

The Inventory and Appreciation of Folk Tales on the West Coast of North Sumatra

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Abstract

Mandailing Natal and Central Tapanuli on the west coast of North Sumatra have a lot of folk tales. The inheritance of folk tales from generation to generation has experienced a shift due to the lack of intensity in speaking across generations, especially the younger generation. Folk tales is increasingly being heard by the younger generation in the villages, including those on the west coast of North Sumatra. The inventory of the legends in the west coast of North Sumatra coast is needed urgently as an effort for the initial step of folk tales documentation. So far, there has not been any research conducted on folk tales in the area. The purpose of this study is to take an inventory of the legends that exist in the west coast of North Sumatra. The method used in the research method is in place (field research). The results showed that there are 12 folk tales, they are The Mystery of the Tortoise Well, The Origin Name of Bangkelang, The Legend of Bukit Bendera, The Aek Busuk, The Giant, The Sacred Urn of Papan Tinggi, The Legend of Ujung Sibolga, The Mystery of Batu Layang, The Legend of Lake Begu, The Origin of Sikaduduak Hill, The Princess Andom Dewi, and The Legend of the Begu Marpayung Forest. Furthermore, these folk tales were packaged into teaching materials for ethnic literature courses at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, Unimed. The next stage is the teaching materials are integrated into the Indonesian Language and Literature teaching materials for junior high school students in the west coast of North Sumatra.

Keywords

inventory, legend, west coast



I. Introduction

As a legacy, there has been carried out constantly on the study of folk tales in the archipelago and even in the world. Taufiana, et al (2020) examined the advantages of folk tales in Indonesia for the character of elementary school students. Robert Baron (2016) examines the dialogue of folk tales to determine the culture of modern society. David Ocón (2021) analyzed the endangered cultural heritage/folk tales in Southeast Asian cities. Even in Argentina, the old folk tales is used as a political symbol. (Ignacio Rodríguez-Temiño & Jaime Almansa-Sánchez (2021). Patricia Lysaght (2021) collected the Irish folk tales as teaching material for students.

The exploratory studies of North Sumatran folk tales have also been carried out. Some of them are conducted by Rosliani (2015), Kembaren, MM, Nasution, AA, & Lubis, MH (2020). Ramadan (2020). However, based on the previous studies, there has not been any research result that explore the North Sumatran folk tales from the West Coast of Sumatra, especially the Central Tapanuli and Mandailing Natal areas.

As it is known that North Sumatra is a province that is very rich in various cultural heritages. This province is also considered a miniature of Indonesia, because almost all

ethnic groups coexist peacefully in this province. Among this cultural diversity, North Sumatra has 8 indigenous ethnicities including Toba Batak, Karo, Malay, Nias, Mandailing, Simalungun, Pak-Pak and Dairi. Surely, these 8 ethnic groups have cultural heritage, including folk tales that contain moral values and local wisdom of North Sumatra.

Mandailing Natal and Central Tapanuli are the areas on the west coast of North Sumatra. The areas have many folk tales that can be interpreted as a wealth of tradition, literature, art, law, behavior and anything that is produced collectively spread and passed down from generation to generation. They usually related to the culture in the past and mostly anonymous or unknown author, so it is very difficult to find out the original source and reveal the sequence and full contents of the story.

According to Karim (2015) folk tales or folk prose that exist among the people in the oral forms are myths, legends, and fairy tales. Legend is part of folk tales or folk prose that develops in a society. They have certain characteristics in society and live as a collective heritage. As with other folk tales, the inheritance of legends is carried out through word of mouth in a traditional way. Folk tales forms such as legends have had relatively long collective standards in a society. This is certainly in line with the opinion of experts who state that folk tales belong to the collective so that the author is unknown or anonymous. It has a cliché pattern, and is rich in value. Stories related to legends have been minimally heard by the new generation in the village. This is not because technology has penetrated to the village, but rather the habit of telling stories from parents to their children has decreased or leaving the characters who hold the source of the story. The research focuses on the legend that will be carried out in the west coast of North Sumatra that is in Mandailing Natal and Central Tapanuli.

Several research related to folk tales have been conducted by several researchers. The first is a research entitled *Inventarisasi Cerita Rakyat dari Kabupaten Demak Melalui Aplikasi Buku Digital (E-Book) Interaktif* (2015) by Noor Hasyim and Ali Muqoddas. The results of the study show that Demak has many folk tales that must be preserved to pass on noble traditional values to the future generations. Folk tales as a noble cultural heritage must be packaged in a modern way in order to get a public attention. An interactive digital book application with touchscreen-based tablet media is an alternative media to preserve and take inventory of folk tales from Demak Regency.

