

Pre History Cultures and Setting Identity Gayo Community (Knowledge for Power)

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Abstract

Gayo is the name of the ethnic group that occupies the plateau region of Aceh, Sumatra Island. Archaeological data showed that there was a prehistoric activity of two different human races that Australomelanesoid and Mongoloid. Both of these races acculturated at around 5000 BP. Of the remains suggests that they have a fairly advanced culture . It is known from deskripsi on artifacts , ecofact and features that are found to then interpreted. The result of the prehistoric culture continued until before the arrival of Islam to the region. Archaeological research results are then used to amplify the desire Gayo community forming the Province of Aceh Leuser Antara

Keywords: Archaeological data, ethnic identity, Aceh Leuser Antara Province

1. Introduction

Gayo is one of the ethnic groups in the province of Aceh. Cultural region centered on Leuser Mountain plateau. As an ethnic Gayo has elements of different cultures with ethnic Aceh. The difference was made one of the reasons for forming a new government which is separated from the province.

After the archaeological research in the area of culture Gayo, in the belief that the ethnic Gayo is one that has a strong cultural role in the formation of prehistoric cultures in the highlands of northern Sumatra Island. Various archaeological evidence has shown the existence of migration and of course also accompanied by culture to culture Gayo region which later spread to surrounding areas. So it can be said that the Gayo as the embryo culture in the region of northern Sumatra. However, the information developed on the contrary, that the ethnic Gayo part (derived) from another ethnic (Aceh and Batak Toba). Such information is based upon folklore known Gayo community until now.

Based to archaeological view by research indicated that pre-history people in *Tanoh* Gayo, they had got advanced cultures, there was many cultural aspects found in this community group and the cultures itself got continuous throughout later.

The community identity inherently to Gayo people is very important to know either since emerging human and cultures throughout later. It would help knowing more the people culture history, and present understanding about pluralism and multi-culturalism that become own identity of local community.

In scientific context, sites found on *Tanoh* Gayo have a very important role, amongst as one of proof existed any Australomelanesoid immigration in Sumatra hinterland and also Austronesian movement in western part of Indonesia (Wiradnyana & Taifiqurrahman 2011,133). For along time, there was tendency the activity of Australomelanesoid occurred to beach-long side only and the Austronesian usually connected to channel of migration took place in eastern-part of Indonesia.

In the local cultures context, there are various pre-history cultures recorded that seemly contributed highly to the existence of Gayo cultures particularly pre-Islam cultures till few years ago.

Overall knowledge that has generated such a discourse to assert that an ethnically distinct Gayo , who have ancestors alone and is not part of other ethnicities. Discourse was also used in connection with the establishment plan of the province of Aceh Leuser Antara.

2. Sites and The Archaeological Data

The Loyang Mendale site, Loyang Ujung Karang and also Loyang Putri Pukes located in District Plumpness, Central Aceh District, Aceh Province and is traditionally located on the Gayo culture area. Administratively, these sites now located in the province of Aceh, Gayo and most people want the provincial governments alone who split with the province. The archaeological sites contribute archaeological data concerning the cultural process that has lasted this long. The archaeological data recovered from a series of research:

In the beginning, survey had been conducted in tracing near Loyang Mandale and found unit produced pottery fragments and any stone tools. By the such temper and pottery fragments indicated a properly anciently

aspect, where as by its technology and stone artifact morphology displayed a similar cultures with Hoabinh. Survey in under water of Laut Tawar Lake produced a plain and decorated pottery fragments from a younger cultures known as colonial period time.

An excavation done at Loyang Mandale, Loyang Ujung Karang and Loyang Putri Pukes found an artifact contained with stone, bone, clay soil, shell-fish and so forth. Those artifact was found within a differently culture layers indicated existing phased time processes continuously. For the such artifact existed seemly a stone artifact indicated as hand axe (pebble) adze- round adze, pick-axe, flake and stone-hammer. Still, there is artifact made of mollusk shell was used as flake, but the other artifact made of clay soil is known as a cauldron fragment with decorated or not. The artifact made of bone is feature bone point as well as found artifact made of tusk used as beads of necklace and the artifact as remnant to bowl made of plaited rattan.

