

## Trust on Tradition/Customs of Batu Bara Community in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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**Abstract:** *This article discussed the trust in the traditions / customs of Batu Bara people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Batu Bara is one of the regions in North Sumatera Province, Indonesia. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Batu Bara communities were dominated by Malay ethnic groups and popularly referred to as "Malay Batu Bara". Malay Batu Bara had several traditions or customs that were considered important to be ritualized in everyday life. There were many traditions / customs in Batu Bara and in this study 3 traditions would be discussed namely; (1) Pantang larang, (2) Tapai Party, (3) Mandi Balimau. The approach used in this research was qualitative which produced descriptive data. In analyzing the data the researcher used data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions and verifies the data. The disciplinary approach in this research was socio-anthropological and based on historical values. From the data obtained, it was clear that there was trust in Batu Bara Community in the 19<sup>th</sup> century of the traditions / customs implemented in daily life.*

**Keywords:** *Trust; customs; coal.*

### I. Introduction

Indonesia is a country that is rich in tribes so that it gives birth to many diverse traditions / customs. Tradition can be interpreted as inheritance or transmitted from the past to the present. In another sense, tradition is a behavior that is usually carried out by people in a certain social order in a hereditary way<sup>1</sup> and has a system of ideas, concepts, thoughts, cultural values and norms.<sup>2</sup> Such theories are widely written by W. Robertson Smith, J.Frazer, A. Van Gennep and R.Hertz who said that the origins of these beliefs arose because of an approach oriented towards rituals and religious ceremonies.<sup>3</sup>

In this article the beliefs of the Coal community in the nineteenth century touched 3 (three) traditions / customs, (1) Pantang Larang, (2) Tapai Party, (3) Mandi Balimau. These three traditions in the modern era have started to be considered as myths and some people assume that myths do not give any meaning to one value. Eliade turns out to have a different view, he saw that myth as an archaeological experience and has a structure and purpose, among the goals he mentioned was the mythical knowledge to know the origin of everything, therefore watching and moving everything was motivated by his desires (not knowledge which is interpreted in an external and abstract sense) but a knowledge based on ritual experience which in the end the rite is formed and implemented based on the justification of myths.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Swidler, *Sorting out Meanings; Religion, Spritual, Interreligious, Interfaith*, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Kristanto, Hdi Didik, *Pribahasa Lengkap dan Kesusastaraan Melayu Lama* (Bandung: Tabora Media, 2008), p.15.

<sup>3</sup>Dalam Adeng Muchtar Ghazali, *Antropologi Agama, Upaya Memahami Keragaman Kepercayaan, Keyakinan dan Agama* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2011), p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Eliade & Kitaqawa (ed), *the History of Religions, Essays in Methodology*, University of Chicago Press, 1959, p.19.

## II. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Pantang Larang

Batu Bara Communities has a cultural rule that must be carried out in daily life, these rules can be in the form of commands and prohibitions. The ban is what is meant by the prohibition of prohibited. Based on the results of research in the field, Hasan<sup>5</sup> explained that what is meant by abstinence is an act or behavior that is prohibited or prohibited to be carried out. If a person does not prohibit prohibiting bad and frightening consequences, for example his mother or father will die, fall into poverty, or his pet will die, including being shunned by the community.

### 2.2 Tapai Party

Tradition or also called habit is an activity that has long been carried out and continues to be a part of the life of a community. Tapai party is a tradition carried out by the Coal Coast community and has been used as an annual program.

There are a number of opinions from the community regarding the history of the start of Tapai party tradition in Batu Bara. The first opinion said that every welcoming of the holy month of Ramadan the people of Coal held a "Mogang" event. Mogang means to slaughter a buffalo or cow before entering the month of Ramadan, where the slaughtering is witnessed by the community in a crowd. In the early days, there are only a small number of people in Batu Bara community who kept buffaloes or cows so that they were brought in from Tapanuli.<sup>6</sup>

Animal traders from Tapanuli settled in Batu Bara a few days to sell the buffalo or the cow. During their time in Batu Bara, traders from Tapanuli once asked for Tapai and Lemang to be eaten at the Mogang event. This event continued to occur until a number of years which eventually the Tapanuli people's demand became the tradition of Batu Bara community every year to provide Tapai and Lemang before the holy month of Ramadan entered.<sup>7</sup>