The second is a research entitled *Inventarisasi Cerita Rakyat di Kabupaten Sragen* (2015) by Fista Nuhlia Kumala Dewi. The results showed two things, first, the process of inventorying folk tales in Sragen Regency was started by conducting pre-research activities, namely a survey at the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Regional Library of Sragen Regency and conducting a literature study. The data collection was carried out based on regional mapping from 15 sub-districts in Sragen Regency which aimed to facilitate the search for folk tales data in Sragen Regency. The last step is folk tales compiled into a collection of Sragen Regency folk tales.

The third is *Cerita Rakyat di Kabupaten Banjarnegara* (2016) by Khotami Nursah. The results of this study indicated that the steps of inventorying folk tales in Banjarnegara Regency are carried out through formal and non-formal channels. While the results of the inventory of folk tales in Banjarnegara Regency are transcripts of folk tales discourses in Banjarnegara Regency in the form of writing in Javanese variety of Banyumas which include stories of Mulabukane in Banjarnegara Regency, Raden Sam Hoong, Dumadine Sigaluh Village, Demang Tirtayasa and Dumadine Villages, Purwareja Klampok Subdistrict, Mulabukane Batur, and Dumadine Banjarmangu Village. The study that

conducted by the three researchers above described the inventory of folk tales in Sragen, Demak, and Banjarnegara. Meanwhile, the focus of this research is the inventory of folk tales in the west coast of North Sumatra. The inventory is the first step to find out all the stories in the west coast of North Sumatra and presented them in the form of a stories collection.

II. Review of Literatures

According to Bascom (in Syuhada, 2018: 190) there are four known functions of folk tales, they are: (a) as a projective system, as a means of reflecting the imagination of a collective; (b) as a means of ratifying cultural institutions and institutions; (c) as a pedagogical device; and (d) as a means of coercion and monitoring so that the society norms will always be obeyed by its collective members. Brunvand (via Danandjaja, 1986:21-22) suggests that folk tales can be classified into three major groups based on its type: (1) verbal folk tales, (2) partly verbal folk tales, (3) non-verbal folk tales (Syuhada, 2018: 190).

Folk tale is a form of folk tales found in Indonesia. At first, it was conveyed through oral culture in the form of parts of heroic stories depicted through wayang (puppet). Other forms were in the form of performances. Folk tale is spread through oral culture, not in written culture.

Folk tale as part of literary works also has elements that are intertwined, thus supporting the overall story. Danandjaja (2002) argues that folk tales has several following characteristics and forms of identification: 1) Dissemination and inheritance are usually carried out orally, that is spread through spoken or with an example accompanied by gestures and reminders. 2) Folk tales exist in versions and even different variants. 3) Folk tale is traditional, that is distributed in a relatively fixed form or in a standard form, and is distributed among certain collectives for a long period of time (at least two generations). 4) Folk tales is anonymous, that is, the name of the creator is no unknown. It can be concluded that folk tale has become the property of the supporting community. 5) Folk tale usually has a formulaic or patterned form that uses cliché words, traditional expressions, repetitions and has standard bookkeeping. This style is behind the cult of the events and main characters. 6) Folk tale has the usage in collective life that is as a means of education, solace, social protest, and projection of hidden desires.

III. Research Methods

The method used in this research is qualitative. It is research that aims to understand the phenomena of what is experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions and others holistically and descriptively in the form of words and language, in a special natural context by using various scientific methods. According to Azwar in Siregar (2020), descriptive research analyzes only at the level of description, namely analyzing and presenting facts systematically so that they are easier to understand and conclude. Based on the explanation Moleong in Amrizal (2018) qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject of research such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc., holistically, and by way of description in the form of words and language, in a special context that is natural and by utilizing various natural methods.

According to Danandjaya (2007), generally there are two kinds of collection or inventory of folk tales, they are: (1) collection of all essay's titles (books and articles), which have been written by people about Indonesian folk tales,

The collection method for the first type of inventory is library research. Meanwhile the second type is field research. The research on folk tales' inventory in the west coast of North Sumatra coast uses the second data collection method, that is field research. This research was conducted in the Mandailing Natal and Tapanuli Tengah areas.

