



## Cake Rasida As Representation Identity Malay Ethnic Culture At Wedding Ceremonies In Langkat Regency

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### Abstract

The tradition of eating rice face-to-face during Langkat Malay wedding ceremonies is a form of cultural expression rich in symbolism and social values. A crucial element of this tradition is the rasida cake, which serves not only as a dish but also holds profound symbolic meaning. This research aims to reveal the meaning of rasida cake in terms of ingredients, manufacturing process and form of presentation in the context of the tradition of eating rice face to face as well as changes in its meaning from time to time. The research method used is qualitative with an ethnographic approach. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and field notes with informants consisting of the bride and groom's families, traditional leaders, the Malay community, invited guests, and the younger generation in Tanjung Pura District, Langkat Regency. The research results show that rasida cake was originally a sacred dish in the palace environment which functioned as a symbol of honor and unity for the king and the nobles. However, as time goes by, the meaning has shifted to become a symbol of honor and acceptance towards the groom's family and invited guests, as well as a form of cultural preservation in the midst of modern society. The materials, manufacturing process, and presentation forms also undergo transformation without eliminating the symbolic values contained within them. Therefore, Rasida cake is a representation of the cultural identity of the Langkat Malays which reflects dignity, politeness, and the values of togetherness in the social life of the community.

Keywords: Rasida Cake, Tradition of Eating Rice Face to Face, Malay Cultural Identity

## INTRODUCTION

In general, a process or implementation of a tradition is always followed by a presentation or dishes that have meaning and can also become a characteristic of a particular ethnic group. The presence of food, especially in Indonesian traditions, tends to be an inseparable part of or inherent in a particular tradition. Generally speaking, these dishes certainly carry a meaning inherent in or related to that tradition. These traditions can include birth, marriage, and even death traditions. Each tradition, particularly wedding traditions among ethnic groups in North Sumatra, has its own distinctive way of presenting food (Alfachrezzy, Hati, & Simanjuntak, 2023).

Dishes that are associated with wedding traditions among ethnic groups in North Sumatra include, for example, the Toba Batak ethnic group, arsik fish or *Dekke Na Niarsik* means the fish that cooked until The sauce dries and is served during wedding ceremonies. Arsik fish is a dish served during various Batak traditional ceremonies, such

as weddings and births (Rahmatain, Rahmat, Mustofa, & Yusra, 2023). At Toba Batak wedding ceremonies, the presentation of arsik carp contains prayers and hopes that the bride and groom will be blessed with a prosperous and prosperous life (Hasairin, 2014). This reflects the values held by the Toba Batak community regarding the importance of material and spiritual well-being. Furthermore, in the Karo ethnic group, *trites* food is served during their wedding ceremonies, commonly called *Erdemu Bayu*. This *trites* dish is generally served during various major ceremonies in the Karo traditional tradition, such as *Erdemu Bayu* (Sinulingga & Siregar, 2024). *Trites* has a special meaning in Karo ethnic weddings, namely the values of togetherness, balance, readiness, diversity, an expression of gratitude, and a symbol of respect for the guests present.

In Malay ethnic groups, there are various traditional ceremonies, one of which is the tradition of eating rice face to face, which is performed after the bride and groom have performed the marriage contract. The tradition of eating rice face to face is the initial stage in the ritual of eating together for newlyweds, for example, among the Batubara Malay ethnic group, enjoying a meal together while sitting face to face also symbolizes togetherness and unity between the newlyweds (Sundari, 2024). Therefore, the tradition of eating rice face to face is an important part of Malay weddings.

In addition to Batubara Malay wedding ceremonies, the tradition of eating rice face-to-face is also frequently performed at Malay weddings in Langkat Regency, particularly in Tanjung Pura District. The Malay ethnic group is the largest population group in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency. Therefore, the tradition of eating rice face-to-face is still frequently practiced by the Langkat Malay community during their wedding ceremonies. This rice face-to-face tradition naturally presents a variety of dishes, including both main dishes and side dishes.

The types of dishes in the tradition of eating rice face to face at Malay wedding ceremonies apart from rice which is the main food, there are other accompanying dishes which are characteristic of this tradition. At Langkat Malay wedding ceremonies, dishes of various shapes, colors and tastes can be found. Examples like Halua, or chili-shaped sweets, and rasida cake (Tarigan, 2022). Rasida cake is a traditional Malay delicacy and is often served at Malay weddings. Rasida cake has a chewy texture, a translucent white color, and a unique blend of sweet flavors combined with the savory fried onions on top, making it unique and different.