The findings in ecofacts indicated amongst as bone of animal, dogs, snake, buffalo, mollusk, crabs' bite, etc. In others, still found as shell of candlenut, also found the remnant of charcoal, a burn remnant of clay and also human skeleton.

By 6 (six) human skeletons completely found on the site were identified amongst 3 (three) of them aged more than 21 years old with a massively decayed teeth and another 3 (three) skeletons aged under 21 years old. In generally, the skeletons had characteristics in Mongoloid race (the cover of skull is rather higher and rounded with a flat and broad face) indicated that the body height between 150-160 cm. It is forecasted the skeletons was deliberately buried with an oval grave and funeral give. The teeth on skull was flat for filing purpose (Wiradnyana & Taufiqurrahman 2011,76,127).

3. Setting the Identity

Before 7400 ± 140 BP it had been available a group of people as Australomelanesoid race resided on eastern coastal of Sumatra island. They were noted carrier of cultures for Hoabinh, namely a certain of culture derived from northern part Vietnam who lived by exploiting a marine biota (Bellwood 2000,238-241). Its stone instruments was known characteristic called Sumatralith. This stone tool made of gravel with all its sides cut off cause its side sharp, but one of its side remained cortex, while other side no have any cortex.

It is noted in eastern coastal of Sumatra through high land indicated found several human group supporting to Hoabinh cultures. They lived by hunting and by fishing, and they collected variously mollusk or snails for food. In about 3870 ± 140 BP up to 4120 ± 140 BP around the sites of Bukit Kerang Pangkalan, Aceh Tamiang was found pollen, peanuts, and leafy vegetables, and it indicated that age they had conducted a simply cultivates (Wiradnyana 2011, 54).

They had made a stage houses, build them around rivers' mouth. The ladies, children and older man stayed at home and the young-adult went out for hunting. When someone died while hunting should be buried around at location. Any ladies, children and the older died, it should be buried around the residence. These hunters had possibly ideas to move from other place to other, it was certainly because they had more opportunity to explore than ladies group, the hunters have known more ideal location for residence and any food supplies as well as.

The other aspect had relation with the idea for moving residence might be about shortage of food supplies, natural disaster such as flood and also any Tsunami and they had moved by tracing the rivers mouthed into sea around their residence. Mostly rivers had been exploited as media to simplify movement space either for hunting or for migration, and determine Loyang Mendale and Ujung Karang to occupy, where mostly they could take the river as access.

Appointing the location either Loyang Mendale and Ujung Karang for residence had a close connected with their daily life necessities either for home, to process out foods, place for workshop and for burial. In selecting the region to occupy because the location had a certain cave with niche properly for shelter. The location was closed to source of water where the region relative flat so that ideal for living.

It was about 7400 ± 140 BP they were living with hunting and collected food. The animal they hunted mostly they got from around the residence. They watched the animal seeking water from a distance around the lake or even near to fore-part of cave where the water flowing into Laut Tawar Lake. There was found also many residual of burning either any hunting animal, mollusk and snail, this indicated that time was consumed by burning.

The hunting as the mostly adult man conducted also was possibly involving some hunting dogs. For this indicated existing also found a completely skeletal of dogs estimated around 5040 ± 130 BP (Wiradnyana & Taufiqurrahman 2011,111). The existence of these groups during their life supported to trace the Hoabinh cultures, and this perhaps assumed that they has applied social organization and social structure for living. The social organization structure was seen in separating the groups of hunting and serving. The group of hunting perhaps were all adult man and the group for serving done by ladies, children and older people, whereas its social structure was possibly occurring on each group, where the group of hunting required specific organization

in doing their activities. Such organization should produce own structure. To classify the older and children into one group is acknowledged a worth concept having link with an effort to know them from physical aspect and psychological point of view. It means, that time they had got consideration variously aspect mainly in maintaining the existence of groups. Beside it, respectful to parent-old people also had been practiced well.

