



## Preservation of The Tortor Mangalo alo Tondong Tradition in Simalungun Batak Weddings in Siopat Suhu Village, Pematang Siantar City

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the importance of the Mangalo-allo Tondong Tradition carried out in the Simalungun Batak Wedding in Siopat Suhu Village, Pematangsiantar City, Explaining the efforts made by the Simalungun community to preserve traditions and knowing how the Simalungun Young Generation views the importance of the Tradition in Simalungun Weddings in Siopat Suhu Village, Pematangsiantar City. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This research was conducted in Siopat Suhu Village, Pematangsiantar City. The data collection techniques are by data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicate that the Mangalo-allo Tondong Tradition is still carried out and is still preserved by the Simalungun community, both traditional leaders, Simalungun parents, and also the Simalungun Young Generation. Because the role of Tondong is very important in marriage, this tradition is carried out as a form of respect. If in marriage gets a blessing from the Bone, it will be happy together forever according to the Batak people's view. And also to strengthen the relationship between two large families that they all need each other. In the context of Bronislaw Malinowski's functionalist theory, traditions and rituals must serve a function in social life to maintain and pass down to younger generations. Through these traditions, we can see that something with a role and function will be respected and maintained so that it continues to exist.

**Keywords :** Tradition, Mangalo-allo Tondong, Simalungun, Preservation

## INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, the Simalungun ethnic group still steadfastly preserves their ancestral traditions. One such tradition is the Mangalo-allo Tondong tradition, a tor-tor dance that is now increasingly popular, not only limited to the village or immediate family, but has become an important part of the Simalungun community (E. L. Damanik, 2020). The

Mangalo-alo Tondong tradition, a tor-tor welcoming ceremony, is a very important part of Simalungun customs and is actually experiencing a revival and is becoming more prominent than in the past, when it was limited to the village or immediate family. In this context, traditions are not carried out solely to follow the ancestors, but rather, there is a growing awareness among the community that traditions are very important and must be implemented (Harvina, 2018).

The presence of tradition is not merely an ancient ritual, but rather a symbol of proud cultural identity. For example, Tondong (honored guests) are solemnly welcomed by a tortor group whose performance has been honed through training and modern choreography. Furthermore, the development of social media and public performances such as videos on YouTube with the account Glory Studio Siantar, TikTok, and cultural festivals have helped introduce Mangalo - alo Tondong to a wider audience, not only Simalungun people, but also tourists and traditional arts lovers, so that its existence is increasingly strong and relevant in today's era (J. K. Purba, Halawa, & Ginting, 2020). Efforts are crucial to preserve and revitalize this tradition to prevent it from being lost over time, especially among the younger generation of Simalungun who need to be given a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving their cultural heritage (J. P. Damanik, 2017).

Mangalo means to welcome and tondong means uncle/partner of the wife. Tortor mangalo alo tondong is a dance held to honor and ask for blessings and prayers from all tondong (uncles). This event is held when the groom brings a daughter-in-law to his parents' house, and at this event the Tondong party must be respected or have the highest position in the Simalungun Ethnic wedding because the Tondong are their advisors (Simamora, Saragih, & Hasratuddin, 2022). Tortor Mangalo-alo Tondong is a very important part of the implementation of this ceremony, because without this tortor, the ceremony will not run well. Through this tortor, a person can carry out his role according to his status in the kinship system of the Simalungun Tolu Sahundulan Community, namely sanina, tondong, boru (Marbun & Silalahi, 2023).

According to sources from the Siopat Suhu sub-district community, the village head, Siopat Suhu Sub-district is a term in the Simalungun language. Siopat Suhu means four corners or four cardinal directions. This term reflects the philosophy of balance and unity in the Simalungun tradition. This name also refers to the four main clans of the Simalungun tribe: Saragih, Damanik, Purba, and Sinaga. In a geographical context, Siopat Suhu Sub-district in Pematang Siantar may have been named to represent cultural diversity or as a tribute to the four clans (Barus & Barus, 2019). The first people to enter this sub-district were the Simalungun tribe and the Simalungun population in Siopat Suhu Sub-district is increasing (F. A. Purba & Slamet, 2018).

