

# Local Wisdom of the Karo Batak's Manuk Sidanggur Dawa-Dawa Folklore

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**Abstract:** Using the qualitative method as the approach, the primary data is obtained from Manuk Sidanggur Dawa-dawa folklore; the value of local wisdom is focused on the followings: (1) Human being's relationship with God including the value of religion, (2) the relationship between man and his society covering the value of tolerance, (b) the value of homeland loving, (c) the value of social care, (d) the value of peace loving (e) the value of cohesiveness, and (f) the value of mutual cooperation. the results show that representations of meaning in animism adherents of Pemena religion (which is also called tribal religion) are found in the villages; the meaning of brotherly solidarity and togetherness in completing the work is also existing.

**Key Words:** Local wisdom, Manuk, Sidanggur, Dawa-dawa, Karo.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

One of ethnic societies in North Sumatra is Karo Batak (KB) which has five main parentians (merga), such as, Karo-Karo, Ginting, Tarigan, Sembiring, and Perangin-angin. These five parent merga are collectively called merga silima (five family names). Sometimes, the term merga is also directed to men, and beru to women. In the broader sense, the KB is tied by the rakut sitelu (the three bonds) concept which expresses a binding kinship system among fellow members of the community and which is similar to the Toba Batak and Mandailing's dalihan natolu. The system is acquired through birth and marriage. The rakut sitelu can be viewed as a division of groups based on customs in KB (Ginting, 1999: 2).

Each ethnic has its own language and literature. There is no society without literature (Teeuw 1982: 7; Tarigan 1979: 9). Oral literature and literary writing, as pointed out by Irwansyah (in Sinar dan Ikhwanuddin), refers to some kinds of folklore, such as, myth, legend or fairy tale. Djamaris (1996: 3) argued that content of folklore can be related to cultural values in the literature which always exposes the problem between literary works and men who become the cultural producers of local wisdom. The form of cultural values reflecting the social behavior of men will not, of course, be far from the recording of system of social events in which the system is based on men's relationships with God, men with nature, men with their societies, men with other men, and men with themselves.

Folklore in its various structures is very complex and contains not only stories, myths, legends and tales, but also has various aspects concerning the life and the life of the community owner, such as, the function of local wisdom (Nasution 2011: 1). Local wisdom in the researcher's view is the same "local genius" which was first introduced by Quaritch Wales (1948-1949) and which was meant as "the ability of local culture to cope with the influence of foreign cultural values at the time the two cultures correspond." Referring to dictionary, local wisdom consists of two words: wisdom and local. In general, local wisdom can be understood as local ideas that are wise, full of wisdom, good value, embedded and followed by members of the community.

Sibarani (2012: 112) pointed out that local wisdom refers to the wisdom or indigenous knowledge of a society which is derived from the noble values of cultural traditions and which regulates the life of society. Local wisdom is focused on cultural values and becomes the value of local culture that can be utilized to order the life of society wisely. The first definition is emphasized on the wisdom or local wisdom and organizes social life derived from the noble cultural values, while the second gives stress on the noble cultural values used to seek wisdom or the wisdom to organize social life. Sutrisno (1981: 43) argued that folklore is descended orally and in written form and this research is addressed to the incarnation and descending of the text of a literary work, its interpretation, and its understanding. Referring to Teeuw (1984: 254), in essence, the literary study is the study of texts.

Text is different from script. All written materials are called manuscripts and the text is the content of the manuscript. Thus, the manuscript is a concrete object because it can be seen or held but the text is abstract that can only be imagined. The text consists of content and form (Baried et al. 1985: 57, Robson 1978: 78, Teeuw 1984: 277, and Tarigan 1979: 9). The content is the idea and the message that the author wishes to convey; the form is the content of the story in the text which becomes the idea of the message that the author wants to say. It can be interpreted as an event which really happened in the men's past time and became the history of oral literature. In this case, this research takes the "Manuk Sidanggur Dawa-dawa" folklore as the data source.

