hypothesis that those four Simalungun ethnic originated from the descendant of Batak Toba just as mentioned in Batak lineage (W. Hutagalung 1961: 7-29) this could be caused by the mixture process with local residents by marriage or local kings adoption.

In hypothesis this migration started from the 11th century until the 14th, where Hinduisme at that time already came into Batak land (ph.O.L.Tobing, 1963:25), which came from Hindu kingdom in South Sumatera. Lot of Batak culture aspects, including Simalungun ethnic were the result of social interaction with Hinduisme, for example : Surat Sipuluh Siah alphabet, chess game, horse riding, plowing field, religion, and some vocabularies come from Sansekerta (Edwin M.Loeb, 1974 : 20-21). The name of Tahanh Jawa Kingdom showed the effect of Javanese. Hindu dominated Simalungun in the past (Parkin, 1976:79-81, J.Tideman. 1926:28-29). The effect also reflected from the kingdom as traditional government in Simalungun.

B.Local Wisdom :Simalungun ethnic life philosophy

- Habonaran Do Bona (Honesty)

The philosophy of life's Simalungun ethnic infamous motto is *Habonaron do bona, Hajukkaton do sapatra*, means every thing must be started from the right thing (Sihotang, Dion P, 2013 : 44). The motto included in Simalungun Regency government Symbol. This philosophy teach people to have the right mind and act. Truth (*Habonaran*) is the source of everything in daily life. In the past there was no robbery in the village. Eventhough the village was left without any door locked, then no one would dare to steal anything.

From this philosophy can be concluded that characteristic of Simalungun ethnic basically honest and pure at heart, soft and well mannered also not intended to hurt anyone. This showed from the Simalungun proverb "*hatana dobtar luar payah maula kansi*" means words mentioned hard to rectified. Also, we can see from the proverb : "*Sonata ma mandogei banina hubang, unang matak kasbokasbanina mabuei*" means ho to step on the mud, without getting caught of dirty foot in public, so that wouldn't be any focus of other people. (Saragih, Sortaman. 2008:144-145).

- ToluSahundulan Lima Saodoran (Brotherhood)

Among Simalungun people there is a social system with philosophy "*ToluSahudulan Lima Saodoran*"

which literally means "*Kedudukan Nan Tiga, Barisan Nan Lima*" (Jahutar Damanik, 1974:144). Personification of Simalungun custom which included into this philosophy focused on the function of human. Means three functions carried by five persons. Those three functions are : (1) *tondong*, (2) *sanina*, (3) *anakboru*. And five persons are those who carried out the functions consist of : (1) *tondong*, (2) *sanina*, (3) *suhut*, (4) *anakborujabu*, (5) *anakborumintori*.

Tondong is a group of family from wife and her brothers side. *Tondong* group consist of : (1) parents and brothers of bride, (2) *tulang* (uncle) *pemupus* is mother's brother, (3) *tondong nitondong* means the uncle's uncle. *Sanina* consists of siblings from grand mother's *suhut*, one clan, and recognized relatives including *pariban* of different clan, also peers who has no blood relation. *Suhut*, the host altogether with siblings of one father or one grandmother *suhut sapamangan konon*, means siblings of one father and granmother, dining partner. *Anak boru jabuis* in laws sibling, daughter in laws, and *panogolan*. *Anak boru minori* is a family group of in law's-in law (husband of sister) that are family or in law's-in law. *Anakboru* is the main helper in any *tondong's* party event. That's why she has the right to get *jambar* from her *tondong*. The function of *tolusahundulan* and *lima saodoran* will be seen in any grieving and joyful party among Simalungun people. Each group carry out the given task based on the function (Hotradja Purba in Purba Juandaha, 2011:37)

It also occured in any village development for example if any development need a committee, then the committee will be arranged as *tondong* as the chief, and the secretary is *anak boru*, meanwhile the treasurer will be *sanina* or *hasuhuton*. With this kind of pattern, *Tondong* (chief) will be freely to order the secretary (*anakboru*) around. This kind of act reflected from Simalungun proverb : "*nasuruk kotok karangang gosihol manandangiharosuti*" means there is nothing wrong to go to the pit when there is something needed to earn.

- Sapangambei Manoktok Hitei (Togetherness)

Sapangambei manoktok hitei means one good step to get a good aim. In the process, can be mean to have one step, one tramp in the whole society component to get a shared goal.

Simalungun known a kingdom system in their traditional society structure with the social stratification such as *king*, *partuation*, *citizen*, *intelectual*, etc, yet the structure run together in harmony to get a shared goal. The king in running his government is the best, and for the common interest.

The philosophy of *Sapangambe manoktok hitei* means that every ethnic live in Simalungun better be join together, cooperate, and help each other in doing every activity in development practice.

- Clan System (family identity)

Simalungun ethnic knows four clans, they are :Sinaga, Saragih, Damanik, Purba (Purba,D.K 1995:4). Each major clan has sub-clans (J. Wismar Saragih in Purba Juandaha, 2011: 7-12). The clan exogamy marriage create a relative system inter clans. The expression *sarindan pesarondun hotang pajalin-jalin, sainang pesaom pung marga palain-lain*, which probably mean the clan variety in relation of mother and grandmother relatives.

