

Historical Changes of Toba Batak Reburial Tombs : A Case Study of a Rural Community in the Central Highland of North Sumatra

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Introduction

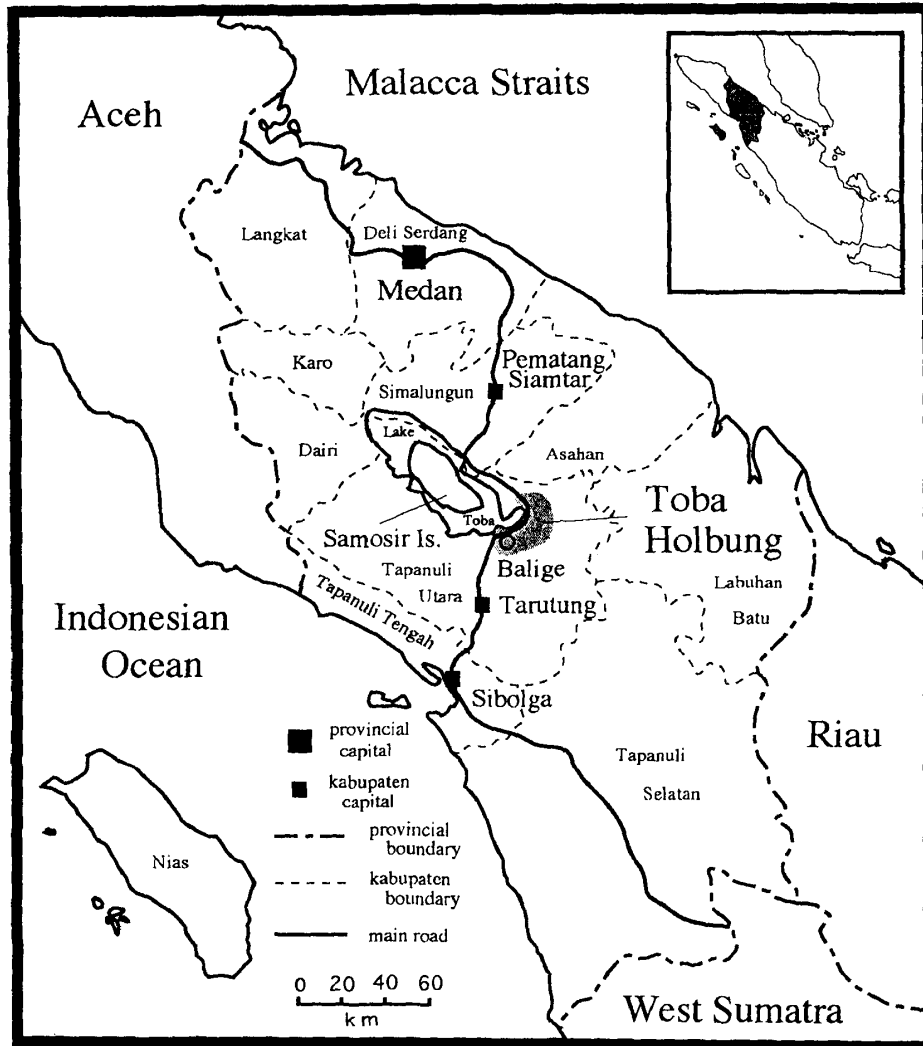
The homeland of the Toba Batak extends over the central highland of North Sumatra in Indonesia. When traveling in the area around Lake Toba, one encounters a distinctive landscape characterized by Christian churches with crosses on the top of the steeple and a wide variety of tombs which appear to compete one another in splendor. Such tombs are especially numerous in the regions on the southeastern shore of the lake called Toba Holbung and the island of Samosir (Map 1).

A great many of the Toba Batak have converted to Christianity (mainly Lutheran) as a result of the missionary undertaking by a German Protestant mission (Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft) which established itself in the northern Tapanuli in the 1860s [Pedersen 1970: 47–72]. Nowadays most of the Toba Batak are Christian, although the precise number can not be ascertained owing to the lack of statistics classified according to ethnic affiliations after the Revolution (a war of independence against the Netherlands in the period 1945–1949).

The custom of reburial, as Metcalf and Huntington [1991] discuss, is found in several ethnic groups in Indonesia, including the Dayak of Kalimantan analyzed by Hertz [1960] in his pioneering study on mortuary practices. As documented, for instance, by Vergouwen [1964: 70–73] and Warneck [1909: 84–85], the Toba Batak also traditionally practiced the reburial ritual accompanied by the slaughter of water buffaloes and cattle whereby the bones of ancestors who had been dead for several years were exhumed and transferred to a reburial tomb. Although the German mission prohibited the custom of reburial for the purposes of ancestor worship in the first quarter of this century, this restriction was not necessarily observed [Schreiner 1994: 174]. Consequently the custom of reburial by the Christian Toba has survived to the present time. A large number of splendid tombs standing together in Toba homeland are reburial tombs in which the exhumed bones of ancestors are deposited.

