

## The Technical Essence of Poda Na Lima as the Foundation of Public Health Philosophy

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### ***Abstract:***

*The latest technology considered relevant to the times' needs makes people from the newest civilisation abandon and forget traditional technology that has even been tested for hundreds of years in overcoming various problems of its time. One is Poda Na Lima, philosophical teaching about mental attitude and lifestyle in Batak civilisation. Now, this philosophy is still known in the Batak community. However, the problem is in the implementation. This study explores and translates the values of Poda Na Lima to draw their relevance to the potential for solving the Covid-19 problem, which is still a problem in the global community. This research and study analyse the Poda Na Lima, a philosophy using the Sociosemiotics analysis knife. The sociosemiotics point of view is appropriate in describing the problems related to this research and study. It becomes a research method, analysis, and conclusion that can ultimately prove that the values and derivatives of the implementation of Poda Na Lima can be used as standards and guidelines for overcoming the Covid-19 problem and any other public health problems.*

### ***Keywords:***

*poda na lima; sociosemiotics; public health; solution; philosophy; technical essence*

## **I. Introduction**

Doubts about the effectiveness of traditional values as the basis for creating civilizational technology should have been eliminated long ago. History records many problems of civilization that contemporary strategies and techniques fail to solve. However, solutions can be found from the perspective of traditional values and ethnic philosophies. Although this fact is of practical value, modern capitalist fear of losing its role is assumed to be the culprit of ignorance and dishonesty in achieving traditional values in world civilization.

For example, during the past Covid-19 colonial period, the traditional values and philosophy of Poda Na Lima succeeded in having a positive influence in overcoming the onslaught of the evil virus so that its negative impact on society could be minimized. People who are educated about Poda Na Lima are considered to have a higher level of self-reliance and have survived the Covid-19 problem. Statistical data prove this empirically.

Poda na lima is a life guide in various segments of life for everyone in Batak society. Everyone will always pay attention to the fundamental values of tradition in the process and interaction of self-development, environment, household, and society. Etymologically, Poda means advice, Na means yang, and Lima means (number) five. As a philosophy for the Batak community, Poda Na Lima is interpreted as five essential pieces of life advice: 1). Paias rohamu, 2). Paias pamatangmu. 3). Paias parabitonmu, 4) Paias bagasmu, 5). Paias Pakaranganmu.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 problem has complicated world civilisation for more than a year and has yet to find a permanent, effective and efficient solution. Vaccines or drugs offered by the modern world do not guarantee the health of people and communities. Behaviour and lifestyle are the keywords for saving people, societies, and civilisations from the Covid-19 attack. The problem is that many people need to be firmer and believe in the strategic offers of the modern world. The solution variables offered need to be revised to bind people's hearts and minds to be consistent and sincere in implementing them. A solution must contain a unique value, which can tempt and influence people to accept and work on it. This is where Poda Na Lima, a cultural technology that has been tested for hundreds of years, is here as a solution to the problems of world civilisation due to Covid-19.

New research is worth doing if it touches at least one of these traits: urgent and interesting (Siregar et al., 2021, p. 51). This study explores and translates the values of Poda Na Lima to draw their relevance to the potential for solving the Covid-19 problem, which is still a problem in the global community. Doubts about the future of civilisation left to contemporary technology and decisions motivate this research. For years, the world's civilisation has needed clarification on the ambiguity and uncertainty of policymakers' statements and solutions based on contemporary technology. These statements and keys were created with a purely political perspective or minimal knowledge, but they are still forced to exist.

## **II. Review of Literature**

Poda na Lima was the educational value that asked all Batak societies to purify themselves, their family, and their surrounding against the five fundamental values of family life, social life, and national life, namely: purifying the soul, cleaning the body, cleaning the clothes, cleaning the house and cleaning the environment from all the things that are not suite the local customs (Lubis, 1997, p. 69). Moreover, D.J. Gultom Rajamarpodang (1992, p. 52) stated that Poda na Lima comes from Poda, which means advice or rule, while the term na means five Poda na Lima means five compulsory regulations that must be practised in daily life.