By the clan we can find out one's hometown, and we can draw the *partuturan* (relatives relation) for example :*tuppuan marga Sumbayak Boru Pakon Panogolanni* (association of Sumbayak clan), *Tumpuan Garingging Boru Pakonpanogolanni* (Association of Garingging clan), *Tumpuan Purbaboru Pakon Panogolanni* (Association of Purba clan) etc.

- Marhorooan Bolon (Mutual Copoertaion)

Marhorooan is a working system or working group conducted by some people together, where the member has taken turn to working their field together, which has same character as mutual coopertaion. In the past it used to be determined. In every "nagori" (village) in Simalungun. *Haroan* has got many members so it called *haroanbolon*. The membership must fulfill the requirement and certain rules, that are : (1) must choose a chief (*pangulu haroan*) to preserve the order between members, (2) some *anak boru haroan* (girls), to bring the *haroanequipments* such as : hoe, trowel, knife, etc and (3) some young men (*garama*) to take the member (*anak boru haroan*) home if needed. There fore we can find a neat division of work based on the function and each position in the system.

- Marsialop Ari (Sharing)

In Simalungun society there is an expression "*eta marsialopari, ulang dong natading, asah parangmu, boan tajakmu, ulang lupa bajutmu*" means to invite the people to help each other by bringing the equipments such as hoe and trowel.

This expression means to help each other is a good deed, not only in farming, but also in building houses, etc.

- MarsombuhSihol (Remember Hometown)

Marsombuhsihol is a kind of reunion of friends and peers from the same blood. This event held by having culture and art festival, to create enculturation place, and to strengthen the solidarity "*Ahap Simalungun*" without discriminate the social status. That philosophy value longing to the interest of hometown. That interest can be appear as ideas, funds, etc for the development of the society.

- Hopuk (Shared Funds)

Hopuk can be defined as a shared fund which will be used for the common interest of society. The process of funding collection (*hopuk*) done by the committee.

- Actualization of local wisdom : actualization of philosophy of Simalungun people.

Habonaron Do Bona, Tolu Sahundulan Lima Saodoran, Sapangambe Manoktok Hitei, Clan System, Marhorooan Bolon, Marsialop Ari, Marsombu Sihol, hopuk, elaborated in previous chapter is an ideal description of how simalungun people live their daily life. Who know, understand, and carry out the philosophy are those who feel *Ahap Simalungun*. *Ahap* is a feeling of being together in the same boat and empathy (Saragih sirtaman,2008:6-7). However, we need to reflect yet again about the values of the philosophy, are they still conducted by the people in Simalungun nowadays?

Habonaron Do bona, is an ideal philosophy for Simalungun ethnic. Probably some of the supporter already blame themself for mis-conducting and being punctilious. This create an impression of selfishness.

Tolu Sahundulan Lima Saodoran, actually gives an image of function and position of every Simalungun people wherever they are. Not only in joyful and grieving event, but also in every interaction with anyone in any circumstance the reflection is needed mostly for young Simalungun ethnic, allegedly most of them less enderstood about the relative function and position among theri family. How to address and to know the function and position of any kinship: *Naboru, Mangkela, Tulang, Nantulang, Besan, Gawei, Pahompui, Oppung, Hela, Parumaen*, is a basic knowledge of family relation (kinship). It can be caused by the decreasing of parental inheritance, or to consider that their possession is less than others. If this continous to happenthe philosophy could be

disappear, which bring disadvantageous to our country.

Sapangambe Manoktok Hitei, gives a description on how strong the unity (social solidarity) among Simalungun ethnic in the past. Strong internally and externally in preserving truth, and common interest. Not only for a certain group. Related to that a deliberation related to common interest in a society, before taking any decision and consensus held previously. And vice versa when there is any problem that endangered the society, a deliberation still conducted by community figure.

But, at this moment is *Sapangambe* Manoktok Hitei still exist in our life? The visible symptom among Simalungun ethnic it is slowly faded, such as double leadership in some Simalungun ethnic organization. For better or not, it is clear that *Sapangambe* Manoktok Hitei allegedly faded.

Clan system, found in Simalungun is the four major clans known as SISADAPUR. The spirit of clan means to be open to accept other clan to come into Simalungun and show "ahap Simalungun" yet still there any critic whether SISADAPUR being the only clan in Simalungun? It can be a reflection for us Simalungun ethnic.

Marharoan Bolon, is a family spirit in a great scale work of development. We should realize that Simalungun people especially in villages still conducting mutual cooperation in developing roads, house of worship by themselves.

Marsialop Ari, shows the spirit to help friends in need. Probably this philosophy still attached in Simalungun people, especially showed by the regular social gathering especially among housewives.

Marsombuh Sihol, is a reunion gathering among Simalungun people which still favored until now. The aim is to enjoy the meeting among member and also to discuss about anything related to the development in Simalungun. That kind of gathering done at the origin city or village of the member. But maybe the thing to reflect is about how some of Simalungun ethnic members whom economically established in capital city feel reluctant to join the event with various reasons.