There is a considerable variation in the type and size of Toba Batak reburial tombs. Barbier [1983: 113–139] elucidates that traditionally Toba reburial tombs were funerary mounds of earth and stone tombs such as sarcophagi as well as stone urns. He also remarks on another type of the tomb: “the introduction of the powder stone called cement in the nineteen twenties has made it

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Map 1 North Sumatra

possible to build increasingly gigantic tombs" [*ibid.* : 113]. In recent decades the Toba themselves became aware that the proliferation of reburial tombs was a phenomenon quite distinctive in Toba Batak society [Gultom 1991: 10; Hutagalung 1986: 185; Lumbantoruan 1974: v; Pasaribu 1986: 175]. As Bruner [1973: xii] points out, most of the funds for the construction of reburial tombs which cost a great deal were provided by Toba Batak urban migrants in the cities who had become economically successful in business, the professions, and government.

Migration of the Toba Batak from their mountain homeland began in small but increasing numbers chiefly to East Sumatra from around the turn of the century, and later increased rapidly from the 1950s resulting in the influx of Toba migrants into frontier settlements in East Sumatra and into the cities such as Medan and Jakarta [Cunningham 1958: 82-97]. Since most of the Toba migrants, even though living far from their homeland, tend to retain social relationships with their relatives in the homeland, it is essential for the proper understanding of the contemporary Toba Batak society to take account of the interrelationship between villagers in the homeland and urban

migrants [Bruner 1972: 209–210]. In the patrilineal Toba society, all of the members of a patrilineal descent group are to contribute to the construction of a reburial tomb and are responsible as hosts of the reburial ritual. Accordingly the study of reburial is considered to be one of the effective measures for examining the interrelationship between Toba villagers and migrants.

Although the Toba mortuary practices have been an object of study from the colonial period, no studies have ever tried to examine historical changes of Toba reburial tombs based on convincing evidence obtained through field research. In this paper, therefore, I aim to verify historical changes of Toba reburial tombs according to information I have collected through my own research conducted in the following ways: interviews in Toba Holbung region; census of all reburial tombs in a village in the region; and case studies concerning the interrelationships between villagers and migrants on a few samples of particular reburial tombs in the village. After describing detailed research procedures, I will begin with a brief account of the concept of ancestral spirits in Toba indigenous religion and requirements for reburial, then I will give the outline of the main elements of reburial rituals. In examining historical changes of Toba reburial tombs I will pay full attention to the historical background such as the introduction of Christianity and the establishment of Dutch colonial rule in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as well as the Toba emigration which began around the turn of the century and increased rapidly after the Revolution.¹⁾

I Research Procedures

The Toba Batak homeland nearly accords with the district (*kabupaten*) of North Tapanuli (Tapanuli Utara) mainly consisting of the following four regions: (1) the island in the center of Lake Toba called Samosir; (2) the fertile plain on the southeastern lakeside area called Toba Holbung; (3) the cool plateau extending in the southwest of the lake called Humbang; and (4) the ravine around Tarutung (the capital of the district) called Silindung. I chose Toba Holbung as my chief research field primarily because there has been a great number of reburial tombs as a result of the widespread custom of reburial from the colonial period to the present day. My field research was conducted intermittently five times between June 1991 and September 1994, for a total duration of about 12 months.²⁾ I collected the material for this paper through the following three methods.

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- 1) As space is limited, I have precluded the reburial tombs of the clan founders which are frequently called *tugu marga* (the monument of the clan) and those constructed in East Sumatra which are said to have increased since the 1970s from the scope of this present discussion. I shall examine precisely the actual state of such reburial tombs and discuss the meaning of them to Toba Batak society in another paper.
 - 2) The research for this paper was partly financed by the Asian Studies Scholarship Program of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (Monbu-sho) in the fiscal year 1990, and the International Scientific Research Program of the same Ministry in the fiscal year 1993 and 1994 (Field Research, headed by Dr. Tsuyoshi Kato of Kyoto University), for which I wish to express my due gratitude. I am deeply indebted to the Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI) and other governmental institutions for giving me permission to carry out research in North Sumatra, as well as to the University of Indonesia, the University of HKBP Nommensen and Teachers' Training College in Medan (IKIP Medan) for their academic sponsorship.