## 2. METHOD:

### 2.1 Research Framework

This research is qualitative descriptive (Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong 1998: 3)). Kirl and Miller (1986: 9) stated that qualitative research is fundamentally dependent on human observations within its own region and relates to the fields of social sciences and humanity with activities based on scientific disciplines to collect data, classify, analyze and interpret facts and to the relationship between the facts of nature, society, behavior, and the human spirit in order to discover the principles of knowledge and new methods. Descriptive in this case means that the data is expounded in the form of words rather than numbers. Data is generally in the form of recording, photographs, document records, memoranda or other official records. Sevilla (2006, 71) argued that descriptive study attempts to determine and report on the present situation and can not control past events. Descriptive research is also not able to control things or events that occur for a while.

Siswanto (2005: 57) said that with a deep understanding to the object of investigation, a literary researcher will be able to recognize the facts and provide a description and the steps that must be taken in describing the facts concerns with the facts that should be sorted by classification, interpretation and reference based on library reviews, concepts, and theoretical foundations developed in this study. Semi (1993: 24) argued that interpretation requires intensity and deepening. Five characteristics of qualitative research might include: researcher is the key instrument and the natural setting, qualitative research is descriptive, qualitative research prioritizes processes not results, data analysis tends to be inductive, and in a qualitative approach the meaning is something important. The aspects of local wisdom might include the values of (1) religion, (2) environment awareness, (3) discipline, (4) hard work, (5) creativity, (6) independence, (7) curiosity, (8) spirit of nationalism, (9) achievement, (10) friendliness, (11) reading, (12) responsibility, (13) loyalty (14) tolerance, (15) love of the homeland, (16) social care, (17) peace loving, (18) cohesiveness, (19) mutual cooperation, (20) demonstration, (21) honesty, (22) self-esteem, and (23) social control (see I Ketut Gobyah (in Prayitno 2011: 61) and Sibarani 2015: 63).

The approach to understand the local wisdom of literary texts is directed to their form of words, phrases, sentences, and units of stories which are distributed on the episode of the story. Each episode is shown, associated, understood, interpreted as a standard cultural value and meaning.

Understanding the meaning of text of a language with the reality of social and cultural communication, the meaning of representation is often based on O'Sullivan (in Noviani, 2002: 6) First, representation is a social process of representing. Second, representation becomes the product of the social process of representation. The first refers to the process, while the second is the product of sign making that corresponds to a meaning. The process of representation itself involves three elements, namely (1) something that is represented as an object, (2) the representation itself, which is called a sign, and (3) a set of rules that define a sign connection with the subject matter is named coding. O'Sullivan argued that the coding limits the meanings that may appear overlapping in the process of sign interpretation.

Lull (1998: 83) states that the representation of cultural identity is activated through language, so it responds in a lifestyle, including the ideological association of cultural construction. The structure of authority and the underlying regulation stays within the cultural power reflecting the image of the conditioned daily life style so individuals or group build their cultural identity and activity with an ideology that constructs images, phrases, texts, sentences, paintings, and images into those attitudes and behaviors and such ideology then influences them. However, in fact, the previous symbols of image are reinforced by cultural construction of ideology that are organized and presented through the language industry.

Representation by Hall (in Prasetyo 2001: 39) denotes to, first, dialogic because the meaning process is not fixed but runs and proceeds within the framework of social conventions and will always emerge with new meaning if the convention changes. In this case, there are two representational processes whose presence can be viewed as a whole, for example, the shapes of object, person, or event that is connected in a concept which refers to the factual form of the object. Second, representations whose meanings depend on the system of concepts and forms of representation on knowledge, represent something that is presented in real life. They create metaphorical form to a thing whose meaning can not be understood only by the similarity of the form of appearance, but can be understood by the ideological system that builds it.