Hopuk, actually is a kind of development fund, which comes from shared saving of society to be used on something planned before. That kind of spirit still exist in village for example in the marbinda (fund to buy sacrificial animal for special events). What to reflect is about the idea of doing hopuk in a larger scale, and wider to be more useful.

CONCLUSION

The discussion is a reflection of thinking aiming to awaken consciousness for the reader, enthusiasts, and supporter of Simalungun ethnic, to re-ponder about the philosophy of our ancestor as Simalungun ethnic people. That will move us to stand closer in one perception of "ahap Simalungun" so that we can contribute something for development of Simalungun in a frame of Indonesian Republic.

Philosophy : *Habonaron Do Bona, tolu Sahundulan Lima Saodoran, Sapangambe Manoktok Hitei, Clan System, Marharoan Bolon, Marsialop Ari, Marsombuh Sihol, Hopuk*, indeed a heritage of Simalungun ethnic that will defeat intolerance issue, disintegration in our country nowadays if appreciated and conducted by all Simalungun and non-Simalungun people in Simalungun Land as a guide of interaction.

REFERENCES

- Agustono, Budi dkk, *Sejarah Etnis Simalungun*, ANRI, SoK No. 2222, *Missive Gouvernements secretaries* 6 juni 1904
- Andar M. Lumbantobing, *Makna Wibawa Jabatan Dalam Gereja Batak*, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1992.
- Anderson, J., *Mission To The East Coast Of Sumatra 1823*, London: Oxford In Asia Historical Reprints, Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Barth, Fredrik (ed.), *Kelompok Etnik dan Batasannya*, Jakarta: UI-Press, 1988.
- Batara Sangti, *Sejarah Batak*, Balige: Karl Sianipar & Co, 1977.
- Clauss, Wolfgang, *Economic And Socialchange Among The Simalungun Batak Of North Sumatera*, Saarbrucken Fort Lauderdale: Varlag Breilenbach Publishers, 1982.
- Dada Meuraxa, *Sejarah Kebudayaan Suku-Suku Di Sumatera Utara*, Medan: Sastrawan 1973.
- D. K. Purba, *Sejarah Asal Usul Terjadinya Dan Makna Nama Simalungun, Pematangsiantar: Partuha Maujana Simalungun*, 1987.
- Damanik, Jahutar, *Jalannya Hukum Adat Simalungun*, Pematang Siantar: PD.Aslan, 1974.

- Henry Guntur Tarigan, *Struktur Social & Organisasi Social Masyarakat Simalungun*, Bandung: IKIP Bandung, 1971.
- Loeb, Edwin. M. *Sumatera : Its History And People*, Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Parkin, Harry, *Batak Fruit of Hindu Thought*, Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1978.
- Pedersen, Paul Bodholdt, *Batak Blood and Protestant Soul*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970.
- Pelzer, Karl J., *Toean Keboen dan Petani: Politik Kolonial dan Perjuangan Agraria di Sumatera Timur 1863-1947*(terjemahan: J. Rumbo), Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1985.
- Purba, D. K, *Sejarah Asal Usul Terjadinya Dan Makna Nama Simalungun*, Pematangsiantar: Partuha Maujana Simalungun, 1987.
- Purba, D.K., *Sejarah Simalungun*, Pematangsiantar: Jakarta: Bina Budaya Simalungun, 1995.
- P.Dasuha. Juandaha Raya dkk.(ed.), *Peradaban Simalungun : Inti Sari Seminar Kebudayaan Simalungun se-Indonesia Pertama Tahun 1964*, Pematangsiantar: KBPS, 2011.
- Saragih, Sortaman, *Orang Simalungun*, Depok: CV.Citama Vigora, 2008.
- Sihotang, Dion.P, *Mengenal Kabupaten Simalungun*, Medan : CV. Mitra, 2013.
- Sinaga, Anicetus B.,*The Toba-Batak High God, Transcendence and Immanence*, West Germany: Anthropos Institute St.Augustus, 1981.
- Tideman, J., *Simeloengoen: Het Lan der Timoer-Bataks in Zijn Vroegere Isolatie en Zijn Ontwikkeling tot een deel van het Cultuurgebied van de Oostkust van Sumatera*, Leiden: Stoomdrukkerij Louis H. Bacherer, 1922.
- Tobing, Ph.O.L. *The Structure Of The Toba Batak Belief In The High God*, Amsterdam: Printed By Jacob Van Campen.
- Vlekke, Bernard H. M., *Nusantara: Sejarah Indonesia*, Jakarta: KPG (Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia), 2016.
- Wasington Hutagalung, *Tarombo Marga Ni Suku Batak*, Medan: Fa. Sihardo, 1961.
- 60 Tahun Injil Kristus di Simalungun 1903-1963*, Pematangsiantar: Pimpinan Pusat Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun, 1963.
- BPS Kabupaten Simalungun Lakip, 2016.