Research on the Mangalo Alo Tondong ritual among the Simalungun ethnic group holds significant urgency in anthropological studies, particularly in understanding social, cultural, and religious concepts involving local traditions. Mangalo Alo Tondong refers to a ceremony or practice in Simalungun culture related to specific processes or rituals, usually within the context of their social, customary, and spiritual lives. Understanding this will enrich anthropological studies on spiritual practices and the relationship between humans

and the natural world (P. H. Purba, 2023). Mangalo Alo Tondong also serves as a means to harmonize the relationship between humans and the surrounding environment, or between humans and ancestral spirits. Understanding this will enrich anthropological studies on spiritual practices and the relationship between humans and the natural world (Pasaribu & Sinaga, 2021).

Simalungun tradition has various ceremonies, namely wedding and death ceremonies. The wedding ceremony, namely the Mangalo Alo Tondong Tradition, is one of the activities in the traditional wedding ceremony for the Simalungun people. This event is carried out when the groom brings his daughter-in-law to his parents' house, and at this event the Tondong parties must be respected or have the highest position in the Simalungun ethnic wedding (A. L. Purba, Nusarastriya, & Jati, 2024). The difference between the Tor Tor Mangalo Alo Tondong tradition in wedding ceremonies and death ceremonies of the Simalungun tribe lies in the purpose, meaning, and atmosphere of each ceremony. In marriage, Tor Tor is a symbol of joy and togetherness, where this dance is accompanied by prayers and hopes for a new life full of blessings for the bride and groom. Conversely, in death ceremonies, Tor Tor is more of a form of respect and prayer for the spirits of the deceased. Dance in this context has the meaning of sadness, respect for ancestral spirits, and the hope that the soul of the deceased gets a good place in the other world.

The Mangalo-alo tradition also faces various challenges, particularly due to changing values and modernization, which have influenced the younger generation's understanding of the importance of preserving this tradition. High costs and preparation, differences in understanding between families, and strict gender roles in the ceremony present challenges. Furthermore, the limited human resources trained in the art of Tor Tor and the difficulty in harmonizing the tradition with other cultures also impact its implementation. Amidst globalization, preserving this tradition is increasingly difficult, given the influence of simpler and more practical foreign cultures (Rambe & Sari, 2020). Nevertheless, this tradition retains deep meaning for the Simalungun people as a symbol of pride and the continuity of their cultural heritage (Rajagukguk, 2020).

Overall, research on Mangalo Alo Tondong in anthropological studies is important to explore the social, cultural, and spiritual meanings of the ritual, as well as to understand how this ritual functions in Simalungun society, both in terms of identity, social change, and adaptation to external influences. This research also contributes to cultural preservation and understanding of the diversity of traditional traditions in Indonesia. With a better understanding of the meaning of Tor-Tor Mangalo Alo Tondong, it is hoped that the younger generation can better appreciate and maintain this tradition so that it is not lost over time. And also, this research is expected to introduce Simalungun culture to everyone. Due to the rarity of students who undertake research on the Simalungun tribe, the author wants the Simalungun tribe to be more widely known. Cultural preservation is not only the responsibility of parents or traditional leaders, but also the responsibility of all elements of society, including young people, who will later become the successors of culture.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The type of research conducted is descriptive qualitative research that aims to explore and understand the meaning, value, and symbolism of the dance in the context of traditional marriage. According to Bogdan & Taylor in Moleong (2012:4) Defines that qualitative research is a method for processing and explaining data descriptively to be understood as a social reality (H. Sihombing, 2023). This method allows researchers to conduct direct observations of the dance performance, as well as conduct in-depth interviews with various parties, such as families and Simalungun community leaders, to obtain their perspectives on the social and cultural aspects of *TorTor*. With this approach, researchers can explore individual experiences and cultural contexts in depth, so they can reveal how this dance not only functions as a ritual, but also as a medium to strengthen social relations and maintain the preservation of traditions in Simalungun society (Rahman & Heniawaty, 2021).

One type of data source that the author can use is the Research Location. This research was conducted in Siopat Suhu Village, East Siantar District, Pematangsiantar City. The author chose this location because this city is the center of Simalungun culture and is a place where the traditions and values of the Simalungun people are still well maintained and preserved. Pematangsiantar not only has a large Simalungun community, but also often holds various traditional wedding ceremonies involving the *Tor-Tor* dance, so the researcher can easily observe the implementation and preservation of traditions that occur. Siopat Suhu Regency is a term in the Simalungun language. Siopat Suhu means four corners or four cardinal directions. This term reflects the philosophy of balance and unity in Simalungun tradition (Rahmadani & Erlinda, 2019). This name also refers to the four main clans of the Simalungun tribe: Saragih, Damanik, Purba, and Sinaga (Mimi Rosadi, Frindah Selawati Pandiangan, 2023). Geographically, the indigenous population of the regency where my research is conducted is predominantly of Simalungun ethnicity (SAMOSIR, MEISURI, & PUTRI, 2021). This will facilitate the researcher in obtaining factual data. Furthermore, many community leaders and traditional leaders live in this city, who possess in-depth knowledge of the meaning and history of the *Tor-Tor* dance, allowing interviews with them to provide a broad perspective.