Furthermore, Prasetyo (2001: 38) proposed three principles that led representation as the production of meaning through language. The first principle correlates to the ideology of the construction of meaning products through language because it can be understood by imagining something imaginative in the mind by placing the mind equation of the meaning of the ground display. The second principle explains about the construction of ideological symbols that communicate the meaning of objects through language to others so that they can be understood by language conventions among others (see also Zoest 1999: 6, Harowitz in Sobur 2003: 111, Lull 1998: 83, Althusser 1984: 37, and Geuss 2004: 17). The third has its context to various ideological associations of cultural construction that can be understood semiotically.

Peirce's 1839 semiotic theory (in Sobur 2004: 41) with his Ground Triad talked about three sign relationships and three sign classification. The three sign relationships are ground, representament "something that represents something", and interpretant "receiver, interpreter, and sign user". Furthermore, the interpretant, the representament is subdivided into "sign" rheme which enables one to interpret meaning according to 'choice', dicent sign/ decisign 'sign

in accordance with reality' and the argument of 'sign of something'. The Peirce's Ground Triad approach denotes to the representation of (1) ground sign, (2) representament (context), and (3) signs/symbols which are the interpretants, translated, and interpreted.

## 2.2 Data dan Data Source

The type of data is qualitative and the data source can be primary and secondary. The first source was obtained from the original manuscript of "Manuk Sidangur Dawa-dawa" Karonese folklore consisting of 73 pages, which was written in Karonese by Veil Sitepu. The second was taken from information of various sources, such as, books, documents, photographs, theses, dissertations, internet, research reports, articles, and among others. These sources add the insight and can be used as a comparative study which was done through interview.

## 2.3 Research Informants

The position of researchers in qualitative research is classified as planners as well as as the instrument (Moleong, 1998: 121). Interview was used as the instrument. The primary information was obtained from direct and participatory observation, and in-depth interviews with informants who knew the folklore.

## 2.4 Technique of Data Collection

Some techniques were involved, such as, observation, interview, and documents. Observation was carried out by visiting fields of research, recording, and video shooting. Interview technique was unstructured interview which was recorded simultaneously. Information for the required data were collected as much as possible directly from certain individuals. Interviewing techniques might include the following steps:

- a. With informal conversational interviews which were carried out spontaneously in natural setting and was led by researchers.
- b. Using the general interview guide approach which was adapted to the circumstances of the respondents (informants) in the context of the actual interview.
- c. Utilizing the standardized open-ended interview which involved a set of standard questions and was intended to eliminate the occurrence of biases or "skewness".

In this study, the first and second techniques were applied and, if it is possible, the researcher spoke directly and asked various opinions and information. This technique was more appropriate to get more natural data without causing nuances. As the result, the individual attitude could be understood. The first and second techniques of interview, which was aimed at getting complete information, were done by recording which were rewritten afterwards. The results were displayed in a thorough news of documented interview. Meanwhile, the secondary information includes literature study.

In case of documents, the data collection was taken from the folklore as the written source with the following procedures:

- The critical reading to the folklore to know each event and to understand the concept of local wisdom of relationship between men and God, men and nature, men and society, men and other men, and men with themselves.
- Reading the transcribed folklore with special attention to the form of words, phrases, sentences, and units.
- Grouping all forms of words, phrases, sentences, and units.

## 2.5 Techniques of Data Analysis

Data analysis employed qualitative description focusing on all the words, phrases, sentences, and texts which were "reduced" to place them in the textual and contextual domains. Then, the data were distributed into sub-headlines with a purpose for an exposition. Predictions and controls as well as mastery were continuously done.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

### 3.1 Local Wisdom between men and God

#### 3.1.1 Value of Religion

Values of attitudes and behaviors are shown in the implementation of religious teachings that are adhered to, being tolerant to the implementation of other religious services, and to live in harmony with the followers of other religions.

King Opung Butara Guru Doli Atas

#### Data 1.

"Get ready for him. Proffered betel, betel peberkatan (for worship). Submit the equipment. He brought a wooden cloth and placed it on his father's grave. After that he installed the lamp. He slept in the upstream. There he promised in his heart, uttered his prayer. Then, the King fell asleep. Without realizing he slept in the darkness. Finally, he was awoken. He turned to his pillow and saw the reed minak (the light from bamboo) growing in the upstream with seven segments of seven books. All of them have been inscribed, therein all the letters, the letters of the indung 19 (the mother of the letters) that described the lack of what was lacking, in creation, the creation was indeed, and the making".

