

# *The Meaning of Suhi Ampang Na Opat at Batak Toba Ethnic Group Marriage*

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**Abstract**—Marriage to the Batak Toba Ethnic is a bridge to meeting *suhi Ampang na opat*, male and female parents. That is to say, with marriage then enjoy the opat from the bride and groom will be related and establish a harmonious relationship. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in marriage rituals provides many benefits, such as lightening and facilitating the implementation of marriage rituals. The term *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* comes from the Batak Toba Language. *Suhi* means angle, *Ampang* means basket, *na opat* means four. So literally *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* means a square basket. The purpose of four square (4 elements of relatives) make an agreement in adat. The symbolic meaning of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* is that kinship ties need each other, have the same strength, and are inseparable and form the roundness of ideas. The role and function of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in marriage rituals creates a sense of family solidarity, togetherness, and belonging to one another. *Suhi Ampang na opat*, something that is absolute and a sense of responsibility. The roles and functions of the *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* must be accounted for, not to be delegated to others. So from that the role and function of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* has shown an attitude of self-approach towards cultural values, especially kinship relations and fostering strong bonds, and high solidarity.

**Keywords**—Marriage, Kinship, Batak Toba, Ritual, Solidarity

## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage to the Batak Toba ethnic group is not an individual bond but a clan bond. Marriage is not only the second person ties kinship, but a network of kinship is formed. If a kinship exists, then marriage strengthens the bond. If there is no kinship relationship, then Marriage forms a new kinship network. The kinship system formulated forms harmonious and intimate relationships. By reason of everyone being bound to unite, and cooperate in social activities. With the kinship system, it always feels one in the banquet of suffering and happiness [1]. Marriage is a bridge for meeting *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* for male and female parents. That is to say, with marriage then enjoy the opat from the bride and groom will be related and establish a harmonious relationship. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in marriage rituals provides many benefits, such as lightening and facilitating the implementation of marriage rituals. In other words, *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* helps the cost of marriage rituals, in addition to strengthening the sense of togetherness, and kinship is getting closer.

*Suhi Ampang na opat*, can be understood as a form of individual/group active participation to realize the cultural values of the Batak Toba ethnic group. Active participation

in the form of material assistance, energy, skills and thought contributions is constructive. Participation carried out is without reply for the sake of mutual interests [2], [3]. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* one of the Batak Toba ethnic kinship systems that includes a leader in the order. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* group namely: (i) *Hula-hula* (wife-giving group), (ii) *Dongan tubu* (group of friends), (iii) *Boru* (wife recipient group), and (iv) *King* (village leader)

The four groups in *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* are *somba marhula-hula* (be careful with groups of wives), *manat mardongan tubu* (slow to groups of friends), *elek marboru* (persuade girls), *pantun marraja* (honest). It means being respectful to the wife-giving group, understanding each other's friends, protecting the wife's recipient group, and obeying the king. The concept of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* is a concept that maintains harmony, cooperation, togetherness, and strengthens the strings of kinship. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* has a meaning that is related to each other, and becomes the basis for determining the position of the rights and obligations of a person or group. This article will discuss about: (a) the essence of being addicted to *opat*, (b) the role and function of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in marriage rituals, and (c) the meaning of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in marriage rituals

At the Batak Toba ethnic marriage a sacred thing. The Batak Toba ethnic life philosophy is wealth (*hamoraon*), descent (*hagabeon*), honor (*hasangapon*). These three things can be achieved if it is included in the scope of marriage. Wealth (*hamoraon*) for Batak Toba ethnicity can be achieved by working hard because it is material. For offspring (*hagabeon*), and honor (*hasangapon*) can be achieved if you already have offspring of boys and girls [1]. The marriage ritual of the Batak Toba Ethnic is considered a sacred matter because marriage means a daughter sacrifices to give her life to be handed over to the male side.

This sacrifice must be rewarded by slaughtering an animal into traditional food during a marriage. This makes the men must respect the family of the woman. For reasons without the sacrifice of a daughter, the men do not have offspring (*hagabeon*). The sacrifice of a princess became a medium for the pride of the highest family in the *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* system. This means that the female family becomes a wife-giving group (*hula-hula*) to the husband's family.

Marriage is a customary relationship and kinship relationship, so marriage does not only bring about the relationship between husband and wife. However, marriage

involves the relationship of customs, kinship, kinship, and concerning traditional and religious rituals. In addition, marriage aims to form a happy household, and as a means of continuing the lineage [4]. Marriage as the entrance to the process of Batak Toba ethnic customs. Marriage is an individual's starting point to have the role and function of the kinship system of the true and false opat. Marriage is an individual form of maturity to interact with Batak Toba people, and has responsibilities based on *suhi Ampang na opat*. This name is called paying adat (*manggarar adat*). It means paying for what has been received during the marriage ritual according to the role and function of the *suhi Ampang na opat*.