In qualitative research, informants are crucial for data collection. A researcher needs to build a good working relationship with informants. According to Spradley (2006), a writer must collaborate with informants because they will be the basis for the relationship between the writer and informant (Remiswal et al., 2022). Therefore, the informant criteria described should be considered, along with full involvement and cultural context. The informant selection technique used in this study was based on the purpose of the research (D. L. Saragih, 2003).

Based on this, the author selected informants who were knowledgeable about the Mangalo-Alo Tondong tradition in the Simalungun community in Siopat Suhu Village. The informants in this paper are as follows:

1. Simalungun Tribe traditional leaders (Partuha Maujana Simalungun). The purpose of selecting these informants was to understand the preservation of the Mangalo-alo

Tondong tradition of the Simalungun tribe in Siopat Suhu Village, Pematangsiantar City, and also to understand the efforts to preserve the tradition.

2. The Simalungun people, who serve as Tondong (Bone) in Simalungun traditional positions, were selected to understand the role and importance of Tondong in the Mangalo-Alo Tondong tradition.
3. Indigenous Simalungun people who marry using the Mangalo-alu Tondong tradition. The purpose of selecting these informants was to understand the meaning of the Mangalo-alu Tondong tradition in Simalungun weddings.
4. Tutua (parents) of the Simalungun tribe. The purpose of selecting these informants was to understand the existence of this tradition in ancient times and the modern era.

Namaposo Simalungun (Young Generation). The purpose of selecting these informants was to understand the younger generation's views on Simalungun traditions and to ensure their continued existence (E. M. Saragih, 2024).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Siopat Suhu Village is one of the villages in the East Siantar District of Pematangsiantar City. Basically, the original inhabitants of Siopat Suhu Village are the Batak Simalungun tribe, and the first King in Pematangsiantar City was also the Damanik clan. Where the Damanik Clan is one of the clans of the original Simalungun tribe (SISADAPUR) Sinaga, Saragih, Damanik, Purba. The name of the first King in Pematangsiantar City is King Sang Naualuh Damanik. In Pematangsiantar City, a Statue of King Sang Naualuh Damanik was also built to signify "The Simalungun tribe is the pride of Siantar City and the statue of the king is an encouragement to preserve Simalungun culture," said Buyung Sarohim who also worked on the Siantar King Monument and was ratified on April 26, 2025 with Simalungun customs together with Simalungun traditional leaders in Pematangsiantar City.

The origin of the name of Siopat Suhu Village is Siopat suhu which means Four Cardinal Directions. Siopat suhu comes from the Simalungun language which refers to the Four Original Simalungun Clans (SISADAPUR) Sinaga Saragih Damanik and Purba. Siopat Suhu Village is still related to the Simalungun Tribe. In Simalungun culture, traditional communities often associate the four cardinal directions with four main clans, each of which has a specific role and symbolism in their social and cultural structure (Siregar et al., 2025). The name Siopat Suhu not only reflects the values of local wisdom in the Simalungun language, but can also be considered a symbol of harmony and balance between various elements in Simalungun society, especially those related to the four cardinal directions and the main clans. This shows the importance of this village as a cultural and social center in the context of Simalungun society (Panjaitan, 2019).

### **The Importance of the Tor-tor Mangalo Alo Tondong Tradition**

In general, in community life, wedding traditions are traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. Traditions can fade if the community does not maintain their preservation. With the increasingly modern era, a tradition will also be affected. In the city of Pematangsiantar, there are various traditions from several tribes. One of them is the

Mangalo-Alo Tondong Tradition from the Batak Simalungun Tribe. Pematangsiantar City is classified as an increasingly modern city, where every place that becomes more developed is likely to be affected by the loss of customs in the community. The researcher aims to examine whether the Mangalo Alo Tondong Tradition is still practiced in the city of Pematangsiantar (Simatupang, 2019).

One of the main values taught through the Mangalo Alo Tondong tradition is the importance of maintaining harmonious relations between two families. In Simalungun society, marriage involves not only two individuals but also two extended families. Therefore, this tradition aims to emphasize the importance of communication, understanding, and mutual respect between the families of the groom and bride (H. M. Sihombing, 2020).