The second opinion says that the history of the Tapai Party is motivated by the dispute between Kedatukan Dahari and Kedatukan Selebar. The two disputes of the two unions take place even more fiercely because of the power struggle, so that the dispute is heard by the Kedatukan Pesisir. Kedatukan Pesisir takes the initiative to improve the relationship of Kedatukan Dahari and Kedatukan Selebar which occurred before the holy month of Ramadhan, finally Kedatukan Pesisir invited the two Unites to make peace and at the time of the peace event Kedatukan Pesisir served Tapai and Lemang food and finally the dish became a big conversation and made into a great conversation as a tradition that continues to run.<sup>8</sup>

The third opinion says the history of Tapai Party is because of the change in the leadership of Kedatukan. The community is very happy with the party but in the beginning the party is not termed Tapai Party but Kedatukan Party.<sup>9</sup> According to Musthofal Akhyar who is a cultural observer at Batu Bara, the beginning of the Tapai Party is mentioned in

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<sup>5</sup>Interview with Hasan, 4 September 2018 in Hasan's home. He is a citizen who works as a fisherman in Coal.

<sup>6</sup>Interview with Hasan Idris, October 1, 2018 at his home. Idris is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>7</sup>The results of an interview with Idris.

<sup>8</sup>The results of an interview with Musa, October 1, 2018 at his home. Musa is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>9</sup>The results of an interview with Rozali, 5 October 2018 at his home. Rozali is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

1918 M.<sup>10</sup> Then from 1918 the Tapai Party continued to grow and became increasingly a special concern of the local community until now (2019).

Another opinion says that in ancient times, the ruling king in the coastal areas of Coal was Datuk Mudo Jalil Lelo Sumaso Tuo. Datuk is the one who ordered to build a place to slaughter cattle and buffaloes to welcome the coming of Ramadan. Many people come from various regions to cut or buy meat, they come from several sub-districts in Batu Bara. Hundreds of buffaloes and cattle were slaughtered here before the coming of the holy month of Ramadan, because of the crowds of people who came, Raja Datuk Mudo Jalil Lelo Sumaso Tuo also ordered to build small shops for the needs of traders and buyers of meat. The shops sell snacks such as lemang, tapai, karas-karas and typical foods of the coastal area of Coal.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.3 Mandi Balimau

Mandi Balimau is a tradition for the people of Batu Bara in welcoming the holy month of Ramadan. The event is held a day to explain the fasting month. Aside from being a happy overflow, this ceremony is a symbol of self-cleansing. Balimau itself is a bath using water mixed with lime or orange. Limes are used vary, sometimes lime, lime or cotton lime. Balimau is colored with traditional ceremonies that contain unique sacred values.<sup>12</sup>

Sri Banun said that balimau for the people of Batu Bara had a profound meaning of purification the day before Ramadan. Usually done when evening before Ramadan took place. Balimau meant to wash away with decoction of lime or lime. This tradition passed down from generation to generation among Malay Batu Bara.<sup>13</sup> Balimau originated from India, namely Hindus in India. Balimau was considered to be similar to Makara Sankranti, when Hindus bathe in the Ganges River to worship the god Surya in mid-January, then there is Raksabandha as a reinforcement of love between people in July-August, then Vasanta Panchami in January-February purification to welcome spring. Purification here meant by Mandi Balimau their sins disappear along with the flowing water of the river and then the religion developed in Indonesia to reach remote corners of the archipelago and the river in Coal proves that the existence of Hinduism reached Batu Bara.<sup>14</sup>

## III. Discussion

There are many taboos that are implemented by the Coal community in the nineteenth century in their daily lives. Among these restrictions can be seen in the table below.

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<sup>10</sup>The results of an interview with Musthofal Akhyar, 6 October 2018 at his home. Musthofal Akhyar is a cultural figure in Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>11</sup>Balai Bahasa of North Sumatera, Indonesian Language and Culture Development and Language Development Board, Anthology of Folklore Coal (Medan; North Sumatra Provincial Language Office Indonesian Language Development and Language Development Agency, 2015), p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Musthofal Akhyar, 6 October 2018 at his home. Musthofal Akhyar is a cultural figure in Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>13</sup>Interview with Sri Banun 28 October 2018 at his home. Sri Banun is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>14</sup>The results of an interview with Musthofal Akhyar, 6 October 2018 at his home. Musthofal Akhyar is a cultural figure in Batu Bara Regency.