Rasida cake is an important dish in the tradition of eating rice face to face at Malay weddings, especially in Langkat. Naturally, this rasida cake has symbolic meaning in Malay wedding ceremonies. Rasida cake is not just a food served at Malay wedding ceremonies in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency, but also reflects the socio-cultural values of the Malay community. Therefore, amidst the currents of modernization and changing lifestyles, rasida cake remains a part of the tradition that demonstrates the richness and uniqueness of Malay culture in Langkat Regency (Tarigan, Al-Hilal, Sazali, & Dalimunthe, 2022).

In the Malay community, particularly in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency, there is an assumption that the rasida cake served in the traditional nasi hadap-hadap meal may be related to the social stratification of the bride and groom's families during the Malay wedding tradition. This can be seen from the number of rasida cakes served, which at a

glance can provide an indication of the high or low social stratification of the bride and groom's families. This assumption is what makes One of the reasons the author is interested in researching the Rasida cake.

Based on the author's initial observations from the Rahmatain journal (2023), the rasida cake is known as the "Peace Cake" and has a philosophy where the purpose of this cake is to please someone and has a function. as a social bridge Which unite two family And Malay society . Rahmatain (Arbia, 2022) also revealed that every Malay wedding procession contains deep symbolism and meaning to strengthen the bond between The bride and groom and their parents. However, Rahmatain's (2023) research only discussed the philosophy of the rasida cake in Malay weddings. Therefore, the author will discuss in more detail the symbolic meaning of the ingredients and the cake-making process rasida cake as well as form presentation in tradition marriage Malay in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency. Next, the author analyzes local values reflected in Malay weddings and interprets the meaning of the rasida cake in tradition marriage Malay according to generation young. As well as The author will seek the truth regarding the assumption that the rasida cake is related to the level of social stratification.

In Tarigan's research (Solikah, Izzah, & Valeria, 2024) he explains in detail the series of processes of the hadap-hadapa eating tradition among the Malay ethnic group. Langkat in Binjai City. Research in this journal briefly touches on the rasida cake, which is part of the tradition of eating rice face to face, but focuses more on the meaning of the tradition. Furthermore, research by Sundari (2024) examines the local wisdom embedded in various traditions of eating rice face to face, as well as shows its impact in strengthen social relations in between Malay ethnicity Coal. Same like study previously previously, study Sundari (2024) also mentioned the existence of rasida cake in the tradition of eating face to face at Malay ethnic weddings but focused more on explaining the local wisdom of this tradition.

Based on previous research, the novelty or renewal in the current research is that if previous research focused more on discussing the tradition of eating rice face to face, this current research will focus on discussing the rasida cake which has meaning in terms of ingredients, the process of making it, and the form of its presentation in the tradition of eating rice face to face. This research is important to be conducted in order to introduce to the wider community and the younger generation regarding the role of rasidah cake in the tradition of eating rice face to face at Malay weddings. This research also serves as validation material to determine the truth of the assumption that rasida cake is related to the social stratification level of the bride and groom's family in the Malay wedding tradition in Langkat Regency. Therefore, this research not only contributes to the preservation of local knowledge, but also broadens the understanding of how a traditional culinary element such as rasida cake can represent the cultural identity of the Malay community

## **METHOD**

research applies a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. Ethnography literally means a writing or report about an ethnic group written by an anthropologist based on the results of field research over several months or years. According to Spradley

(2017), ethnography is the work of describing a culture with the aim of understanding the perspective of the indigenous population (Afriansyah & Anjani, 2025).

This qualitative research using ethnographic methods is suitable for the author because this ethnographic method has the power to explore cultural meanings in depth from the perspective of the local community itself, or what is known as the native point of view . Rasida cake in the context of Malay society is not just a culinary dish, but a symbol rich in meaning in a series of traditional wedding processions (Soraya & Harahap, 2023). This approach is very much in line with Spradley's principle that emphasizes that culture is a system of meaning shared by a group. The author's task is to explore this meaning from an insider's perspective (Sundawa, 2016).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In social life, marriage is an event that unites two people from different backgrounds. Each ethnic group has its own wedding traditions that define its unique characteristics and cultural identity. Likewise, the Malay ethnic group, particularly in Tanjung Pura District, Langkat Regency, has its own unique wedding traditions. The Malay wedding process encompasses a series of traditions and activities, including several stages that follow the marriage vows (*ijab qabul*).