By carrying out this tradition, families on both sides are expected to respect each other and accept their roles and responsibilities in maintaining the continuity of life together. This is a form of social agreement that fosters harmony within the extended family, a crucial element of Simalungun culture, which prioritizes mutual cooperation and kinship.

### **Efforts to Preserve Mangalo Traditions - Alo Tondong**

A tradition can be lost if the community fails to maintain it. Preserving the Mangalo-Alo Tondong tradition in the Simalungun community is crucial for preserving a cultural heritage steeped in spiritual values, kinship, and respect for ancestors. This tradition is not simply a ceremonial ritual, but a form of sacred communication between the present generation and the ancestors, who are believed to continue to provide blessings and protection (Situngkir & Herlina, 2022).

In a modern context increasingly impacted by globalization and changing lifestyles, preserving this tradition faces various challenges, such as declining interest among the younger generation, lack of documentation, and limited space for cultural expression in urban communities. Therefore, various strategic efforts are needed, including cultural education from an early age, strengthening indigenous communities, digital documentation, and support from local governments in the form of policies and funding for cultural activities. Furthermore, collaboration with cultural institutions and academics is also important to rediscover the philosophical meaning of Mangalo-Alo Tondong so that it is not only preserved in ritual form, but also deeply understood by future generations.

The use of social media and other digital platforms can also be an effective means of introducing this tradition more widely and attracting the attention of young people. With these steps, it is hoped that the Mangalo-Alo Tondong tradition will not only survive but also continue to thrive as a proud cultural identity for the Simalungun people and Indonesia as a whole.

### **Young Generation's Views on the Importance of the Mangalo Alo Tondong Tradition**

The younger generation's perspective on traditional traditions is currently an interesting topic to observe, particularly in the context of preserving Simalungun culture. Amidst the onslaught of globalization and the strong influence of foreign cultures, many

young people are beginning to show a renewed interest in their own cultural roots. One tradition that is gaining attention among Simalungun youth is Mangalo-alo Tondong, the tradition of welcoming the tondong (the family of the person giving the wife) during a traditional wedding ceremony (Sa Fitri, 2019).

From the perspective of the younger generation of Simalungun, views on the Tor-tor Mangalo-alo Tondong can vary. Some young people may see it as a very important cultural heritage and want to ensure that this tradition continues in their future weddings. They see the Tor-tor dance and the gifts in Mangalo-alo Tondong as symbols of respect for family and tradition, which must be maintained to strengthen their social ties and cultural identity. For them, this tradition is not just a ritual, but also a way to demonstrate that despite the ever-changing world, their cultural roots remain preserved and respected (Epsan Harianja, Monang Asi Sianturi, & Roy J. M. Hutagalung, 2024).

For some young people, this tradition is no longer seen as a mere formality or customary obligation, but as a tangible form of respect for ancestors and an effort to strengthen their identity as Simalungun people. They are beginning to understand that the Mangalo-alo Tondong tradition embodies important values such as respect, brotherhood, social responsibility, and a spirit of mutual cooperation that must be preserved. Therefore, observing how the younger generation responds to and reinterprets this tradition is crucial in efforts to preserve Simalungun culture now and in the future (Tarigan, 2024).

The younger generation is the lifeblood of society. They will carry on the legacy into the future. Therefore, it is crucial for the Simalungun people to introduce them to traditions and customs.

### **Relation to Theory**

Based on Functionalism Theory, every element in society, including traditions and rituals, plays a role in maintaining social continuity and balance. In this context, Mangalo-alo Tondong is not merely a wedding ceremony but also serves to strengthen social ties between individuals, families, and communities. Functionalism, according to Malinowski, holds that every element of culture, including customs and rituals, exists to fulfill a series of basic human needs. Culture is viewed holistically, with each part interconnected and functioning to maintain the balance of the social system (D. I. Sihombing & Simanjuntak, 2020).

According to functionalist theory, every element in society, including traditions and rituals, has a function that contributes to the continuity and social balance of the group. Malinowski also argued that culture is an interrelated system, where each element plays a role in fulfilling the needs of society. From a functionalist perspective, Malinowski believes that changes in traditions and rituals still serve to fulfill social needs and maintain balance in society (Sumarsih, Siregar, Bahri, & Sanjaya, 2024).

