Tape as a Symbol of Luxury and Respect of Gayo Community

Kasmawati¹, Lulu Purwaningrum², Theresia Widyastuti³, Sarah Rum Handayani⁴

Master of fine arts, Faculty of arts and design, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia.

Email: ¹kasmawatiamin@student.uns.ac.id, ²lulu_purwaningrum@staff.uns.ac.id, ³theresiawidiastuti@staff.uns.ac.id, ⁴sarahrpinta@yahoo.co.id

Abstract. Gayo Lues is a regency that still preserves cultural customs in everyday life and upholds the traditions of their ancestors. The majority of the Gayo people are farmers. They process natural products such as prickly pandan leaves into a product called tape. Tape is used as a wrapper and a rice. The purpose of this study is to determine the function, types, and motifs of tape. The benefits of this research serve as an effort to preserve local culture, and an effort to preserve ancestral heritage for the future. This study used a qualitative descriptive method to describe the importance of local culture. Sociological observation, theoretical and cultural analysis based on intensive field research. Based on the field research results, tape has several functions. First, tape is used as rice wrappers, envelopes for invitations to traditional events and as a container to store plain flour that is served to newlyweds at weddings. Second, there are three forms of tape in general, namely ucak, kul and dere. Third, tape has various motifs called sesiku, matapat, bunge terong and special motifs such as bebalun which is only used as a substitute for invitation letters. Tape bebalun is perceived as a symbol of luxury and respect among the Gayo community. This can be seen from the use of tape to invite close relatives to attend traditional events in Gayo. The role of tape in the Gayo is very important because it is an identity and symbol of the Gayo community’s customs.

1. Introduction
Indonesia is the largest archipelago country in the world, consisting of 17,504 islands. The alternative name commonly used for Indonesia is Nusantara, an archipelago with a population of nearly 270,054,853 people in 2018. With a very strategic location and an area of approximately 1,919,440 km², Indonesian soil is very rich with deposits of natural resources and various flora, fauna and hydrographic potential. The benefits of Indonesia's natural resources can be seen in various sectors such as agriculture, forestry, marine, fisheries, livestock, plantations and rivers.

Aceh is located on the westernmost tip of Sumatra island and the Republic of Indonesia. Aceh has many ethnic groups and 23 regencies, one of which is Gayo Lues regency. Gayo Lues Regency is the result of the division of Southeast Aceh Regency in 2002. Gayo Lues has an art performance that is very popular among Indonesian people, namely the saman dance, which has also been recognized by UNESCO as a world cultural heritage in March 2010. Like its beautiful art, Gayo Luwes’ natural wealth can also be seen from its tropical property. Most of Gayo's territory is Gunung Leuser National Park with an area of 1,094,692 hectares that has also been declared a world heritage. This regency is the most isolated district in Aceh.
Although isolated, Gayo Lues has various natural resources, some of which are rivers and trees such as prickly pandanus. Prickly pandanus (Pandanus tectorius) is a forest plant that can also grow in tropical coastal areas. This plant has elongated leaves (like palm leaves or grass) with prickly leaf edges. Widespread life's pandan in the open areas of the lowland is thorns that have slender roots [1]. The prickly pandanus plant is used by the Gayo community to hold back the flow of river water and prevent flooding that can damage plants around the river. In addition, since ancient times, prickly pandanus has been used in the everyday life of the Gayo community. It is usually made into an art craft, namely tape.

*Tape* is a craft commonly used by the Gayo community. *Tape* is rectangular and it has some volume in it. *Tape* functions as a wrapper, a place for rice which is used in birth ceremonies, weddings, circumcisions and other traditional events. The term *Tape* in Gayo Lues culture is different from the term *tape* in Javanese culture. In Javanese society, *tape* is fermented food. In general, in terms of size, the type of *tape* can be divided into several category, namely: *tape ucak* (small), *tapedere* (medium), and *tape gedok* (large). Meanwhile, in terms of motifs, the types of *tape* also vary. *TapeBebalun* is a special *tape* which is usually used as an invitation for traditional events. *Bebalun* is used as a traditional token to invite the Gayo community to attend an event. The Gayo community does not use an invitation letter but the invitation is directly in the form of *tape* filled with betel leaf which signifies close relatives and respect for fellow Gayo community members. This study aims to describe the function, types and motifs of *tape*. That in order to understand the implied meaning, the form in the work needs to be examined. The benefit of this research is as an effort to preserve local culture and ancestral traditions, as a research theory material and a reference for future research [2].