A. *Case Study in a Village*

My chief research site was a village called Lintong Ni Huta (LNH), which is located on the western edge of Toba Holbung and depends greatly on wet-rice cultivation in terraced paddy fields. LNH is an administrative village (*desa*) in the subdistrict (*kecamatan*) of Balige in the district of North Tapanuli and it also functions as a *horja* or community based on *adat* (traditional law and customs).³⁾ According to the census data of 1990, LNH was comprised of 230 households and had a population of 1,063 [Kantor Camat Balige 1992: 157]. In terms of its population size LNH is included in the larger half of the villages in the subdistrict.

In LNH I carried out the census of all reburial tombs in the village with a co-worker from the village who was in his fifties. First of all I photographed all reburial tombs in LNH, while recording on the research form the following information: the name of the buried and the reburied; the year of birth and death of the deceased; and the year of the construction of the tomb. After that, with the aid of the photographs of the tombs, I conducted interviews with villagers who were connected to the respective tombs to verify the name of the buried, year of the construction, kinship relation between the deceased and the constructors, migration experiences of the kin including the buried, and the scale of the reburial rituals.

B. *Observations and Interviews Mainly in Toba Holbung Including LNH*

Along with the research mentioned above, I also conducted general research in Toba Holbung comprised both of observation on reburial tombs and of interviews so as to confirm the correspondence between the result of the intensive research in LNH and that of the general research in Toba Holbung. I examined some of the reburial tombs which were said to be old or whose details for the construction were well-known, accumulating information concerning the tombs as accurately as possible.

Furthermore, I conducted interviews on historical changes of reburial rituals and tombs with mainly the following people. The first were two men who were regarded in the subdistrict of Balige as thoroughly acquainted with *adat*. One person in his seventies (hereafter referred to as Mr. MA) had long been a teacher at a high school in Balige after leaving MULO (Dutch-language secondary school) in colonial times. Although he later had a brief experience in the shipping business in Jakarta, he is retired now and a member of the assembly of the district. The other person in his fifties (hereafter referred to as Mr. HM) was born in LNH but lives now in the town of Balige. After graduating from a high school in Balige, he went to a private university in Jakarta but had to

3) In Toba Holbung, a *horja* generally corresponds to an administrative village (*desa*), although in some cases a *horja* is divided into a few administrative villages. When the Toba formerly broke up the virgin soil, they made a new hamlet in which several houses and rice granaries were built in two parallel lines surrounded by earth wall on which bamboo was planted for protection from enemies from the outside of the hamlet. Such a hamlet, called *huta*, is a cooperative unit in everyday life. As *huta* increased because of the founding of another *huta* near the original *huta* or the settlement from outside, a ritual aggregate became formed based on the agro-hydraulic demands or kinship relations. Such a larger unit is called *horja*. Vergouwen [1964: 119] points out that in Toba Holbung *horja* is a genealogically pure unit as well as being a sacrificial community and a corporate community. *Horja* functions as a unit of main *adat* rituals such as marriage rites, funerals, and reburial rituals.

leave it and come back to Balige because of illness. He became an engineering contractor following in his father's footsteps. The two men belong to the Simanjuntak clan and have so much experience in officiating at *adat* rituals that they are deeply versed in the process of reburial rituals.

The second group of people I interviewed were craftsmen connected with the construction of tombs: those who were familiar with the production of lime utilized as an element for early mortar; and also masons and plasterers.

The third group were older people both in LNH and in Toba Holbung. Most of them were in their sixties or above.

Additionally, I had an opportunity to interview officers in some subdistrict offices in the district of North Tapanuli, church staff and people who connected to some tombs about the construction of reburial tombs in order to comprehend the feature of Toba Holbung.

C. *Supplementary Research among Migrants*

I conducted a supplementary research in some villages in East Sumatra and in such cities as Pematang Siantar (usually referred to simply as Siantar), Medan and Jakarta, where many Toba migrants reside. In East Sumatra I visited some migrants from LNH and their descendants in their settlements so as to observe reburial tombs built there and interview them about the participation in reburial rituals held at their homeland. I also conducted interviews in the cities mainly with some migrants from LNH about their opinion on the custom of reburial. Furthermore I examined the present situation of urban dwellers' burial in town cemeteries.