The term *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* comes from the Batak Toba Language. *Suhi* means angle, *Ampang* means basket, *opat* means four. So literally *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* means a square basket. *Ampang*/material container made of bamboo. Bamboo is formed in rectangles, the length, width, and size are determined. The square shape is so that the position is balanced. The *Ampang* section is four square and diagonally shaped, so that the square is still sturdy, balanced, and able to support the load if the load is carried on. In the center of the bamboo is formed vertically as a support. There are four buffers. The buffer is combined on each corner of the base so that it can stand upright and is able to support the load. Each support for one another supports one another, and is inseparable. After a buffer is formed vertically, it is formed at the top called *Ampang*/container (interview Monang Naipospos and B. Lumbantoruan).

*Ampang* also makes ties to four supports to be sturdy, capable of supporting loads and balanced. Then making *Ampang* begins with the base, pole/buffer, and *Ampang*/container. The essence of the cosmological view four (4) can be seen from the activities of close family relationships and extended families. This means that to initiate a marriage ritual, the close family discusses the procedure for carrying out the marriage ritual. Four elements of close and large families namely [4]:

- a) Close Family
  - *Suhut Sihabolonan* (host)
  - *Namarhahamaranggi* (host's sibling)
  - *Saboltok* (siblings from the level of the father/grandfather of the host)
  - *Boru* (clan that takes the female side of the host)
- b) Extended family
  - *Hula-hula* (wife-giving group) of host
  - *Dongan Tubu* (friend of one clan) of host
  - *Boru* (wife's recipient group) of host
  - *King* (protector of territorial community) of host

According to Blumer individual behavior is determined by external forces. Blumer put forward a theory that focused on social-structural and socio-cultural factors [5]. Blumer presents three main principles of symbolic interactionism:

- a. Meanings; (human act toward people or things on the basis of the meanings they assign to those people or

things). This means that humans act on other humans based on the meaning that is on them

- b. Language; (meaning arises out of social interaction that people have with each other). This means that the meaning arises from social interaction and the negotiation process through language use
- c. Thought (thought); (an individual's interpretation of the symbols is modified by his own thought process). Thinking as a conversation with yourself is reflexive. Symbolic interactionism sees the position of language as a set of ideas that are exchanged symbolically. Differences in the use of language determine the differences in human thinking

According to Blumer the symbolic interaction theory rests on three premises, namely: (1) humans act on something based on the meanings that are on something to them; (2) meaning comes from one's social interaction with others; (3) meanings are perfected when social interaction takes place [5].

According to experts Kroeber which generally define that all cultural definitions are in cultural concepts consisting of explicit and implicit patterns of behavior [6]. Patterns obtained with the help of symbols as distinctive achievements of human groups include the manifestation of groups of humans through artifacts [5]. William A. Haviland defining culture a a set of rules that when followed by community members will produce behaviors that appear in various variants of members, because they consider it to be appropriate to be accepted [7].

## II. METHODOLOGY

The data from this article are the results of research using interviews and library analysis. Interviews were conducted on several informants who were considered able to provide data to answer research questions. The informants in this study were people who had competence in knowledge related to the Batak tradition. Interviews were conducted in several places in the Samosir District and Toba Samosir District. Data obtained from interviews and literature are then interpreted and analyzed using theories that have been determined to be described and drawn conclusions.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *The essence of Suhi Ampang Na Opat*

Literally *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* means a square basket. Analogically *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* as a kinship system as a form of cooperation/participation of individuals/groups in realizing cultural values. Participation in the form of material assistance, money, energy, skills, and constructive ideas. Participation without expecting a reply, and are alternating, according to the role and function of the marriage ritual.

*Suhi Ampang Na Opat* forms a harmonious and prosperous relationship. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in marriage rituals provides many benefits, such as lightening and facilitating the implementation of marriage rituals. In other

words *suhi na opat* can help expenditure, and strengthen the sense of togetherness, and the kinship of fellow close and distant relatives.

The formation of *Ampang* is one form of culture. According to defining the concept of culture consists of explicit and implicit behavior [6]. Patterns are obtained in the form of symbols as a typical achievement of ethnic groups through artifacts. *Ampang* is a category of artifacts. *Ampang* is inherited through symbols as an achievement of the Batak Toba ethnic group making *Ampang* from bamboo. *Ampang* made of bamboo is a form of culture. This is consistent with cultural theory as a man-made part of the environment. The Batak Toba ethnic Environment is dominated by bamboo. For that bamboo to make *Ampang* is from the Batak Toba ethnic environment.