The first series after the marriage ceremony is carried out is the pantun tradition. This tradition is carried out when the groom walks towards the bride who is already sitting on the dais, where the groom's *telangkai* will reciprocate the pantun from the *telangkai* bride's side. Second, enter into a series of traditions of the *tepung tawar* tradition . During this *tepung tawar* tradition , the family will sprinkle flower water and leaves on the thighs of both bride and groom who are covered with cloth first while giving advice. Third, the next series is *the marhabanan* , an activity of reciting prayers and sholawatan usually performed by the women of the recitation group. Fourth, then enter into the final series of traditions, namely eating rice face-to-face, which is the initial stage of the process of eating together between the newly married husband and wife. In this tradition of eating rice face-to-face, there are dishes served in addition to rice and side dishes, namely traditional foods, one of which is the rasida cake which is a characteristic of the Malay ethnic group (Nazriah, Mirsa, & Mulianna, 2025).

The tradition of eating rice face to face in the wedding ceremony of the Langkat Malay community is an important part of the tradition that is still maintained to this day. This tradition reflects the values of togetherness and unity that are characteristic of Malay culture (Ramadhani, 2025). The tradition of eating rice face to face is carried out after *the marhabanan* , where the bride and groom are directed to sit at the place where the tradition of eating rice face to face is carried out. The place for this tradition of eating rice face to face is previously prepared by the bride and groom's family by spreading out a mat and covering it with a long yellow cloth, then neatly arranged the food dishes. After that, on top of this cloth is also placed candies that have been created in various beautiful shapes such as flowers, peacocks and others. This shows how creative the Malay people are. During this tradition, they will be guided by the Malay wedding *telangkai*.

Among the various traditional dishes served during the traditional nasi hadap-hadap meal, kue rasida is the most distinctive dish, always present at every Malay wedding. While this cake was once served only in the palace for the king and other noble guests, it is

now considered a special dish at various Malay traditional events and can be enjoyed by ordinary people. Traditional events such as kenduri (celebrations) and circumcisions are most often served at Malay weddings. However, kue rasida is sometimes sold as a snack during Ramadan, indicating that it can be enjoyed beyond traditional occasions (Zulkarnain, Yansah, & Sihabudin, 2025).

Therefore, it can be concluded that rasida cake is not only found at weddings and other traditional ceremonies, but can also be found during Ramadan as one of the types of food sold for takjil. Therefore, there is a shift in meaning where the presence of rasida cake in the context of selling takjil is more interpreted as a form of preserving Malay culture and as a symbol of sharing sustenance, while in the context of weddings or other traditional ceremonies, the cake still has meaning as a symbol of honor for the groom's family and invited guests (Seftrin, 2023).

Based on this, the author obtained new findings in this study that the meaning of rasida cake has changed according to the context of its existence. In the past, rasida cake was a rare and sacred dish because it was only served to kings and nobles. However, over time, this meaning has shifted (Prodjosantoso et al., 2020). Currently, rasida cake can be consumed by the general public but is still considered sacred when served at wedding ceremonies as a form of respect. Meanwhile, in the current context, when rasida cake is found for sale, it is no longer interpreted as a symbol of honor but rather as a form of sharing fortune and a manifestation of preserving Malay culture.



**Figure 1 Rasida Cake**

Rasida cake is also known as "Peace Cake" in the Langkat Malay tradition because it is served as a special dish for guests, especially the groom's family. This term is also explained by Rahmatain (2023) in his research, which states that rasida cake functions as a social bridge that binds two families.