In data 1 the sign of Ground, meaning religious/animist King, became the representament (belief) to the ancestral spirits in the folklore and revealed that the King was obedient in carrying out his religious teachings when he gave offerings of betel peberkatan. He submitted the equipment. He brought a wooden cloth and slept in her father's grave. This is of course the hallmark of folklore that still exists in animism which is usually more absurd.

Informants argued that religious diversity in KB land increased quite rapidly. However, animistic belief or tribal religion, which is named *pemena*, is still found in villages. Although principally they have devoted into either Christianity or Islam but the old belief is still adopted by some Karonese as shown in the Fig. 1 which potrays a pangir (bathing) ceremony.



Figure 1. Religious teacher opens the *pangir* ritual

### 3.2 Local Wisdom between men and their societies

#### 3.2.1 Value of Tolerance

The value of tolerance may cover the attitudes and actions that are addressed to respect differences in religion, tribe, ethnicity, opinion, attitude, and acts from other people.

**Data 2:** "We have returned, Our Lord," said Beru Pitu Jalan (BPJ). "So when you get back, let's go to the house. What news do you bring from Purba Kalak village? he said. "Oh, my Lord, she does not have any weakness, I thinks. The way she walks and she swings her hands looks like a valley mounting to the sky. Her hands' movement swings like taro leaves in the middle of the cliff. If she raises her hair while combing in the porch, I saw it high above the road in the gentle breeze. Talking about size, she is not big like big trees, talking about density, she is not densed like clump of leaves, talking about tiny size, she is not small; therefore, she is really appropriate to be the mother of this beautiful land," said ana beru and anak beru pandai perkata-kata. "About the news as the souvenir I have heard but let us first open the Sibelah Langit Pustaka (Manuscript), which knows the news about a boat uprooted in the sea. She is really beautiful. Her hair is pretty, her hands swing interestingly, her smile is charming, but she walks in the way of scavenging. "who sees this among you?" "Is that true or not? "That is correct, that is what I see," said another. "Then, she is not proper to be the mother of this land. When I marry her, you will be involved in the way of scavenging."

In data 2, the sign of Ground marks the value of tolerance from the King to his men; he appreciates togetherness and their different opinions although at last they follow what is indicated by their traditional pustaha (manuscript).

#### 3.2.2 Value of Loving Mother Land

The value to love homeland, to way of thinking, to act, and to do that shows loyalty, awareness, and high appreciations to language, to physical, social, cultural, economic, and political environments can be seen in data 3.

**Data 3:** A ... hey ... "Not like that, our Lord, we never feel tired walking to do your orders. What other places should we come to?" said His men. "O brothers, you would better take a break. We replace the good day; almost every hour you walk incessantly. Always do I see you have never finished your job," said the King. "Oh our Lord, please do not bring this situation like this. We never get tired with your orders. Wherever you think there is a place we should visit, we are not lazy to come to that place. That's why, tell us where to go" said His men. "Alright, please go six days later. Six days later, come here again because you have to depart from this house."

The *Ground* sign in data 3 shows the value of love among the King's men who are loyal to Him. They are faithful to go anywhere to find a girl who should be suitable with their King because a wife is considered the mother of Land.

#### 3.2.3 Value of Social Awareness

Nilai peduli sosial sikap dan tindakan yang selalu ingin memberi bantuan pada orang lain dan masyarakat yang membutuhkan. The value of social care which always appears in the forms of attitudes and acts come to the reality by providing assistance to other people and communities who need their help.

Data 4

"Then, let's go home to request that we should be served with food," said one of them. "O my sons. Do you want me to cook?" "We are from TNM, my sons, we are very hungry. We are the Lord's men from TNM," they said. Finally, Beru Ngena Mehuli cooked. She prepared food for them. Having finished cooking, she called up those men to come her house for a meal. She served the dish for each of them.