II Toba Concept of the Spiritual World and Reburial Requirements

A. *Toba Concept of the Spiritual World in Their Indigenous Religion as a Background to Reburial*

In order to understand the religious background to Toba reburial, we need to clarify how the descendants and the ancestral spirits were thought to interrelate in the concept of the spiritual world in Toba indigenous religion before the introduction of Christianity. For this purpose I rely on two well-known studies: the first is the work written by Warneck [1909] who resided in the Toba highland as a missionary from 1892 until 1908 and later as the president of the Rhenish Mission Society in Sumatra in the period 1919–1932; and the second is by Vergouwen [1964] who was a colonial official stationed in the District of Toba for a few years from 1927. Fig. 1, based on their descriptions, illustrates the relationship between descendants and ancestral spirits.

The soul of the living which dwells in the body (*pamatang*) is called *tondi*. Vergouwen [*ibid.* : 79–81] mentions that *tondi* is considered to weaken or leave temporarily when a person becomes ill or dreams and to leave the body entirely when a person dies. The *sahala*, again according to Vergouwen [*ibid.* : 83], is the *tondi*-power in its most active and most perceptible form.

The spirit of the dead is called *begu*. According to Vergouwen, the *begu* is thought to be united in a *begu*-community which is very similar to the human community, but in reverse: for example, what human beings do by day the *begu* do by night [*ibid.* : 69]. Warneck offers more elaborate interpretation on the character of the *begu* than the explanation submitted by the common Toba:

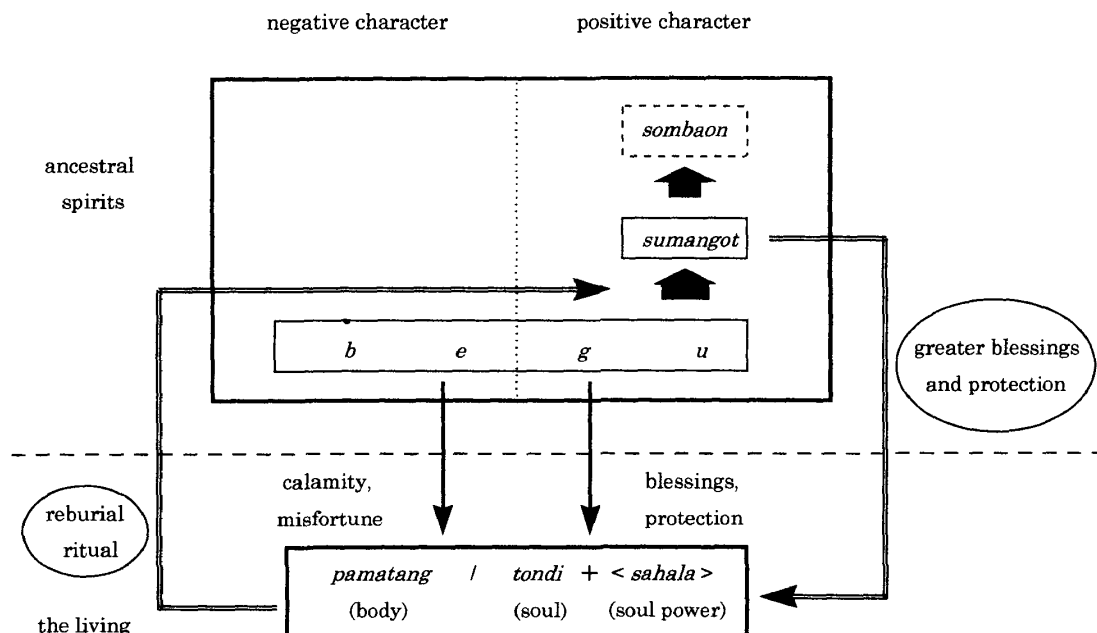


Fig. 1 Relationship between the Living and Ancestral Spirits in the Toba Indigenous Religion

leaving the body absolutely, *tondi* does not change into *begu* after the death of a person, but the remnant of one's personality or self changes into *begu* [Warneck 1909: 8].⁴⁾ In either case we may consider that, in Toba indigenous religion, spirits of the dead exist as *begu* in the other world.