Meanwhile, based on the results of the author's interviews with informants in Tanjung Pura District, Langkat Regency, the Malay community agrees that the term rasida cake is "Peace Cake". The reason rasida cake is called "Peace Cake" is because the word "Peace" in question has the meaning of serving this cake as a form of respect and acceptance of guests that represents the good faith of the bride's family to the groom's family. The nickname "Peace Cake" is attached because this cake is also believed to be able to unite the hearts of those who eat it, becoming a symbol of the inner bond that marks the establishment of kinship between two families. In addition, rasida cake is called "Peace Cake" in the word "Peace" is also intended as a hope for the bride and groom to live a harmonious household

life and forgive each other (Harahap, 2021). The author concludes that the word "Peace" is interpreted as a form of acceptance and welcome to the presence of guests from the groom's family which is realized through the serving of rasida cake during the tradition of eating rice face to face. In addition, this term also represents a symbol of the spiritual bond between two newly formed families, as well as a hope that the married life of the bride and groom can be lived in peace and harmony.

Rasida cake is a cake characterized by its sprinkling of fried onions on top. Rasida cake is made with wheat flour, granulated sugar, cooking oil, water, and fried onions. However, there have been slight changes in the ingredients used to make rasida cake. In the past, wheat flour was obtained by hand-pounding, while today the flour used is instant flour. This change results in a difference in the cake's texture, with rasida cakes in the past tending to be denser, while today's ones are softer.

Based on this, the author found that although both past and present use wheat flour as the main ingredient, there are differences in processing methods. These differences affect the texture of the resulting rasida cake. In the past, wheat flour was obtained from grinding it yourself, resulting in a denser and stronger cake texture, whereas nowadays the use of instant flour makes the texture softer. This shows that there has been a change in the practice of making rasida cakes which reflects the adaptation of society to the development of the times without eliminating the traditional values contained within them (Eduar, 2024).

Each ingredient of this rasida cake also has its symbolic meaning such as; First, wheat flour means strengthening the relationship between the bride and groom as well as a solid foundation in the household. Second, granulated sugar as a hope for a sweet household life. Third, cooking oil makes it easier to mix and soften the dough, its use implies the hope that the bride and groom can live by adapting to each other, maintaining harmony, and facing the twists and turns of the household with gentleness and wisdom. Fourth, water is needed to combine all the ingredients into a complete dough. This symbolizes the hope that the life of the newlyweds' household will be united in purity and given good continuity. Fifth, fried onions mean the hope that the bonds of the bride and groom's household will be fragrant in the sense that their family name will be well known by the community (Khairuddin, 2017).

The process of making rasida cake is relatively simple and has no particular symbolic meaning. However, there are differences in the process between the past and present. In the past, rasida cake was cooked over a wood stove, requiring a longer cooking time because the flame had to be kept steady. Meanwhile, nowadays, the cooking process uses a stove, reducing the cooking time. While patience is still required when waiting for the dough to cook, using a stove allows for easier control of the heat to achieve optimal doneness.

Rasida cake is made by mixing wheat flour, sugar, and water, then cooking it in a pan over medium heat. The mixture is stirred until it thickens, a process that requires patience as it takes quite a long time. Once the mixture thickens, cooking oil is added to prevent sticking. Stir again until evenly distributed, then pour into the cake pan. After pouring the mixture into the pan, let it cool slightly before removing it to a plate or tray. The final step is to sprinkle fried onions on top of the cake to complete the presentation (Mailin, 2016).

The presentation of rasida cake has also changed over time. In the past, rasida cake was served on a large *tray* or *tray* with a simple shape, generally a small circle . However, nowadays, it is served more practically , namely served on a regular serving plate and the cake shape is more varied to suit tastes and developments of the times. Based on this, the author found that along with the development of the times, the presentation of rasida cake has also changed, namely a shift from a sacred presentation to a more practical form. In the past, rasida cake was served on a large *tray* or *tray* so that it looked more luxurious and had a traditional feel, whereas nowadays the presentation is simpler, namely only using a regular serving plate for practical purposes. However, the change in presentation does not reduce the meaning and symbolic value of the rasida cake as a form of respect and part of the cultural identity of the Malay people (Traditioan, 2020).

Present-day presentations of rasida cakes, part of the Malay tradition of eating rice face-to-face, come in a variety of shapes, depending on the creativity of the maker. Some common shapes include flowers, circles, hearts, goldfish, and so on. Regarding the meaning of these shapes, there are differing opinions among informants. Some believe the cake's shape has no specific meaning, but is merely aesthetic. However, others believe there is a hidden symbolic meaning behind the beauty of these shapes.