The Ground sign in data 4 displays a social care which is facilitated by Beru Ngena Mehuli who is the representament (context). When she knows that her King's men feel hungry, with a sense of togetherness and/or brotherhood she immediately prepares food for them.

### 3.2.4 Value of Peace Loving

The value of peace loving is shown with attitudes, words, and acts that cause other people feel happy and secure with their presence.

**Data 5:** A ... hei ... Beru Sisindar Mataniari has arrived as the first Lady of the Land in TNM with our King. All people have indeed given a lot of bags, clean rice in order to acvhieve what they intended. After days by days, the year comes and Beru Sisindar Mataniari has now beautiful shape.

With this condition, what the Lady Beru Inang Situa-tua wants has come into realization. Therefore, one day, there will be someone who is blind in the village from a family. No one feeds him; he can not do anything. No body cares for his food. Beru Sisindar Mataniari hears what the family does to the blind.

Then she said, "Oh mam, why do you do such an act to the blind?" "He contributes nothing, Lady. He works for nothing; he can not be requested to do a job. He even can not see the road," said the old woman.

"Oh, mam, that's wrong. If you do not care for him, bring him to my house. One day, I can ask for help from him. If it is dusty on my stomach because of pounding paddy, I can tell him to blow the dust because his eyes will not hurt," said Beru Sisindar Mataniari.

"Oh ... my God," people said in their hearts. "No wonder our Lord searched a Lady from another place for his wife; that is his conscience. Only he who can lead this TNM," said the people in their hearts.

The Ground sign in data 5 proves that there is the value of peace loving which is shown by the act of Lady Beru Sisindar Mataniari to the people in TNM.

### 3.2.5 Value of Cohesiveness

Value of cohesiveness means complete unity (Poerwadarminta 2011: 608) and togetherness in one activity or in one idea to achieve goals.

**Data 6:** "Oh wife of our Lord. This is about the desire of the Lady. Of course, it is awkward to hear what people say about this Land. Therefore, our Lady, we are never lazy to find a girl who deserves to be the wife in the Land. If we are lazy, perhaps, we have problems. We are lazy today but we do not receive any orders. You deserves to have a family," said His men.

"That is not what I imagine, uncle; I have gone around this village and from eight villages, I have not yet monitored thoroughly. If that becomes mother's and sisters' concern, please go to Purba village seven days later in this month. Please find me girl who deserves to be the Lady in TNM," said His men.

The data in 6 describes how the King's men are working hard to seek a prospective wife for their King by walking through villages to other villages. The prospective wife (or kemberahen) can be the symbol of prosperity in the village.

### 3.2.6 Value of Cooperation

Mutual cooperation is meant to work together in completing the job and enjoy the results fairly. It also means an effort that is done unconditionally and voluntarily by all people according to their respective abilities (Sibarani, 2012: 183); almost all tribes in Indonesia have cooperation although the shape is different. Data 7 displays a ceremony to have an offspring.

"Ahei ... time goes by; arrive the day of beraspati which becomes the day for people to gather at King's house; some of them take water in the morning, and some other make cimpa cake for lunch. Some of them compose cimpa rambai-rambai cake which is called si melias gelar. In the end, the courtyard of the king's house is crowded. "Ahoi ... then the King's men come to Him serving the cimpa simelias cake which means to open mind, to have good designation, to have respected heirs.

### Data 7:

The Ground sign marks the mutual cooperation in the giving name ceremony. All parties, such as, anak beru, senina, kalimbubu (wife-giver) as well as people give helps to provide the ceremony.



Figure 2. Fruits and flowers (*Mejuah-juah*) festival

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS:

It is concluded that (1) human relationship with God indicates the value of religion, (2) that human relation to their societies shows the values of tolerance, of motherland loving, of social awareness, of the care for peace, of the cohesiveness, and of the mutual cooperation. Pemena followers are still found in villages and they show their solidarity, togetherness in completing their daily work.

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