The technique used in this research is in line what Sudikan (in Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017) said that that the technique of collecting data on oral literature is different from collecting written literature. The collection techniques used are (1) recording, (2) shooting, (3) observation, (4) recording, (5) interviews, and (6) questionnaires.

This research only uses four techniques, they are interviews, recording, recording and shooting. An interview is a conversation with a specific purpose. The conversation was carried out by two parties, they are the interviewer who asked questions and the interviewee who provided the answers to the questions (Moleong, 2009). In this study, the interviews were semi-structured interviews by making a list of questions as an interview guide and providing feedback on the answers given by the informants. Meanwhile, the recording technique is conducted by recording the conversation during the interview process between the researcher and the resource person. The recording was conducted by recorder. Furthermore, the recording technique was carried out to fill in the identity of the informant as well as special points that were of special concern to the researchers for the development of interviews. Finally, the shooting technique was used to file the interview through photos.

The informants in this study were the indigenous people of the Mandailing Natal and Central Tapanuli areas who also became the traditional elders in each village in their regions. The interviewees must have certain criteria such as they are native people, they are peakers of oral literature, and they have never left their hometown. There are several sources who were interviewed to make an inventory of folk tales in the west coast of the coast of North Sumatra. They are spread across several villages. The research took place from January-June 2022.

After collecting the data, then the data analysis steps were carried out based (Sulistyorini, 2007) suggested, they are: (1) the recorded data obtained from the interviews of the informants were roughly transcribed in written language; (2) the transcript is roughly refined (matched again with the recording); (3) The unclear words and sentences were marked and other necessary signs; (4) after the transcript was complete, then typing was conducted; (5) the field data in the form of folk tales were translated into Indonesian; (6) the folk tales were completely transcribed and translated into written language, then were analyzed; (7) the analysis was based on the problems and the selected theory.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The inventory of folk tales in the west coast of North Sumatra shows that there are 12 folk tales in the west coast of North Sumatra, they are The Origin Name of Bangkelang, The Legend of Bukit Bendera, The Aek Busuk, The Giant, The Sacred Urn of Papan Tinggi, The Legend of Ujung Sibolga, The Mystery of Batu Layang, The Legend of Lake Begu, The Origin of Sikaduduak Hill, The Princess Andom Dewi, and The Legend of the Begu Marpayung Forest. The steps taken in this study were: (1) Debriefing with the team in order to equalize the perceptions before going down to the west coast of North Sumatra. (2) Conducting the research by determining the gathering point to the data collection in Mandailing Natal and Central Tapanuli. The resource persons met were Abdul Mahdi Tanjung, Ardin Caniago, Satnan Nasution, and Grandmother Langkot (Patiluban Mudik). (3) Recording and translating the interview data based on recorded stories. The researcher

recorded all the stories in the local language and then translated them into Indonesian. Although we have found at least a synopsis of the stories of each legend, we need a deeper exploration of these stories if they are written in the form of folk tales. This is because the results of interviews conducted in this study were only conducted once on 1 resource person to find out 1 legend title. It is highly recommended that writing a more complete legend can be conducted by finding at least more than 3 sources. (4) Writing a synopsis of the legend story.

The following table shows the results of an inventory of legend stories in the west coast of North Sumatra.

Table 1. Folk tales in the Areas of the West Coast of North Sumatra

No	Title	Area
1	The Mystery of the Tortoise Well	Mandailing Natal
2	The Origin Name of Bangkelang	Mandailing Natal
3	The Legend of Bukit Bendera	Mandailing Natal
4	The Aek Busuk	Central Tapanuli
5	The Giant	Central Tapanuli
6	The Sacred Urn of Papan Tinggi	Central Tapanuli
7	The Legend of Ujung Sibolga	Central Tapanuli
8	The Mystery of Batu Layang	Central Tapanuli
9	The Legend of Lake Begu	Central Tapanuli
10	The Origin of Sikaduduak Hill	Central Tapanuli
11	The Princess Andom Dewi	Central Tapanuli
12	The Legend of the Begu Marpayung Forest	Mandailing Natal

After further analysis, the developed folk tales in the west coast of North Sumatra is quite diverse. The people beliefs in *uis neno* and *uis pah* is still very influential on the developed stories such as myths, fairy tales, or legends. Among 12 folk tales, most of them tell about the origin of an area or interesting things from the area such as a mystery. There are 9 folk tales that tell the origins of an area, including The Origin Name of Bangkelang, The Legend of Bukit Bendera, The Aek Busuk, The Giant, The Sacred Urn of Papan Tinggi, The Legend of Ujung Sibolga, The Legend of Begu Lake, The Origin of Sikaduduak Hill, and The Princess Andom Dewi.