Functionalist theory holds that a tradition will not endure if it lacks a clear utility or function in the social life of a society. This means that a tradition is maintained and passed down because it is considered to have real benefits in maintaining social balance, strengthening solidarity among community members, and preserving long-standing

kinship structures and cultural values. Therefore, the functionalist approach is an appropriate analytical tool for examining how and why a cultural tradition continues to exist in a society, even when it experiences changes in time, modernization, or shifts in values (Susanti, Sugiat, Grace, Shinta Dewi, & Sudirman, 2022).

So, in relation to functionalist theory and this thesis, Mangalo-alo Tondong is a custom that has a clear social function (Akmal, Loebis, & Latiffani, 2022). It strengthens kinship ties and relationships between families (especially between the paranak and the Tondong), which is the primary purpose of cultural function according to Malinowski.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research conducted by the author regarding the Preservation of the Tor-tor Mangalo-Alo Tondong Tradition in the marriage of the Simalungun Batak Tribe in Siopat Suhu Village, Pematangsiantar City, it can be concluded that:

1. The Mangalo-Alo Tondong tradition plays a crucial role in Simalungun weddings. The blessings (Pamasuon) and advice given by the Bone (Tondong) during a Simalungun wedding are essential for the bride and groom to achieve a lifelong happiness in their marriage. According to the Batak people, receiving the Bone's blessing during a marriage will lead to eternal happiness. It also strengthens the bond between the two extended families, demonstrating their mutual need for each other.
2. The efforts made by the Simalungun community to preserve the Mangalo-alo Tondong tradition include encouraging marriage with fellow Simalungun women, especially Simalungun women, because they will follow the customs with their husbands in the future. The next effort is to introduce traditions/customs to the younger generation of Simalungun. To maintain the continuity of traditions through formal and informal activities in schools, cultural festivals, traditional parties and in wedding or death ceremonies in Simalungun so that the tradition does not die out to the older generation. And the most common effort made by the Simalungun community is documenting and digitizing. This tradition needs to be recorded and videoed and then posted on all social media so that more people see it and it will become a memory for future generations of Simalungun.
3. The younger generation's view on the importance of the Mangalo Alo Tondong tradition is that they have begun to realize that customs or traditions are not something that is merely passed down from generation to generation, but something that must be continued and implemented well. From several informants, the author learned about the Mangalo-alo Tondong tradition and was of the opinion that Tulang is indeed highly respected and loved like their own parents because they will be very blessed in their lives if they receive the Bone pasu-pasu, so they will also carry out Mangalo-alo Tondong in the future and will also continue it to their children,
4. The tor-tor gesture of worshiping the ground also has its own meaning. When the bride and groom and their families bow to the ground, it's not just a gesture; it has a profound meaning. It symbolizes humility, respect for parents, the tondong (traditional Javanese traditional leader), and also for the land upon which we stand,

which we consider sacred because it is where we come from and to which we return. By bowing to the ground, the bride and groom ask for blessings, demonstrating their readiness to receive blessings, guidance, and responsibility to carry on family and traditional values.

## **Suggestion**

Based on the findings of this study, the author provides the following suggestions:

1. The Simalungun community in Siopat Suhu Village, Pematang Siantar City, is expected to continue preserving the Mangalo-Alo Tondong tradition. Amidst rapid developments and the influence of external cultures, there are concerns that such traditions will begin to be abandoned. Therefore, young Simalungun people need to be actively involved in traditional and cultural activities, whether as dancers, trainers, traditional event presenters, or as part of a family that understands and respects the traditional process itself.
2. It is hoped that traditional leaders and parents will serve as role models and educators for the younger generation, whether through oral storytelling, direct involvement in traditional ceremonies, or by explaining the philosophy of the Tor-Tor Mangalo Alo Tondong tradition. Furthermore, in every traditional wedding ceremony, traditional leaders and families should continue to include the Tor-Tor procession in its entirety, in accordance with custom, and not diminish its meaning for practical reasons or time efficiency.
3. The Pematang Siantar City Government and the local Cultural Agency are expected to be more active in supporting the preservation of regional culture, particularly the Tor-Tor Mangalo Alo Tondong tradition. This support can take the form of
  1. Holding training and coaching activities for the community, especially teenagers and children, so that they can learn the meaning and movements of the tor-tor correctly.
  2. Create a cultural festival or competition featuring Tor-Tor Mangalo Alo Tondong, so that people outside can also get to know and appreciate this tradition.
  3. Conducting digital cultural documentation, such as videos and guidebooks, so that information about this tradition can be accessed more widely by the general public, even outside the region.

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