The stone tools used such as pebble axe function to cut through wood, flake and blade used knives and mortar with function to hummer. The condition of any stone tools as found indicated that time had already got as good technology and morphology as they used while living around the coastal region of Sumatra Island, yet some parts of the tools got a bit changed up already such as about the size and its shape. The change meant linked more with the adaptation of human against the environment. Sometimes, they used yet variously splinters made of shell of mollusk, it helped resolving problems connected with their needs in food. Their life with the cultures was taking place throughout year 5040 ± 130 BP (Wiradnyana & Taufiqurrahman 2011,110)

It was about 5080 ± 120 BP had been existed a group of other human (a group of people not supporting human for Hoabinh as Austromelanesoid race) migrated to Tanah Gayo. From the cultures aspect found by these group had similarity with the supporting group to Austronesian cultures. It was noted the characteristic of cultures such as pottery, had a more universal characteristic compared to the spreading region of Austronesian in speaking on other place. The pottery on Sites of Loyang Mendale and Loyang Ujung Karang had a variously features as the characteristics of pottery cultures existed on Southeast Asia, once again, it indicated that migration to Tanah Gayo region had taken place on the early of migration those Austronesian speaking to western-ward leading to Sumatra, for this reason also seen according to the analysis in radio-carbon implied it was more older than the results of the radiocarbon analysis of the Austronesian culture oldest so far in Indonesia

The traces of migration of Austronesian to Tanah Gayo was possibly from South China into Thailand through out western part of Sumatra. For this matter was based on a finding of red slipped pottery that have a similar decorated-style with the pottery on Band Chiang Site, Thailand. Beside it, its geographical position tended ideal for shipping by wind, where when one put lied sail on Thailand where without any oar canoe the canoe itself may sail own into western-part of Sumatra Island.

On Sumatra Island, this group was known residing at Loyang Ujung Karang and might also at Loyang Mendale and Loyang Putri Pukes, with the advanced more cultures compared to the cultural support of Hoabinh. Certain technology and religion existence showed the advance.

By excavation at Loyang Ujung Karang site seen that they had practiced a burial by providing oval hole. They also buried one-death by flexed burial with funeral gifts an arrow, pot plaited rattan, pot a media for cooking and laid the death-one oriented facing tended to East-West (the Head to East and feet to West/ face facing to east). This condition indicated that they had known a religious aspect such as they had believed available a life after death so they were supplied in several matters. The burial gifts also indicating an effort to prepare their life for future meaning the supplies was prepared for the living they would got. This aspect is very important to hold up as one of local wise that it had been practiced already at pre-history age by the ancestors of Gayo people.

They also had possibly hold up a concept with sun-shine where the sun rising as the symbol of life and sun sets in the West as the leading of death. The sun-shine concept seemly yet was applied in the developing a traditional house of Gayo people whose always build a traditional house leading to Eastern-ward. The other aspect also seen still continuing as faith existing a ruler god for a certain region, also a trust upon rice has spirit so encourage whoever to respect it with an initiation ceremony (filing) (Hurgronje1996, 216).

There were also found a decorated pottery fragment and any plaited rattan made around 4400 ± 120 BP (cal.3285-2937 BC) indicated that the human group that time had known an esthetic aspect and they had practiced already skill-hand in making any media. It was assumed their skill to make the plaited, also they produced a fish-nets, it was indicated seen in its decorated pottery. Beside it, the plaited also indicating available their efforts to produce something in pieces at possibly used as cover for body for instance.

In pottery fragment displayed that group of human that time had known own technology, but seen from the culture aspect such as in flexed burial and also dating had a tend similar between Mesolithic age with Neolithic, means there was interacted the culture from Mesolithic age into Neolithic age or from the group supporting Hoabinh cultures with the group supporting Austronesian culture (Wiradnyana 2012, 99-118). In own old dating indicating the existence of Austronesian and existed stone adze and oval-round adze and available pottery fragment with the similar technique and decorated form with the pottery cultures of South-east Asia assumed that occurrence an early immigration of Austronesian into Loyang Mendale and to Ujung Karang site. The matter was also indicated with assumption is always inherently that Austronesian migration brought along pottery of Bau-Melayu with stone adze and migration brought along Lapita pottery with its oval-round adze, both features was found on the site.