Meanwhile the other 3 folk tales relate to the mysteries occurring in the community, for example the story of The Legend of the Begu Marpayung Forest. It is said that once upon a time there was a forest with very fertile soil and was always used by the community for gardening which usually the harvest produced was always abundant, right one day/ In that area there was heavy rain accompanied by very strong winds, and strangely it only happened in the forest. As a result of the incident many rocks fell from the top of the hill to form a very terrible cave. It was because of this strange incident many people did not dare to garden in the forest area, not even one dared to enter the cave. A few days later the village of Patiluban Mudik had guests, where he was a man who had heard the strangeness and wanted to know more about the story of the Begu Marpayung Forest. The local people forbid the man to enter the cave, but he insisted on going in. Right in the afternoon, the man immediately got ready and entered into the Cave. His departure was witnessed by many people. After he entered, the people waited outside and the strange thing happened because the man did not come out of the cave even though it was already noon, but people still thought maybe in the afternoon the man would appear.

4.2 Discussion

The next part is an appreciation of each of the folk tales that have been collected. The following is an overview of each of them.

a. The Mystery of the Tortoise Well

This story has often become a byword in the local community. It is a well that have been said if we shave (men) and bathe there as soon as we feel in another place, then it will happen to us at a different time. The incident was first felt by a gentleman when the father was shaving in a well, then he dived into the well, immediately the father saw a lot of people around him, and he was already in Mecca, and he was surprised to see the clothes he wore exactly like the clothes people wear when performing Hajj.

b. The Origin Name of Bangkelang

Bangkelang is the name of one of the areas, where now the area is used as a residence by the people in the Natal area, Natal District, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra Province. This village is in the interior, the entrance to the Bangkelang area from Natal to Patiluban Hilir Village, from Patiluban Hilir there will be an entrance to Bangkelang. The name of Bangkelang from the past until now is still a byword for the people who live in that place, and also for newcomers. Previously the area was a very dense forest area with very tall trees, and it looked very scary, especially if we passed from the area in the afternoon before sunset, in general this forest is only a place for people to look for wood and hunt.

c. The Legend of Bukit Bendera

Bukit Bendera (Flag Hill) is one of the historical places in Natal, Natal District, Mandailing Natal Regency, from an altitude of 100-120 above sea level on Natal Flag Hill, the coastline of Natal can be seen with the horizon line of the Indian Ocean. Previously this hill was an ordinary hill or there was nothing special about this hill. This hill was just a hill overgrown with big trees, and people never went to that place at all, but after the death of some old ancestors at Natal like Sheikh Abdul Malik and Sheikh Abdul Rashid who willed to be buried right on the hill brought a big change in itself for the flag hill.

d. The Aek Busuk

The Aek Busuk (water that smells unpleasant) is in Lubuk Tuo village, Andam Dewi Subdistrict, Central Tapanuli Regency. In that area there is a beautiful princess named Andam Dewi who has long hair and white skin who is the daughter of a king. One day there was an eagle that had a large size around the king's house. So it always headed towards the Princess Andam Dewi and wanted to take her away. The incident happened repeatedly so that the Princess Andam Dewi was afraid and hoped that someone could help her from her anxiety. The king made a notice who can kill the eagle, will be rewarded in the form of cash which is very large, but no one has been able to do it yet.

e. The Giant

A cruise ship passing from west to north suddenly stopped in the middle of the sea and not far from the mainland of the Sitiris-tiris area. The reason they stopped was because they ran out of supplies, one of which was drinking water. Inside the ship there was the captain and several crews. At that time the captain directed the crews to look for drinking water ashore not far from where the ship stopped, and immediately the members carried out orders from the captain, bringing several large jerry cans, a place for drinks and food that they would later find, and crossed the seas by swimming in order to reach land. At that

time the captain was left alone on the ship, because the captain felt that it was enough for his crews to leave.

f. The Sacred Urn of Papan Tinggi

There is a tomb located on a mountain, Barus sub-district, Central Tapanuli regency, North Sumatra, which has a jar next to the tombstone at the foot of the tomb and contains clean water. The tomb according to the people is a magical tomb, because they never knew of the existence of the tomb on the hill, even though the people there were crowded. Until one night one of the sheikhs (guru) had a dream, in his dream he met someone he didn't recognize, thus ordered to go to the highest mountain in this area (Barus), there is a tomb left behind. None of people knew the existence of the tomb. They looked for the tomb because according to the sheikh it is an order, then in the morning the sheikh immediately rushed to prepare makeshift equipment from climbing equipment, and others.