Then, Siregar (2012, p. 59) stated that Poda na Lima was recognised as five pieces of advice or education about cleanliness similar to command. There were five commands:

- the command to purify the heart
- the power to purify the self
- the order to clean the clothes
- the authority to clean the house
- the command to clean the environment

Furthermore, the concept of Poda na Lima was five points that must have united each other (Siregar, 1984, p. 77). Poda in Angkola-Mandailing meant a word of reminder given by parents to their children. Poda was one of the guides of life ancestors gave to live life easily. Shortly, Poda na Lima meant five words of reminder (Siregar, 2012, pp. 74-75).

The history of the Coronavirus began with the first report of the COVID-19 outbreak originating from a group of cases of human pneumonia in Wuhan City, China, in late December 2019. The earliest date of onset of issues was December 1, 2019. The patient's symptoms included fever, malaise, dry cough, and dyspnea, diagnosed as a symptom of viral pneumonia infection. The press initially called Wuhan pneumonia because of its pneumonia-

like symptoms. Genome sequencing results indicate that the causative agent is a new coronavirus. The World Health Organization (WHO) temporarily named the new virus 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) on January 12, 2020, and then officially changed it to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on February 12, 2020.

The COVID-19 disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, also known as the Coronavirus, is still in the same family as the Coronavirus that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreaks. These three outbreaks have different rates of infection in infecting victims. Of the three, COVID-19 is the fastest at causing infection among humans.

One way to anticipate or avoid COVID-19 is with good PHBS and ongoing health promotion to the community. The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia has formulated "Guidelines for Guidance on Clean and Healthy Life Behavior" as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 2269 / MENKES / PER / XI / 2011 Management of PHBS (Kasrudin et al., 2021, p. 20).

### **III. Research Method**

This research and study analyse the Poda Na Lima, a philosophy using the Sociosemiotics analysis knife. The sociosemiotics point of view is appropriate in describing the problems related to this research and study. In the sociosemiotic strategy, there are tactics to measure signs broken down into meanings on a convicted abstract object.

The investigative approach method used in this research and study is the field research method. Field research is one of the data collection methods in qualitative research that is not fixated on specific theoretical knowledge but rather translates actual conditions based on existing data. Field research is usually done to decide which direction the study should take based on context.

The method of analysing data was carried out descriptively. The data analysis was based on the Social Semiotic theory based on the will and focus stated in the study question.

The conclusion method used in this study is a combination of induction-deduction. Both ways are intended to lead to objective, balanced, and argumentative conclusions by properly upholding the rules of writing academic literature.

### **IV. Result and Discussion**

Poda Na Lima is the philosophy of the Batak people which consists of five core pieces of advice. The five principles in Poda Na Lima can be interpreted as follows:

#### **4.1. Paias Rohamu (Clean Your Heart)**

The Batak tribe is famous for its game of feelings. Nearly every policy will begin and end with feelings of thought. This condition means that feelings are the source of every action for the Batak people. The feeling arises in the heart. So, preparing and guarding the heart well is the beginning and the end of every step.

The human body has a heart that gives birth to creation, taste, and intention. For humans to lead to ideal conditions, these three elements must be balanced and harmonious.

When there is lameness, an abnormality will appear. To acquire fairness needs to be in a clean mood. A pure or dirty heart can be known for behaviour. The terms dirty and clean, in this case, are abstract. So, knowing the cleanness and filth of this human heart can judge it from muhasabah or self-examination. This analysis can be done when humans' emotions realise that humans are created beings. So, humans do not appear and stand alone. When that sorrow has come to the recognition that it was created, the heart begins to search for the creator. In seeking this essence, the heart must know that there is something prior and powerful to make itself into existence.

The heart cannot escape from the understanding that it is made alive and nourished by something Almighty, namely Allaah, God Almighty. A clean heart is still connected with the power that created it. This dependence is a belief that makes belief, belief also gives birth to belief, and belief is an element of religion. In Islam, it is stated: that prayer, worship, life, and death are for Allaah, the Lord who owns all the worlds.

By surrendering oneself to Allaah, there will be a clean heart. However, the heart has weaknesses and is always overshadowed by lust, doubt, and doubt. Often fall into the wrong paths because of the influence of the body's instincts in which the heart resides.