The four square objective (4 elements of relatives) is to make an agreement in adat. This means that symbolic *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* is a kinship in a traditional party. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* has four angles, the same angular size, and is inseparable and needs each other. Four corners of *Ampang na opat*, the meaning of Batak Toba ethnic cultural values is that four groups have the same and inseparable strength. Each group needs each other, supporting it to form a round of ideas. If one group does not exist, the power of implementing adat is not balanced. For reasons there have been gaps with each other. If there is a gap, then something is not good, it is not perfect for marriage customs. Even it does not rule out the possibility of conflict. Both between the executor and the invitees. Therefore, balance must be maintained, maintained, so that it is not bad in life (interview Naipospos and Simarmata).

#### *Role and Function of Suhi Ampang Na Opat in Marriage Rituals*

The Batak Toba ethnic group saw *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* not only as a physical form, but seeing ancestral values that were guided by painting on *Ampang*. Cultural values in the form of 1. love (*holong*); white rice (warm, smooth), 2. Peace (*dame*); strung leaves, 3. Joy (*las ni roha*); ulos as a cultural result, 4. Hope (*panghirimon*); side dishes of the four types manifested in *Ampang*, namely the opening ceremony of *marsibuhabuhai* marriage ritual (eating with men and women).

*Suhi Ampang Na Opat* talks about dowry, procedure, time, and place of marriage. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* male side; 1. *Pamarai* (male cousin) is responsible for the cost of marital implementation, not entirely but is able to arrange dowry for marriage, 2. The *unti Ampang* (father's sister) is responsible for carrying rice, meat, for the opening of marital rituals (*marsibuhabuhai*), 3. *Simandokhon* (male cousin) is responsible for inviting directly, cannot be entrusted with the message, 4. *Tulang* (mother's brother) is responsible for helping the dowry (animals and gold). The purpose of this gift is if men don't marry uncle's daughter. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* women; 1. *Parbara* (cousin of the father) is responsible for receiving and managing the dowry for carrying out marriage rituals, 2. *Simolohon* (brother and

sister) is responsible for protecting and helping women's issues, 3. *Pariban* (female cousin) is responsible for receiving dowry and there is harmony between dowry, recipient of meat (*jambar*) and administration of ulos, 4. *Tulang* (mother's brother) is responsible for determining the dowry (interview Lumbantoruan, Simarmata, Naipospos).

- The Role and Function of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in the Legalization of Marriage: 1. *Hula-hula* (ornag tua woman) gives ulos until they are old to the bride, by giving advice in order to have offspring, sustenance, and as long as they undergo the household, 2. *Dongan Tubu* (friend of a clan) carries rice, rice, and gives advice to the bride, 3. *Boru* (recipient of the wife) carries a long cloth and gives advice related to new life, 4. The king gives words advice to the bride. The king has the role to close the wedding ritual activities.
- Roles and Functions of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* on *Jambar* Distribution: 1. *Male Parties*; the complete distribution of *jambar* is not there. If the marriage uses buffalo livestock, the woman gives parts of the pig or fish livestock (*batak ihan*). The term giving men cattle to women as the expression "*ulu ni dengke mulak*" means simply tasting meat (*dai sira*). The intention and purpose is that the men do not go home empty-handed from women's homes, and vice versa
- Role and Function of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* When Receiving Ulos: 1. *Ulos Pansamot* (given parents of women to male parents). This means that to have health, strength, warm grandchildren in the old days, 2. *Ulos Paramaan* (given a female parent's brother to a male parent's brother). This means that giving ulos especially to my daughter's needs becomes your guide. 3. *Ulos Simolohon* (who was given a female family to a male family), 4. *Si Unti Ampang* (who was given a woman's family to her father's sister). In giving ulos has a symbolic essence which lies in the recognition of something in lieu of something else (something stand for something else). The recipient relationship and the giver give rise to a symbol. The use of symbols both words, objects, symbols, and symbols presents the "meaning" inherent and related in the event. Such as giving ulos as a symbol in life that is used in a wedding ritual (event) to declare something with ulos. Shows how meaningful ulos is in life. In addition symbols are not knowledge of objects/words, but memories (memory). Symbols are something improvised on implicit knowledge in following unconscious rules. This means that giving ulos has a memorable meaning. With *ulos*, the ulos giver expresses words/expressions and *ulos* is a memory object for the ulos recipient.