The existence of head skull with femur, tibia and available human skeletal not complete with its position as level as the skeletal folded indicated that round 4400 ± 120 BP (cal.3285-2937 BC) they had known a

secondary burial concept. For un-complete skeletal as amongst left some burning human mandible fragments had its period of 2590 ± 120 and it indicated also existing a certain re-treat against one-death after burial. The treatment concept was known as secondly burial namely after the one was buried sometime inside soil and then re-move its bones to re-burial or fire, and this like concept as then more known as an effort to respect those one-death. This concept in advance connected to provide more places for the soul. Some traditional community in Indonesia (namely Batak Toba, Karo, Bali and Dayak ethnic groups) hold yet practicing alike secondary burial. The existence of human bones un-complete (some burn) also found on upper layer of site that had been analyzed already in radio-carbon produced its around 2590 ± 120 BP. This indicted that secondary burial tradition had taken place during that age and it might be also taking place through further times (Wiradnyana & Taufiqurrahman 2011,154).

Teeth is a very highly hard part in body so that existing preserved and it is highly possibly to find a long time after died (Artaria 2009, 6-81). Tooth filing was conducted also by human at Loyang Mendale and Ujung Karang, in assumption that human for the period conducted a like procession, estimated there was a transferring ceremony from childhood to teenager/ youth. In addition, the tooth filing is also correlating with an initial aspect that possibly an effort to establish between human with wild animal. There, wild animal was symbolized with teeth and canine tooth, to establish it, done by mutilation.

The condition of teeth found at Loyang Mendale site that had got mutilation already, even more extreme, it displayed that there was an effort of mutilation but left out a few, or sometimes with many mutilations under a social structural concept, practicing that more often done mutilation the one has a higher social status compared to another. It means that one-death has been considered got already several stages in life (Wiradnyana & Taufiqurrahman 2011,155).

It was about 300 AD, found a lots human skeletal burn at Site Loyang Mendale, assumed as a sort of secondary burial as found at Loyang Ujung Karang. However, for primary burial was also relative similar but in Site Loyang Mendale, the human skeletal was pinned under stone and rounded and provide wall by stone with a slab of stone through boulder karts. In viewing they practiced for burial (lead to east-ward, feet folded) had the similar way with previously period (a burial on Hoabinh culture), means the concept practiced in the period had conformity with (Wiradnyana & Taufiqurrahman 2011,125). But, for the skeletal concept by stone-pin seen the burial practiced often found on Sites as aged as Austronesian cultures on Southeast Asia (Bellwood, 2000:245 – 325), this displayed that they practiced a cooperative works beside to save the one-death from disturbing by animal or as part of certain procession. When connected it to practicing aspect absolutely it should be compared to the same condition as practicing for burial at present, where it is found gravel or bamboo to cover the burial.

The nature of land and findings on Loyang Mendale site indicated available arrangement to use the land for many purposes. For today, it has been arranged in such not only relating with social organization aspect, social structure, but also the arranging space aspects and its uses. Means, it has been arranged the uses of land according to the function such as space for burial-yard, it was prepared forward west, and for workshop space prepared lead to eastern part and for consuming food or for fire-place centralized around the middle as it is closed to central of workshop.

The group of human that time had got capable producing variously tools either an stone adze and oval-round adze as indicated found a prospect stone adze or stone adze fragment. Also found tools made of clay indicated was produced on the site. In general, the group of human in the age had got living autonomy. About 5080 ± 120 BP this group of human had known already technology for producing pottery, and later they had known also rattan plated, stone adze and oval –round adze.

