

Batak tribe essay sample



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Batak is one of the largest tribal group in Indonesia. They are divided into 6 groups, which are the Pak Pak/Dairi, Toba , Mandailing, Karo, Angkola, and Simalungun and have an estimated total population of 6 million according to 2000 census. Although nowadays batak people can be found in many regions in Indonesia, actually they came from mountainous region in Northern Sumatra.

Batak people had a lot of traditions, including their traditional communal houses and the popular hand-woven textile that is called ulos. The traditional house, that has such a fabulous and well-known roof, is made up of timbers for the wall and dried coconut leaves for the roof. The house has three levels, people live in the middle level, and animals are placed in the lower level. The house is a symbol of the batak's tribe.

Ulos is a hand-made textile. It is made exclusively by women and used in traditional clothing, rituals, and as souvenirs. One important type of cloth, the ulos ragidup, is traditionally used at wedding ceremonies. On the day of the wedding, the father of the bride presents this cloth to the mother of the bridegroom. This symbolic act unites the two families and ensures the fertility of the couple. It is then passed down from one generation to the next as an heirloom, along with jewelry and other household objects.

However, Batak people still believe in black magic and shaman. There are people called " datu", that has a task to cure and predict the future. Some of Batak people still depend on datu to heal their illness, and it makes the government's efforts to socialize modern medicine harder. Datu cures their patients by giving recipe , spell and some traditional song. Traditional

healers are not powerful enough to cure illness due to the loss of a person's tendi (this falls under the jurisdiction of the datuk), however they do play a role in communicating with begu (death soul) and influencing their behavior.

There was also an issue about arranged marriage in Batak tribe. Some of Batak families, have perspective that their children have to marry Batak's. Therefore it curbs the freedom of their children to determine their spouse, and it is a little bit racist for me.

Batak people looked like common Indonesian people. You can recognize them by listening to them when you are talking to Batak people. Some of them still have Batak's accent, which is very unique and different with Javanese or Sundanese accent. You can also notice them by looking to their name, Batak people have certain family name or usually it is called Marga, such as Situmeang or Tampubolon.

Batak's cultures are influenced by the European missionaries. In 19th century, European missionaries came to North Sumatra, they discouraged carving and ritual dirges and dances, fearing these were blasphemous. Missionaries eliminated most of the masked dance and rituals. They also introduced Christian religion to Batak people.

This is a short introduction of Batak tribe. There are still a lot of other tribes in Indonesia. We need to understand the other cultures, because it is a part to appreciate the differences of the Indonesians citizens. Therefore the aim of our independence predecessor can be realized, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.