**Table 1.** Pantang Larang which are Implemented by Batu Bara Community in 19<sup>th</sup> Century

No	Pantang Larang
1	Berpindah tempat pada waktu waktu makan. <sup>15</sup>
2	Berselimut dengan tikar. <sup>16</sup>
3	Berteriak-teriak mengucapkan kata-kata kotor dalam hutan. <sup>17</sup>
4	Berfoto bersama dalam jumlah ganjil. <sup>18</sup>
5	Bangun tidur terlalu siang. <sup>19</sup>
6	Bersin sewaktu akan bepergian. <sup>20</sup>
7	Berlama-lama di kamar mandi. <sup>21</sup>
8	Duduk di pintu. <sup>22</sup>
9	Gadis keramas di hari sabtu. <sup>23</sup>
10	Kebiasaan bersedih pada waktu hamil. <sup>24</sup>
11	Kebiasaan duduk di tengah pintu waktu turun hujan lebat. <sup>25</sup>
12	Kebiasaan makan asinan di malam hari. <sup>26</sup>
13	Kebiasaan menggigit bibir sebelah bawah. <sup>27</sup>
14	Kebiasaan menggigit bibir sebelah atas. <sup>28</sup>
15	Kebiasaan menggigit bibir sebelah bawah. <sup>29</sup>
16	Kebiasaan mengigit kuku. <sup>30</sup>
17	Kebiasaan memutar rambut. <sup>31</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Do not move places at mealtime, because it will result in having a stepmother. Except moving to a better position, for example at first eating on the floor, then moving to the proper dining table, if that is done, sooner will get a better job.

<sup>16</sup>Do not cover yourself with a mat, because one day you will be rolled up by the waves when bathing in the sea.

<sup>17</sup>Do not yell dirty words while in the forest, because you will soon be entered by an evil spirit that is in control of you (possessed).

<sup>18</sup>Do not take pictures in odd numbers because one of those photographed will die quickly. Usually the middle one.

<sup>19</sup>If you wake up too late until the sun is almost standing, it will result in all forms of sustenance that will always stay away again.

<sup>20</sup>You cannot immediately travel whether using a vehicle or not after sneezing. At least you wait a few minutes after you sneeze and then leave, because if you sneeze right away you will be harmed on the way.

<sup>21</sup>Do not linger in the bathroom because you will look older than your actual age.

<sup>22</sup>You are prohibited from sitting right in front of the door, because it is feared that there are creatures that pass through the door and you will fall ill.

<sup>23</sup>If you are a girl, don't wash your hair on Saturdays, because you will have a torturer husband.

<sup>24</sup>Don't always grieve during pregnancy, because one day you will get a whiny child.

<sup>25</sup>Do not sit in the middle of the door when it is raining because one day you might get struck by lightning (which is actually the lightning, it is said, targeting the devil).

<sup>26</sup>Do not you are accustomed to eating pickles at night, because it will always be crushed by unrest, if he is an unmarried person it will be difficult to match and if he is married he will often fight.

<sup>27</sup>Don't you always bite the lower lip, because someday you will have bad luck and bad luck.

<sup>28</sup>Don't bite the upper lip because there will always be a lot of debt in life.

<sup>29</sup>Don't you always bite the lower lip, because someday you will have bad luck and bad luck.

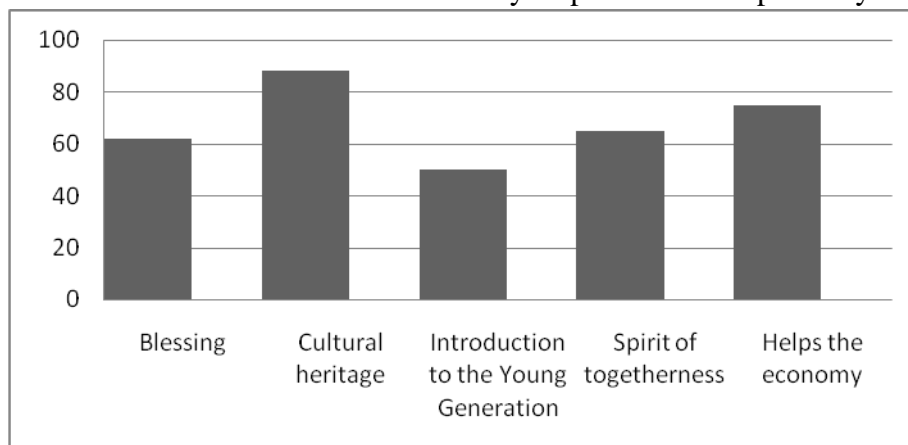
<sup>30</sup>Do not bite your nails often, because it will invite bad luck and often nervousness will also suffer inner suffering.