It was found also some canine with pore indicated as pins and still found pottery with variously decorated pattern showed that its aesthetic aspect got advance more compared to previously period. About 5080 ± 4400 BP, the aesthetic aspect on decorated pottery was displayed only by scratches decorated (vertical and horizontal) but in around 3580 ± 100 BP (cal. 2.087-1.799 BC) or afterward the decorated pattern on pottery advanced variously.

Aesthetic work is a certain part of important life for community, it was indicated by pottery fragment for daily necessities decorated and also found a plated rattan fragment.

Ceramics fragment as found at Loyang Mendale and Loyang Ujung Karang site showed a period further younger namely the aged in 12 through 19 centuries and it was assumed that people in the age used the land advanced since classical period and colonial aged. On this time also known available an pottery decorated pattern as similar with the pottery pattern with decorated at Loyang Mendale site. In addition, it got continuously advanced with animism/ dynamism belief in some aspect of traditional Gayo community in life (Bowen 2003,44; 1998,60). It indicated that found an advanced cultures from pre-history age through earlier period of advancing Islam. In addition, uses location at Loyang Ujung Karang site and also at Loyang Mendale site continuously passed various stages of cultures that lead the location become a *multi component site* that taking place from Mesolithic, Neolithic through colonial ages.

Variouly matters taking place on human and cultures on Tanah Gayo since pre-history period namely by Australomelanesoid race as associated between Australoid race with Melanesoid race with its Hoabinh cultures. The association present a great contribution for the advancement of human and cultures until today. Pluralism and Multiculturalism later played a highly role to the existence of Gayo people either with the Asian races or entry into India cultures, Islam and Europe. On Site Loyang Mendale and Ujung Karang, its cultures aspect showed the original of part in Gayo cultures as available until to day. It is concluded that from its cultures aspect point of view, the human skeletal of pre-history as found on Loyang Mendale and Loyang Ujung Karang site is the ancestor of Gayo people.

These conditions make their identity clear that during this time was a blur in Gayo society. The true identity of which is believed to be a new identity for the people of Gayo. Previously, Gayo identity only based on the existence of coastal folklore stating that it came from the coastal Gayo (Acehnese) and folklore Batak 27, which states that the Gayo ethnic Batak. Folklore does not agree with the view Gayo society. That's because people Gayo has an area of culture and cultural elements that differ by ethnicity in the folklor. Conditions that make unclear the identity of which is believed prior to the archaeological research on sites in the region Gayo culture.

Knowledge Gayo ethnic identity is then published in print media and electronic media continuously. Even the various seminars and dialogues in elektornik media often coloring until now. Discourse that emerged in the dialogue often concerns the identity of Gayo in archaeological context that legitimates the desire to form a province of Aceh Leuser Antara.

5. Conclusion

According to the noted on Loyang Mendale site indicated that there was human activities supporting to Hoabinh cultures it was about 7400 ± 140 BP through 5040 ± 130 BP. In around 5080 ± 120 BP, it was also found a group of Austronesian had performed their activities existed on Loyang Ujung Karang site. In several advanced cultures aspect (flexed burial), it had similarity in radio-carbon period on the carrier of cultures, indicated both human groups with the different race was highly possibly associated already.

There are variously and important archaecological remains existed such as a red slipped pottery fragment found in context with ashes. The such incinerator with ashes was dated 5080 ± 120 BP and 4940 ± 120 BP. Around 4400 ± 120 BP, they had buried the one-died by providing a burial hole, also applied aesthetic with a plated and decorated pattern. For a red slipped pottery was known its existence on 3580 ± 100 BP (cal. 2.087-1.799 BC).

Within the framework of the culture, indicating that culture in prehistoric times seem to continue in the traditional Gayo culture (before the advent of Islam to be some years ago). It was an interpretation that the whole prehistoric culture that is the forerunner of today's culture Gayo, thus supporting Gayo prehistoric cultures are the ancestors of the present-day Gayo.

Gayo ethnic identity is then used as the legitimacy of the establishment of the province of Aceh Leuser Antara that are not part of Aceh province.

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