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Nusantara Woven Fabrics

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LAMPUNG TAPPAN FABRIC: A STUDY OF SERUMPUN MELAYU NUSANTARA WOVEN FABRICS

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This paper will explain about the Tappan fabric in Lampung Province and its relationship with the Serumpun Melayu woven fabrics. As long as we observe, few people know about this type of fabric. Tappan fabric or in other words called Handsome Fabric is a type of traditional woven fabric commonly worn by the *Saibatin* people of Lampung. We need to know that in Lampung Province there are two major tribes, namely the *Saibatin* Tribe and the *Pepadun* Tribe, this is what makes Lampung have the motto "*Sang Bumi Ruwa Jurai*" which means "One Earth, Two Tribes". The division of tribes in Lampung makes the Lampung people have many cultures, both tangible and intangible.

The ancestors of the Lampung people in ancient era had excellent weaving skills which can be seen from the various types of woven fabrics in Lampung. One of the famous woven fabrics from Lampung is Tapis fabric. Tapis fabric itself is a fabric that is often used in traditional Lampung events such as ceremonies for giving traditional titles, wedding ceremonies, traditional festivals and other traditional events. Tapis fabric is a symbol that implies that a power does not only exist in men, but also women. Tapis is a women's dress that characterizes the cultural identity of Lampung which is usually worn by Lampung people from the *Pepadun* tribe. Generally, Lampung people only know the traditional Tapis woven fabric, while the Tappan or Handsome Fabric is still very rarely known even by Lampung people themselves.

In contrast to Tapis woven fabrics, Tappan woven fabrics are generally worn by the community for dining mats, food covers, dowry wrappers in wedding processions, also used in traditional Lampung rituals for the *Saibatin* tribal community, because this tribe is the original owner of the Tappan fabric which later became the one of the traditional woven fabrics by Lampung people from the *Saibatin* tribe. Knowing more about this Tappan fabric, the Tappan fabric is a fragment of the ship fabric which is divided into three parts, the other two being the *Tatiban* fabric and the *Pelepah* fabric. According to the history, Tappan fabric has existed since the 16th-17th Before Century where at that time Lampung people still adhered to Animism. Long time ago, the Tappan fabric pattern was generally a ship pattern which was interpreted by the community as a ship that

carried the spirits of the dead to go to the afterlife. But along with the development of the times and Islam which is the majority adopted by Lampung people, the philosophy of the Tappan fabric which was originally a human journey from death to the afterlife, is now a human journey from life to death, this happens because of the process of life. Humans are considered an important phase that will determine whether a person is worthy or not to enter heaven (Dewi, 2022:26). Interestingly, the community has modified the shape of the Tappan fabric a lot, not only in the form of a ship or resembling a ship but also having various patterns by imitating the natural environment, as shown below:

Figure 1. Tappan Fabric (Tray)



Figure 2. Kapal Fabric



Source : Documentary Collection of Lampung Museum

Figure 3. Tappan Fabric



Source: Nurdin, BV, & Damayanti, D. (2019). Tappan-Pelepai Woven Fabrics, Social Status and Caring for Local Culture in the Multicultural Society at Lampung, Indonesia. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*,

Knowing that the development of Tappan fabric in the Lampung area has been very difficult, but as a form of preserving Lampung culture, we can still find this fabric in the museum of Kekhatuan Semaka, Tanggamus Regency, and also at the Lampung Museum, Bandarlampung City. By placing Tappan fabric in the museum, we can have easy access to learn and get to know more about the manufacturing process, shape, size and motif of Tappan fabric.

In ancient era, people were very accustomed to the use of existing natural resources to meet their daily needs, such as in fulfilling their primary needs, they used to use materials from plants to make dyes for fabrics, while the main material in making fabric was cotton yarn and its additional materials such as gold thread and silk thread, while the manufacturing process uses traditional techniques and is carried out by indigenous people, therefore the traditional fabrics of the people on the island of Sumatra and the island of Borneo have many similarities. In addition, the fact that the majority of the people of Sumatra and Borneo are from the same ethnic group, Malay cognate.