<sup>31</sup>Do not twist your hair because you will become a gossip of people and become a victim of defamation.

18	Kebiasaan pura-pura menangis. <sup>32</sup>
19	Kebiasaan bersiul di waktu malam. <sup>33</sup>
20	Kebiasaan bersiul di dalam rumah. <sup>34</sup>
21	Kebiasaan memberi sapu tangan kepada kekasih.

The twenty-one examples of abstinence prohibited above are examples of data scattered from various ethnic groups in Indonesia, including in Batu Bara. Most abstinence is prohibited for women, although some are generally accepted.<sup>35</sup> It shows that Indonesian women in patriarchal cultural ties are bound in norms, ethics, as a moral reference for them traditionally so that it is not easy to run a life. However, now it has changed. Not all of them are still obeyed according to custom. As an oral tradition document, this prohibition is still something that needs to get a more appropriate study in the form of an explanation of local wisdom.

There are several responses from the Batu Bara community related to the tradition of the Tapai Party and the relevance of the cultural meaning. In the chart below will show the respondent's answer when researchers ask how they respond to the Tapai Party.



**Figure 1.** *The Coal Society's Response to the Tapai Party Tradition*

From the results of the questionnaire distribution and researcher interviews with 100 respondents regarding their response to the tradition of the Tapai Party in Batu Bara, the researcher received the answers as listed in the chart above. The following detailed description of the image above.

- Blessings

According to Baharuddin that the Tapai Party activity that is carried out every year before the coming of the holy month of Ramadan is as a sign of the existence of Batu

<sup>32</sup>Do not pretend to cry because it will result in parents will receive disaster.

<sup>33</sup>Do not you always whistle at night because when you sleep that night and will hear whistling coming from outside your room it is the act of spirits who feel disturbed by your whistle and reply.

<sup>34</sup>Do not always whistle in the house, because it will invite spirits who will do evil.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Mahmuda, 5 September 2018 at his home. Mahmuda is a fisherman profession in Batu Bara Regency.

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Bara Community gratitude for the creator who gave blessing.<sup>36</sup> Blessings will come to us if you glorify the holy month of Ramadan in good ways such as the Tapai Party.<sup>37</sup>

Mushofal Akhyar said that the Tapai Party activity which was held every year was one of the activities that had become ingrained in the Batu Bara community, even some people who had a thick culture considered the Tapai Party to have its own blessing before the holy month of Ramadan.<sup>38</sup>

- Cultural Heritage

Each region has its own characteristics in carrying out life as a cultured creature and sometimes that culture has become a cultural heritage that comes from ancestors. Amnah said that the Tapai Party which is always held by the people of the coast of Batu Bara is a cultural heritage that must be done by the current generation as proof of respect for the ancestors.<sup>39</sup>

Mardiah said that the Tapai Party was a cultural message conveyed by the ancestors to Batu Bara Community and the message had to be done as well as possible, because the Tapai Party was not an activity that contained elements of shirk, immorality and violating religious values.<sup>40</sup> That answer was also conveyed by Daud, and Daud added that the Tapai Party was not a culture that was merely a coincidence, but it was a culture of inheritance that certainly had meanings.<sup>41</sup>

- Introduction to the Young Generation

Ali Umar, an elder in the Batu Bara community said that the Tapai Party was a form of tradition that had to be truly implemented, because the Tapai Party was a symbol of the Batu Bara Community in welcoming the holy month of Ramadan and to preserve and preserve this culture so that it would not disappear. it is very important to involve the younger generation in this annual event.<sup>42</sup>

- Spirit of Togetherness

Arifin said that the Tapai Party activity that was held every time was one of the ways to promote togetherness among Muslims on the coast of Batu Bara, because the tradition of the Tapai Party was not an individual event but many community members were involved and even the local government of Batu Bara also gave attention and contribution.<sup>43</sup> It was also expressed by Zainal, Zainal also said that the spirit of mutual

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<sup>36</sup> The results of an interview with Baharuddin, October 7, 2018 at his home. Baharuddin is a community leader in Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>37</sup> The results of an interview with Jamilah, 7 October 2018 at his home. Jamilah is a citizen of Batu Bara District.