Therefore, it is understandable that the shape of the rasida cake is primarily intended to enhance its appearance. However, many informants believe that the shape of the rasida cake has its own meaning. For example, the flower shape symbolizes beauty, fertility, and the growth of love in married life. The circle shape symbolizes wholeness, eternity, and unity. The heart shape symbolizes love and affection between husband and wife, while the goldfish shape represents prosperity, good fortune, and the continuous flow of fortune. Therefore, the shapes of the rasida cake are not created haphazardly. The Langkat Malay community chooses these shapes to represent hopes and prayers for the life of the bride and groom and their families (Putra, 2021).

In addition, the presentation of rasida cake in the tradition of eating rice face to face at Malay weddings in Tanjung Pura also has an assumption that the presence of rasida cake can be related to the social status of the bride and groom's family at Malay weddings. According to Soekanto (2017), social stratification is basically the differentiation of social positions in society that can be in the form of upper, middle, or lower class, depending on economic criteria, education, power, and honor. Based on the results of the study, according to the statements of several informants who are Malay people and Malay traditional leaders, rasida cake is indeed related to social status but not in an explicit or crude meaning. The presence of rasida cake in Malay weddings has more meaning as a symbol of family dignity or traditional dignity that reflects their ability to maintain and preserve culture. The assessment does not lie in the luxury of rasida cake such as the number of cakes served or the level of special ingredients used, but rather on the sincere intentions and respect of the bride and groom's family as reflected through the presentation at the wedding. In Malay society, respect is given to families who understand customs and have refined character. Families who serve rasida cakes with neat, beautiful presentation and appropriate taste are considered to be families who maintain the family's dignity or the dignity of their traditions.

Thus, it can be concluded that the rasida cake has a meaning as a symbol of family dignity that proves the family's sincerity in welcoming in-laws and guests. This cake can function as a subtle marker of social stratification, but is more accurately understood as a sign of the family's level of understanding and respect for Malay customs. Therefore, even though coming from a poor family but able to continue to serve rasida cake, even in limited quantities, is not a benchmark of social class in Malay society. This still receives respect because the family is considered to uphold Malay customs compared to Malay families who do not serve any traditional Malay cakes such as rasida cake at their wedding reception.

Food is also considered to have cultural significance, representing an ethnic identity. One example is the rasida cake, a unique cultural heritage of the Langkat Malay ethnic group and not found outside the Malay community. Rasida cake is part of Malay cultural identity in the culinary aspect. This cake has symbolic meaning reflected in the ingredients used and the way it is served, which generally depicts the Malay character of simplicity, politeness, and uniqueness (Marsan & Siregar, 2021). The meaning of rasida cake represents a symbol of honor and a manifestation of the hope for harmony in the married couple's household life. Therefore, rasida cake can represent Malay cultural identity, but not entirely (Kautzar, 2017).

This is because Malay cultural identity is formed from various interrelated elements, such as language, customs, beliefs, art, and social values that exist in society. Rasida cake is just one symbol that reflects some of these cultural values, especially in wedding ceremonies. However, its existence remains important because through rasida cakes, the Langkat Malay community can maintain and express their cultural identity amidst the development of the times. Moreover, preserving rasida cake is not only about preserving culinary traditions, but also an effort to pass on noble values and strengthen the identity of the Malay community amidst changing times

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results above, it can be concluded that rasida cake has an important position in the tradition of eating rice face to face at Malay wedding ceremonies in Tanjung Pura District, Langkat Regency. This cake is not just a side dish, but is a symbol of honor, peace, and the unification of two large families. In the past, rasida cake was considered sacred because it was only served to kings and nobles, but over time its meaning has shifted. Nowadays, rasida cake is not only a symbol of respect in traditional events, but also a means of preserving culture and a form of sharing fortune in modern society. Changes in ingredients, manufacturing processes, and presentation demonstrate adaptation to changing times without diminishing the traditional values and meanings inherent within them. Symbolically, the ingredients of the rasida cake represent prayers and hopes for harmony, unity, and the good name of the bride and groom's families. Furthermore, the presence of the rasida cake can serve as a subtle marker of social stratification, but is more accurately understood as a sign of the family's deep understanding and respect for Malay customs. Therefore, the rasida cake can be understood as a cultural heritage that

is not only aesthetic and culinary but also rich in social and spiritual meaning that strengthens Malay cultural identity amidst the currents of modernization.

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