Therefore, cleansing the heart is a highly complex matter. Controlling the heart is tricky, but all difficulties will disappear if maintained well. A clean heart gives birth to the pure character.

#### **4.1. Paias Pamatangmu (Clean Your Body)**

In the Batak tribe, the body always complements the soul, as in the Pangupa ceremony, which prays and celebrates Tondi dohot Badan (Soul and Body). This condition is implemented in cultures around the world. Based on empirical considerations, this is because it is believed that the body's physical condition significantly affects the psychological condition. The body is an active organ that moves, acts, and tries. In such a space to move, the body must be filled with dirt that needs to be cleaned every time. If someone is negligent, the dirt will cover the body and cause disease. We always have to live cleanly as a precautionary measure to avoid this. A clean body makes humans healthy. In a healthy body, a healthy soul grows.

Sometimes, when maintaining the body's cleanliness, humans face anomalies. It is not uncommon for a body to live in a clean environment, but that body is always sickly. Furthermore, a body is covered with dirt, but the body is not sick. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse what is meant by clean in the cleanliness of the body. The body desires food and drink and clothing or clothing. These must all be clean. Determining cleanliness will only be formulated with the provisions contained in religious teachings. In Islam, education about cleanliness is regulated down to minor elements. It is said to eat the excellent sustenance given and not exceed the limit.

Whosoever anger strikes will be hurt. Suppose we examine cleanliness from a religious perspective. In that case, the notion of a clean body will be blurred because many things are considered clean according to natural conditions but dirty according to religion. Meanwhile, according to religion, what is neat is also unlimited. For example, when there is not enough water, ash, or clay instead of water for ablution. Guidelines or instructions for cleansing the body are in religious teachings.

Moreover, it is a legal provision and a helpful guide. If the heart and body are clean, then the human being must be pure. The two elements cannot be separated from each other. There is no way that in a dirty heart, a clean body.

#### **4.3. Paias Parabitonmu (Clean Your Clothes)**

Clothing is additional material or humanitarian aid to support ethics and aesthetics. Clothing is an interpretation or sometimes even a summary of a person's image. Clothing is a civilisation that shows the value of human culture. What clothing means is covering the human body consisting of leaves, bark, animal skins, and cloth. This clothing depends on the circumstances of its use and the place or area of use and has a double function, namely as a protector and as a humanitarian shield that wears it.

If it functions as a humanitarian shield, what is judged is its cleanliness and durability as a protector. No materials or variables are seen from a high or low price. Clean clothes according to their function, do not wear clothes to the fields to work in officials, wear bath clothes when eating, and party clothes are worn for prayer. Clean clothes can raise self-esteem, but on the other hand, dirty clothes can affect the cleanliness of the body, clean clothes and be pleasant for those who wear them. In this case, the clothes that become right or wrong are also very dependent on considering space and time of use.

Likewise, clothes can show someone's identity. Traditional clothing can facilitate the identification of a person's ethnicity. Uniforms can quickly identify a person's occupation or profession. Even the colour of the clothes can reveal a person's character or preferences. This variable facilitates the interaction process between parties.

Batak clothes are called Abit Godang (Ulos). Batak people use Ulos in childbirth ceremonies, marriage, circumcision, Etc. Each pattern and colour in Abit Godang have its meaning. So, its use in a moment must be related and relevant to the unity of the clothing itself.

#### **4.4. Paias Bagasmu (Clean Your House)**

A house is a place for all family members to live and carry out activities that become their daily routine. The house can be a source of peace, inspiration, and energy for the owner. The traditional Batak house has two types of buildings: the godang bagas as the place for namora-natural and the sopo godang as the customary court hall. A house is a building inhabited by humans who live in families. Each has a different will, even though there are many similarities.

The house is divided into several rooms:

1. Place to cook (kitchen),
2. Places to eat and drink (dining room),
3. Place to sleep (bedroom),
4. Place to clean the body (bathroom and toilet),
5. Place to chat and interact (family room).