Associated with symbols of opulence and respect of Gayo society, it proved that Gayo customary ceremonies were closely tied to *tape*. As long as that *tape* is used in everyday life as well as in the performance of a customary event. The use of the *tape* was strictly oral from generation to generation without documentation and evidence such as books. It is feared that the next 10 years will be more sophisticated and more modern, that such customs and traditions will be lost and destroyed. So the content of this study has led to an object of study for the function, type and motive of the *tape*.

2. **Methodology**

This study used a qualitative descriptive method to describe the importance of local culture. Data collection was carried out in the field for later analysis. Qualitative research emphasizes the process of directly identifying the problem under study. Descriptive research describes or describes the data [3]. Methods are the processes, principles and procedures used to approach problems and seek answers. In other words, the method is a general approach used to study the object of research.

This study applied a sociological approach using community observation. The theoretical approach was used to obtain in-depth descriptions and analyzes regarding culture based on the results of intensive observations in the field. Sociology is the study of living together in society and investigating the bonds between humans that govern life. The definition of sociology in general is the study of social behavior between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, and groups and groups. Society is a group formed by different segments, each of which has a special function and grows with interplay of interactions [4]. The data collection technique was carried out by determining the informants obtained from the research location. The selected informants were those who understand the forms, uses and history of the *tape*. Observations were made directly in the field, through interviews with sources, and documentation, in which each component of the analysis included the stages of data collection, reduction, presentation and verification.

3. **Results**

The weaving of *tape* among gayo people was ranked as one of the jobs with the precision and skill that specialized the craftsman in making the *tape* work. Moreover *tape* is one of the traditional components of the gayo region from the time of ancestors to the present day still in use. In this section the data will be presented for a review of the multiple *tape* studies of the motif function and the type of *tape*
available in the gayo. In regard to the discussion of the ancient tape included in both the customary and the daily lives of the gayo people.

Based on the results of field research on woven tape, the following findings were obtained. First, the function of tape in traditional events is as a wrapper for rice that is used as an envelope for invitations and as a container for plain flour that is served to newlyweds at weddings. Second, in general, the types of tape are classified into three based on size, namely ucak (small), kul (large) and dere (medium). Third, there are various kinds of tape motifs such as sesiku, matapat, bunge terong and bebalun. Certain motifs such as bebalun are only used as a substitute for an invitation letter. Tape bebalun is perceived as a symbol of luxury and respect for fellow Gayo people. This can be seen from the use of Tape Bebalun as a means to invite close relatives to attend traditional events in Gayo. The role of tape in the Gayo community is very important because tape is a unique symbol and custom in the Gayo community.

4. Discussion

The Indonesian culture has various crafts in terms of forms, patterns and functions that depicts the image of the nation. Craft art has existed since prehistoric times, one of which that was quite prominent came from the bronze era [5]. Crafts have quite extensive details, namely: paper crafts, bamboo crafts, rope crafts, ceramic crafts, leather crafts, carving crafts, batik crafts, and woven crafts made from various materials such as root, dry leaves, and pandan leaves [6]. Diligence was so diligent in human nature that it had the skilled hands to create an object that it could produce such creative and skilled works as the tape [7].

Tape is a craft commonly used by the Gayo community. Tape is rectangular and it has some volume in it. Tape functions as a wrapper, a place for rice which is used in birth ceremonies, weddings, circumcisions and other traditional events. The term Tape in Gayo Lues culture is different from the term tape in Javanese culture. In Javanese society, tape is fermented food. In general, in terms of size, the type of tape can be divided into several category, namely; tape ucak (small), tepadere (medium), and tape gedok (large). It's about the tape from the old days that grandma monyang if pepergian made the tape as the place where the rice would eat when working in the garden [8].

![Figure 1. Principal Ingredients Of Panand Spiked](Source: Kasmawati)

The main material in the woven tape craft is prickly pandanus leaves that are selected from medium sized young leaves. The tool used by the Gayo community in making tapeis very simple, namely: a thread that functions to split pandan leaves from 5 cm to 0.5 cm in size. It is different from the manufacturing and processes found in other areas such as in East Java, where the cutter is specially made knife. Langusis made of flat bamboo that functions as a tool to soften pandan leaves which are usually stiff, thus making it easy to weave.
4.1. Function

_Tape_ in traditional events functions as a wrapper for rice which is used as an envelope that is brought when attending the invitation. The Gayo community believes in and follows the customs passed down from their ancestors. From the field observations, it was found that since ancient times, guests who attend traditional events such as weddings and circumcisions do not bring gifts but instead they give envelopes called _Tape nangon oros_. _Nangon oros_ means to deliver rice in Indonesian. The _tape_ that is brought is filled with rice and given some money on it. Close relatives will usually give a larger amount of money.