g. The Legend of Ujung Sibolga

In the past, there was one of the commanders who stepped aside during the Padri War named Khulifah Alwi. He had a lot of knowledge, religious knowledge and martial arts. In his escape, he finally arrived at Hajoran, one of the villages in Central Tapanuli today. He saw a *surau*, and rushed to pray. He who seemed foreign to the residents turned out to be able to melt them with Khulifah Alwi who was diligent in praying, had a sweet voice during the call to prayer, and often taught the children Al Quran there. Since then, he led the young people in the *surau*. He taught male students. Meanwhile the girls were taught by a girl named Rudiyah, a beautiful girl who was good at Al Quran. After they got married, one day the wife lost her husband. Finally, she circled around the area until she reached the end of Sibolga. She searched while crying, whoever she saw resembled her husband the more she wept. On the black stone she always prostrated, even though she had lost his mind, she still prostrated to pray. Day after day, Rudhiyah seemed to fall asleep on the new bed, it turned out that she had died. The news spread, but in one village no one cared. Finally, she was united with the stone until the end of her life because she was waiting for the person he loves. It is said that until now, if the moon shines brightly, the stone at the end of the sibolga will also reflect the light.

h. The Mystery of Batu Layang

Since the first, this story has often been a byword among the local people. There was a rocky mountain which is said to be able to float and even seem to chase around road users. The mountain area is called Kayangan. The place is very beautiful, on the side of the road and has a variety of plants around it. There is also a shallow and clear river opposite the mountain.

i. The Legend of Lake Begu

Tapian Nauli is the largest sub-district in Central Tapanuli, directly adjacent to the city of Sibolga and its territory also includes the Mursala Island area (one of the famous islands in Central Tapanuli). Not many people know about the diversity and uniqueness that exists in Tapian Nauli. This area has never been separated from the history of the formation of Sibolga. Tapian Nauli, which is surrounded by beaches, swamps, and mountains, has a unique mystery, one of which is about Lake Begu. Lake Begu are two lakes that are close together and have been a mystery among the people, therefore the name is called Lake Begu or Lake Ghost.

j. The Origin of Sikaduduak Hill

Once upon a time there lived a young man who loved to work. He is known by the name of the pitcher peje. Every day he worked as a catfish finder in the rivers in the forest. One day he got lost and could not see the path he used to take to return to the residential area. He got lost in the forests and entered the village of the Bunian. The residents who realized the loss of the young man began to look for him every day. They searched for months and never found the young man. During the search process, the residents saw the traces of the young man's spear. They could even see the young man's footprints. But the residents still could not see and find the whereabouts of the missing young man.

k. The Princess Andom Dewi

Once upon a time in a kingdom there lived a princess who was very guarded by her parents. The king and queen of the palace did not allow their daughter to meet anyone except the palace maids who had been appointed as the maid of the princess to take all her needs to where the princess was. The princess is placed in a special place called *anjuang* and covered with 7 mosquito nets. *Anjuang* is the place or the highest part of the palace building. The days of the princess is only above *anjuang* and can't go anywhere, not even allowed to meet anyone.

l. The Legend of the Begu Marpayung Forest

Begu Marpayung Forest is a folk tale that tells about the mystery of the forest that often scares people. The Begu Marpayung Forest is located in the Patiluban Mudik Village area, Natal District, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra Province. At first, the story of the Begu Marpayung Forest has always been the subject of stories among the people who live in the Patiluban Mudik Village area.

V. Conclusion

From the results of this study, some conclusions can be drawn that there are 12 folk tales in the west coast of North Sumatra, they are The Mystery of the Tortoise Well, The Origin Name of Bangkelang, The Legend of Bukit Bendera, The Aek Busuk, The Giant, The Sacred Urn of Papan Tinggi, The Legend of Ujung Sibolga, The Mystery of Batu Layang, The Legend of Lake Begu, The Origin of Sikaduduak Hill, The Princess Andom Dewi, and The Legend of the Begu Marpayung Forest. Among the 12 stories above, there are 9 folk tales about the origin of an area and 3 folk tales about the mystery of a place. Some important notes after conducting this research are that more in-depth research is needed for each story so that the stories obtained would be more complete.

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