The family living in this house is good if all of this is neat. However, some things need to be prioritised in a household, namely the harmony between the father, mother, and children. A father must know his obligations as the head of the household. A wife must also realise he is the husband's companion in managing the household, including their children's formal and informal education. If a mother ignores household hygiene, it can be ascertained



that all household members are incompatible. In the mother's hand lies the happiness of the household. If the household is clean and all the instruments are placed in harmonious positions, comfort, joy, and security are there. If this is not reflected in a home, it means that cleanliness does not exist, likewise, with the children who consequently will receive the inheritance of the house. This variable means that all the parents' roles, functions, and duties will one day be left to the children. For this reason, parents must instil an example in the home.

However, recently there has been a change toward using personality measures and observation. McCall (1993) claimed that the result of the assessment showed readiness among educational psychologists to get referred child institutionalised and expelled from the setting where the problem happened, but it was not always necessary for the child to be in a special school. (Gadour, A. 2009). Explaining this problem, personal conversation with primary school teachers in England suggest that they are often finding it difficult to respond to the linguistic needs of newcomers because they lack knowledge and training in second language acquisition. As a result second language learners are very often failed to engage in meaningful social interaction within classrooms (see for example, Hatch, 1983; Krashen, 1982; Long, 1983). (Gadour, A. and Amniana, S. 2009). In line with this, parents made reference to teachers' scribbled writing on children's exercise books, which they found neither clear nor encouraging to address children's learning mistakes at home (Gadour, 2011).

#### **4.4. Paias Pakaranganmu (Clean Your Yard)**

A yard is an area in front of or behind the house. The yard is the element of the house closest to the site, which is not the homeowner's authority. The yard is directly adjacent to someone else's yard or house. The yard is also directly adjacent to a public road. For this reason, even though the yard is the homeowner's property and authority, the yard's conditions and situation can directly impact and affect the environment and other people. So, it is the obligation of residents who have yards to condition the condition of their yards so that they can work together and not cause social friction with other parties.

The yard area is not determined, but it is a place that can evaluate the beauty (harmony) of the house itself. The yard is outside the house but still blends with the house. There is only a house with a yard. Therefore, the role of this yard has a crucial function. Even though the house is made of a magnificent and luxurious building, while the surrounding grounds are dirty, its value will be lost, and the occupants will not feel at home. Nevertheless, if the house's yard is clean and tidy, it can bind and please the heart, even if the house in the yard is small or straightforward.

Humans live in society and cannot live alone. Likewise, the houses will be arranged so that neighbours can surround them. In this case, the yard has a close relationship with neighbouring neighbours and between one yard and another. Therefore, it is necessary to keep it clean not to offend other people's houses and gardens. It is not uncommon for severe disputes between a family and a neighbour. To prevent things like this, we need to keep the yard clean. The yard of the house reflects the family of the occupants. The reason is that the yard and the house have an inseparable link. Likewise, the house is intimate with the family, and the family has links with other human groups. So, the main point of this advice is that if the yard is clean, our relationship with our neighbours must also be clean and harmonious.

There is an assumption that the Batak people tend to be loud because they talk to their neighbours from page to page. The yard for the Batak people is also commonly used to place various catches or plantation products. It is in line with the previously described role and function of the yard that the yard is the front line of the interaction of the inhabitants of a house with entities outside it.

A summary of the holistic description of Poda Na Lima based on a Sociosemiotic perspective is as follows:

Paiaas Rohamu (Clean Your Soul) indicates that the cleanliness of the heart is the essence of everything in this life as a human being. Good intentions and clarity in feeling something will guide a person towards a more strategic, effective, and efficient orientation and steps. Empathy and sympathy can also be directed and constructed precisely and better based on a clean heart. It is not just personal sentiments that can create mere conflicts of interest. This philosophy teaches us to be more feeling in action. Profit and loss calculations are not everything. Happiness, inner satisfaction, and heart are essential factors in any policy. With a simple sentence, "Think, see, hear, and do with your heart. Then everything will produce better results".