![Figure 2. Tape Made Geez](source: Kasmawati)

4.2. Types

In general, there are several types of _Tape_, namely _ucak_ (small), _kul_ (large), _dere_ (medium) and _bebalun_. Each type of _tape_ has different uses. Small _tape_ is usually used as a container to store antiques. The Gayo people usually call it _kampil_. The medium sized _tape_ is usually used to hold rice during weddings, and to wrap rice which is usually referred to as _krotom_ by the Gayo community. _Krotom_ means rice wrapped in banana leaves. _Krotom_ is usually given as a gift to be distributed to the groom's family when the bride is escorted to the groom's residence. _Tape Gedok_ is used as a base mat for plain flour.

![Figure 3. Gedok](source: Kasmawati)

4.3. Motifs

The function of the _tape_ function based on the opinion of h. kadim, a cultural observer for gayo, said that the _tape_ function among gayo peoples from the ancient days was used for packaging of all sorts such as food, rice and for antique storage. Because in ancient times paleotics were available [9]. In general, the _tape_ motif has a geometric woven shape. In Gayo society, _tape_ commonly has several types of motives such as _sesiku_, _matapat_, and _bunge terong_. These motifs can easily be found because they are easy to make and have a luxurious woven appearance.
5. Conclusion

*Tape* is a craft commonly used by the Gayo community. *Tape* is rectangular and it has some volume in it. *Tape* functions as a wrapper, a place for rice which is used in birth ceremonies, weddings, circumcisions and other traditional events. From the results of observation and interviews with craftsmen and cultural analysts on *tape* among society a major factor is the use of *tape*. The people of gayo use *tape* in these customary events such as summarriage even to the death. *Tape* has an important role in the Gayo society. *Tape* is a form of art that continues to exist among the Gayo community because it is used in traditional events that do not fade away.

*Tape* is perceived as a symbol of luxury and respect among the Gayo community. This can be seen from the use of *tape* to invite close relatives to attend the traditional event in Gayo. In general, *tape* types are classified into *ucak* (small), *kul* (large), *dere* (medium) and *bebalun*. The *tape* motifs that are often found and used by the Gayo community are *sesiku*, *mata pat* and *bunge terong*. The Gayo people believe that *tape* is the most durable container that has the meaning of respecting fellow Gayo relatives. For maximum results and future research it should be considered early reference. Hopes for related agencies such as cultural services and tourism to create bookish media information so that the traditional customs and artifacts found in gayo did not become extinct. To the people of gayo, to keep and preserve such artifacts like the tape that will be the symbol and pride of the gayo people.

References

[1] Muhammad, Reza Putra. (2017). Uji Komposit Berpenguat Serat Pandan Duri dan Resin Polyester Dengan Variasi Komposisi Metoda Fraksi Berat. *Jurnal Teknologi Kimia Unimal*. 6: 2 Hal 63 – 72

[2] Rohidi, T. R. (2011). *Metodologi Penelitian Seni*. Semarang: Cipta Prima Nusantara.

[3] Sugito. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Seni Rupa*. Medan: Unimed Press.

[4] Rachmad K. (2008). 20 Tokoh Saoioiologi Modern. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media.

[5] Gustami, Laksmi Kusuma Wardani. (2014). *Keramik Kasongan*. Jakarta: Kementrian Pariwisata & Ekonomi Kreatif.

[6] Soemarjadi, Ramanto Muzni. (1991/1992). *Pendidikan keterampilan*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

[7] Muh. Aulia Rakhmat. (2018). Study Of Woven Structure And Meaning Of Songkok Guruin Takalar Regency. *Walasuji* Volume 9, No. 2, 425—434.

[8] Hamidah. (2020). Masyarakat Pengamat *Tape. Gayo Lues*.

[9] H. Kadim. (2020). Masyarakat Pengamat *Tape. Gayo Lues*. 

Figure 4. Tape motifs Mata Pat
source: Kasmawati