#### *Meaning of Suhi Ampang Na Opat in Marriage Rituals*

*Suhi* is an *opat* that is a kinship system of Batak Toba ethnicity that has value in the life of the Batak Toba ethnic group. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* symbolizes the life attitude of the Batak Toba ethnicity in living in a community. *Suhi ampan na opat* is a life guide for Batak Toba ethnic in community life. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* is not a caste or measure for everyone, but shows the position of someone whether as *hula-hula*, *dongan tubu*, *boru* or *raja*. Position as

*hula-hula, dongan tubu, boru, or raja* is not something absolute, but it is seen how someone is. This situation is seen as the relationship between relatives and those who carry out the marriage ritual. This is in line with the Ritual of *suhi Ampang* marriage and *opat* consisting of *hula-hula, dongan tubu, boru, and raja*. Marriage of the Batak Toba Ethnic is a kind of bridge that brings together the *suhi Ampang na opat*. In this case *suhi na opat* in accordance with Blumer's theory [5] formulated the symbolic interaction assumptions as follows: 1. Humans act on something on the basis of symbolic internal assumptions that have something words, terms, and objects. (This means that *ulos* as an object has a symbolic value on the Batak Toba ethnic marriage ritual), 2. The meanings are the result of social interaction in human society (the four elements of *hula-hula, dongan tubu, boru, and kings* interact so that they have meaning).

Herbert Blumer's theory [5] symbolic interaction rests on three premises, then marriage rituals state that humans act on something based on the meanings of something. The ethnic Batak Toba marriage ritual *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* position has a position as *Hula-hula* acting as *Hula-hula, Dongan Tubu* acting as *Dongan Tubu, Boru*, acting as *Boru* as well as *Raja*. In the division of *jambar* (ration) there are meanings from the distribution of rations. With the type of quota accepted, then someone's position is known. Distribution of rations shows one's identity. By knowing someone's position in marriage, all of this is coupled with harmonious social interaction, there is no feeling of humiliation, but all are coupled with enhanced social interaction.

In terms of language seen in the expressions of advice, and advice spoken to the bride during liberalization and giving *ulos* by those who play a role [5]. This means that advice and advice using the Batak Toba Language have specific and specific meanings. Symbolic interaction appears not a natural process, but in terms of language meaning. In terms of thoughts (thought) many determined the practice of language. Symbolic interaction sees the position of language more as a set of ideas that are exchanged symbolically. The difference in the use of language determines the difference in thinking. This can be seen in the distribution of rations and giving *ulos*. Using language and thought processes, seen in the *ulos* giver and the ration divider do self reflexes to be understood by recipients of *ulos* and ration dividers.

*Suhi Ampang Na Opat* philosophy *somba marhulahula, manat marodongan tubu, elek marboru, pantun marraja*. This philosophy becomes the guideline of the Batak Toba ethnic group, and includes a leader in the order. The leader spirit is used. The leader is interpreted as King, *Panuturi* (role model), *Paniroi* (leader). The meaning of being full of togetherness-based *opat* is, 1. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* cannot be represented; if someone in a marriage ritual is located one of them is an amphibian, then someone cannot be represented. For whatever reason a person cannot send other people/close relatives as a substitute. With the position of

one of the people who has the right to *opat*, then they must attend, 2. Must be responsible, not to give up roles and functions to close/distant relatives, 3. Changed, someone who has a position cannot be changed. Although replaced by siblings themselves. So if you have a position, it must be approved and cannot be rejected. From the explanation above, if roles and functions are not carried out, it will lead to consistency in marriage rituals and consequences for people who do not carry out their roles and functions.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The kinship system of the Batak Toba *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* ethnic group embodies the relationship of close relatives, and in general the Batak Toba ethnic group. The role and function of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* in marriage rituals creates a sense of family solidarity, togetherness, and belonging to one another. *Suhi Ampang na opat*, something that is absolute and a sense of responsibility. The roles and functions of the *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* must be accounted for, not to be delegated to others. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* must go true. The role and function of *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* has shown a self-approach to cultural values, especially kinship. So social relations with the closest relatives will lead to strong ties, and high solidarity.

The phrase which states *namalo nampuna hata, na auto tuadisan*, (who is good at having ideas / speaking, who is ignorant is less attention) is combined with *namora nampuna hata, na pogos sip* (those who have the wealth of having ideas/talking are stupid not talking). This means that such behavior is not in accordance with the *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* philosophy. *Suhi Ampang Na Opat* still sees someone based on their closest relatives, and has roles and functions. In the sense of not looking at economics, education, and authority to participate.

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