Paiaas Pamatangmu (Clean Your Body) indicates that the body, soul/heart are connected. Endurance affects liver resilience. Body health affects soul health. Of course, body hygiene will affect inner organs' health. The body consists of various organs that support and influence each other. All these organs perform specific roles and functions. For example, we cannot force our eyes to chew food like our mouths cannot be forced to see. So is the advice this philosophy gives with this metaphor. Never see a thing, problem, or anything as an independent entity. All are connected. Then consider the treatment effect of one variable on other variables, as in looking for a solution. Consider various related things. It also includes every stakeholder involved and affected by the problem. Of course, everything is adjusted according to their respective roles and functions.

Paiaas Parabitoimu (Clean Your Clothes) indicates that clothes are not just sheets of fabric that stick to the body. The primary function of clothing is to cover and protect the body from foreign particles that might irritate or even damage the body. However, clothing is also about ethics and aesthetics. The principles of propriety and harmony are also played there. Improperly dressed ethics and aesthetics can disrupt a person's biological stability and devalue that person's image. They are likewise related to cleanliness. Even though a person has cleaned his body well, when he uses dirty clothes, his body is immediately polluted with dirt on those clothes.

That is how the Batak interpret this metaphor. Again, profit and loss are only some things for the Batak people. Even 1 plus 1 does not always have to be 2. Some ethics and aesthetics go hand in hand to balance each other. Sometimes formal and normative things are sidelined when injuring ethical and aesthetic values.

Paiaas Bagasmu (Clean Your House) indicates that no matter a person's mobility, the home has a place to go and return. So, make the place as comfortable and proper as possible. If someone leaves the house with dirt, he can pollute the people and the clean environment. Likewise, when someone comes home with soil from outside, he can contaminate the house and its inhabitants with this dirt. So, clean the house before and after we go out.

The lesson is that we have to come to a community, not with problems or other bad things. Do not bring issues outside the home as a burden to the family. The Batak people will never reveal their disgrace outside the home. Their problems outside the house will be addressed and will become gloomy. It is considered very taboo for the Batak people.

Paías Pakaranganmu (Clean Your Yard) indicates that our neighbours will see and feel good and bad about our yard. For example, when much garbage is piling up, the air is polluted by the smell of waste, and the unsightly scenery will disturb the environment and neighbours. That is how the Batak people maintain dignity. Verbal attitudes and behaviours must be maintained, and personal responsibility circumstances must be cared for and cleaned for personal gain and others. Although other people do not indirectly respond to us verbally, we have to maintain the kindness of their thoughts, feelings, and senses. In other words, looking and being good is also to avoid slander, which can bring badness to all. Sometimes, our good condition can also bring happiness to those who witness it, even though we do not know it.

#### IV. Conclusion

Based on the explanations above, it can be understood and concluded that the principles of life based on the Poda Na Lima philosophy are very relevant to the proper lifestyle and can also be an effective and efficient solution in dealing with the Covid-19 problem. Think and keep the heart positive as a form of implementing Paías Rohamu. Clean the body maximally and thoroughly as a form of advice from Paías Pamatangmu. Only using clean clothes and immediately washing clothes worn from outside the house, including using a mask correctly and adequately, is applicative from Paías Parabiton. Constantly cleaning every corner of the house and trying their best not to bring dirt and disease from outside the house into the home is the implementation of Paías Bagasmu. While Paías Pakaranganmu describes that the condition of the outermost part of our territory, namely the yard, interacts with and directly impacts our neighbours and the environment. For that, we must maintain and ensure the best condition. It is not only for our good but also as a form of responsibility and concern for the environment, other people, and the universe. All the advice and implementation of Poda Na Lima are proven easy to understand. It is also believed that it can effectively and efficiently become a standard rule of a good and correct lifestyle. Including it can solve human resistance to save civilisation against Covid-19. In other words, implementing Poda Na Lima can be used as a standard and guideline for overcoming the Covid-19 problem.

Research and studies related to traditional philosophy must continue to be carried out and developed. The traditional philosophy has been tested for hundreds or even thousands of years as the basis of ethics and aesthetics in thinking, feeling, and behaving. Seeing the increasing frequency of contemporary norms experiencing cultural shocks and friction in domestic, local, or even global interactions, perhaps it is time for the philosophy of tradition derived from the values of local wisdom to be promoted as the primary and legal rule of play in future life.

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