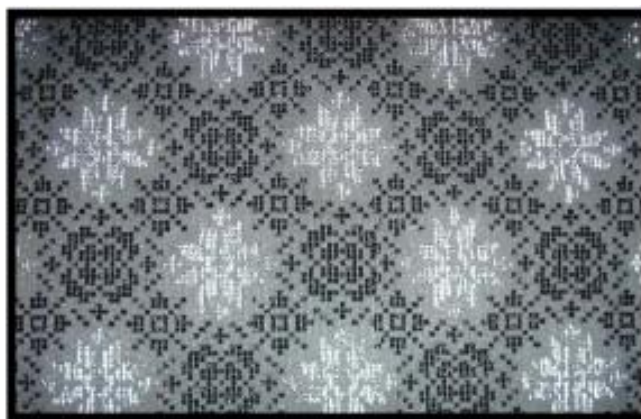
The spread of ethnic Malays has started since the establishment of kingdoms in various regions which later formed Malay territories to Johor and Malay. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initially interpreted the term of Malay in 1972 as a Malay ethnicity group residing in Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Madagascar. The term of Malay itself comes from the words *Mala* (beginning) and *Yu* (country) which means 'first land'. One of the Malay folk tales, namely the story of the Kelambai, which tells about various countries, statues, caves,

carvings, and others that are inhabited or touched by the Kelambai will get miracles. It indicates that the country that was formerly inhabited by the Malays already has a high civilization (Thamrin, 2018).

The spread of the Malay ethnicity community in Indonesia and the other countries in Southeast Asia produces many cultures. One of the material culture is the traditional woven fabrics, such as Ulos fabric originating from North Sumatra as a traditional Batak fabric, Palembang Songket fabric from South Sumatra, and Pandai Sikek fabric from West Sumatra. Each of these fabrics is made traditionally with weaving techniques, using traditional dyes and has distinctive patterns, indeed, basically the traditional woven fabrics have a function to be used in traditional events and as one of the icons of traditional culture owned by each region like the Tappan fabric, which becomes the pride of the Saibatin tribe, Lampung.

Apart from Indonesia, other areas which are mostly inhabited by ethnic Malays, they have also developed by forming a variety of regional cultures which are the traditional characteristics of the region. In the Philippines, the distribution of the Malay tribe is around the islands of Sulu and Mindanao, the traditional fabric from Mindanao is the Inaul woven fabric, physically this fabric is also the same as traditional Indonesian fabric which has a combination of bright colors, with patterns that have full of meaning, in its manufacture using a weaving technique. The woven fabric or it is also called Songket fabric can also be found in several regions in Indonesia, such as Palembang, Riau and Sulawesi. In addition, this fabric can also be found in other ASEAN regions, including Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore.

Figure 4: Malaysian Songket



Source : Hasbullah, H., Wilaela, W., & Syafitri, R. (2020). Menenun Bagi Perempuan Melayu Riau: Antara Peluang Usaha dan Pelestarian Budaya. *PALASTREN Jurnal Studi Gender*.

Figure 5. Palembang Songket



Source: Viatra, AW, & Triyanto, S. (2014). Seni Kerajinan Songket Kampoeng Tenundi Indralaya, Palembang. *Ekspresi Seni: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Dan Karya Seni*.

Figure 6. Siak Riau Songket



Source :<https://student-activity.binus.ac.id/himdkv/2021/07/kain-tradional-khas-riau-tenun-siak/>

The culture above is the result of interactions among communities that produce a new culture. This is very reasonable, because even though they come from the same ethnicity, if they are spread out and occupy different areas, it will produce a new culture but still will not eliminate the characteristics of the old culture. This is what makes Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam and other countries in Southeast Asia called Serumpun Melayu Nusantara with its culture that comes from one Malay ethnicity.

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