<sup>38</sup> The results of an interview with Musthofal Akhyar, 6 October 2018 at his home. Musthofal Akhyar is a cultural figure in Batu Bara District.

<sup>39</sup> The results of an interview with Amnah, October 8, 2018 at his home. Amnah is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>40</sup> The results of an interview with Mardiah, 8 October 2018 at his home. Mardiah is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>41</sup> The results of an interview with David, October 9, 2018 at his home. Daud is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>42</sup> The results of an interview with Ali Umar, 10 October 2018 at his home. Ali Umar is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>43</sup> The results of an interview with Arifin, October 11, 2018 at his home. Arifin is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

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cooperation of the Malay Malay community was very visible and memorable at the Tapai Party tradition.<sup>44</sup>

- Helps the Economy

The Tapai Party tradition, in addition to promoting togetherness between Batu Bara Community, is also a golden opportunity for residents who sell Tapai and Lemang.<sup>45</sup> Bukhari said that the Tapai Party is a legacy of the ancestors who are very much enjoyed by the people now, because the tradition of the Tapai Party can help the economy of the community even though the tradition is carried out every year but the arrival of the season is eagerly awaited by residents of the coast of Batu Bara.<sup>46</sup>

For the tradition of bathing in balimau, one of Robiah's residents said that limes are not only limited to fruit, but there are many other great benefits contained in them. Every lime has meanings, meanings and even diverse benefits.<sup>47</sup> Mandi Balimau is not included as the sunnah of the Prophet, but only as a tradition that has a high philosophical value for the Batu Bara Community, In addition to the moments of self-cleaning, Mandi Balimau is also a momentum to establish friendships and events to forgive each other in order to welcome the great guests namely the moon ramadan, so it is not a belief that has the proposition of *nāqli* in *qāt'i*.

Ramlah revealed that the month of Ramadan is a holy month and is very much awaited arrival by Muslims, therefore preparations for entering the holy month must also be done well too, physical and spiritual preparation becomes the main provision, and one of the preparations is to cleanse yourself by mandi Mandi Balimau.<sup>48</sup>

Aminah Suri said that the Mandi Balimau community in Batu was used as a means to strengthen the feeling of brotherhood among fellow Muslims by visiting and apologizing to each other, because the preparation for Mandi Balimau was often first discussed with families, neighbors and surrounding communities so that the yield of balimau water was maximized.<sup>49</sup>

## IV. Conclusion

Indonesia is a vast country geographic, rich in natural resources, human resources and a wealth of traditions / customs. Batu Bara as one of the regions in the territory of Indonesia also contributes to the wealth of traditions / customs. This was responded by the community

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<sup>44</sup> The results of an interview with Zainal 11 October 2018 at his home. Zainal is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>45</sup> The results of an interview with Arkan 12 October 2018 at his home. Arkan is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>46</sup> The results of an interview with Bukhari 12 October 2018 at his home. Bukhari is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>47</sup> The results of an interview with Robiah 1 November 2018 at his home. Robiah is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>48</sup> The results of an interview with Ramlah 2 November 2018 at his home. Ramlah is a citizen in Batu Bara Regency.

<sup>49</sup> Results of an interview with Aminah Suri 2 November 2018 at her home. Aminah Suri is a citizen of Batu Bara Regency.

with a variety of perspectives and some are taking alternatives to serve as one of the features / characteristics in the midst of a diverse society.

There are at least 3 (three) traditions / customs in the Batu Bara community in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which are believed to have a major influence on the sustainability of life in the midst of society. The three traditions are (1) Pantang larang, (2) Tapai Party, (3) Mandi Balimau. In the XIX century the three traditions were carried out with high frequency by various levels of society even the tradition continued until the presence of the XX century and some groups of people still believe it to this day.

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