According to Vergouwen and Warneck, the effect of the *begu* on people is believed to be two-sided: if the descendants entertain deep veneration for their ancestors and are faithful to make proper offerings, the *begu* of the ancestors bring earthly blessings and protection against misfortune which result in such benefits as good harvests and prosperity of the descendants; on the other hand, the *begu* which is ignored or paid little attention to may cause such calamity and misfortune as bad harvests, death of children and illness in man and cattle [Vergouwen 1964: 69–70; Warneck 1909: 15–17]. It is through the reburial rituals that the descendants elevate the position of the ancestors in the other world from the *begu* to the *sumangot* (the revered spirits higher than the *begu*), based on the belief that the *sumangot* can bring greater blessings and protection to the descendants who venerate them [Warneck 1909: 84].⁵⁾

4) Vergouwen [1964: 69] notes: "The term *begu* embraces the spirits of the deceased as much as nature spirits, and includes all those spirits exclusively devoted to inflicting harm on people, the *begu na djahat*, as well as those which, by worship and sacrifice, can be induced to give earthly blessings." He adds: "The spirits called *homang*, which live in the forests and try to kidnap children are also malignant as are the water spirits, *solobean*, which make navigation dangerous, and the *begu antuk* which bring cholera, and so on" [*loc. cit.*].

5) In the Toba indigenous concept of ancestral spirits, those which ranked higher than *sumangot*—and the highest among all ancestral spirits—are *sombaon* (he who is revered) [Warneck 1909: 85–89; Vergouwen 1964: 71–73]. According to Vergouwen [*ibid.*: 71–72], a *sumangot*, if his line had grown to a great *marga* (clan) or tribal group, was formerly elevated to the highest rank of spirits approaching the status of the gods through a great sacrificial ceremony which was specially arranged for the purpose. However, he mentions that such ceremonies had already disappeared at the time of his residence in ↗

B. Reburial Requirements

Not all the *begu* can be exalted to the position of *sumangot*. Therefore it is needed to explain some of the reburial requirements prior to the introduction of Christianity based on the descriptions by Vergouwen and Warneck, supplementing them with my own interviews in Toba Holbung.

Warneck mentions that only those who have male descendants can become *sumangot* [*loc. cit.*]. In my interviews most of the Toba pointed out that one of the most important requirements for reburial was being an “*ompu*” (a grandfather/grandmother) and that this requirement was as a rule in effect from the period before the introduction of Christianity. In Toba society the teknonym (a name of reference according to the relationship with one’s child or grandchild) of a person changes when one has the first child or the first grandchild (the first child of any of one’s sons).⁶⁾ In general, a person any of whose sons has a child is entitled “*ompu*.” Strictly speaking, a person entitled *ompu* does not always have male grandchildren as patrilineal descendants because there may be no male among the children of the sons: all of the grandchildren may be female. It should, however, be understood that the requirement referred to as “being an *ompu*” virtually means that one has male grandchildren as patrilineal descendants before or after one’s death and that, consequently, one’s spirit can be worshipped as an ancestral spirit by the patrilineal descendants.

The virtue and influence of a man during his lifetime weighed heavily as a requirement for the elevation to *sumangot* through the reburial ritual.⁷⁾ Vergouwen [1964: 70] notes that the spirits of deceased ancestors who, in their lifetime, became wealthy, had power and material goods, and whose descendants are many can be elevated to *sumangot*. I was often told in Toba Holbung that it was traditionally required for reburial to fulfill the following three conditions called “3H” by the Toba: (1) *hamoraon* or economic prosperity; (2) *hagabeon* or proliferation in the number of descendants; and (3) *hasangapon* or being highly esteemed. Some of the Toba I interviewed observed that the Toba raised the position of ancestral spirits from *begu* up to *sumangot* through the construction of a reburial tomb and an execution of the great reburial ritual as proof of the accomplishment of 3H.

Most of the Toba I interviewed also added that it was important as a reburial requirement to die from causes which were not regarded as abnormal. According to my informants, the Toba considered death by old age or illness as death from natural causes. I was told that death from murder or an accident (including a traffic accident) was not distinguished from the normal death as regards

↘ Tapanuli [*ibid.*: 71]. Barbier [1983: 134] also remarks: “The notion of raising to the rank of *sombaon* (the state of semi-divinity which a great ancestor could reach) seems to be forgotten, although the existence of these *sombaon* is well known.”

6) It is a taboo in Toba society to refer to the given name of a person who has a child or more. In consequence, if we put the case that the given name of a person is “X,” the name of one’s first child regardless of sex is “Y,” and the name of the first grandchild (the first child of any of one’s sons) is “Z,” the name of reference of a person changes as follows: (1) until the first child is born: X; (2) from the birth of the first child until the birth of the first grandchild: *ama ni Y* or *nai Y* which means “Father of Y” or “Mother of Y”; and (3) after the birth of the first grandchild: *ompu si Z* which means “Grandparent of Z.” Even a person without one’s grandchild at the time of death can be referred to by a teknonym entitled *ompu*, if the grandchild of the deceased is born after one’s death.

7) It was only for men that the virtue and influence were evaluated; women were reburied based on their status as the wife of the deceased.

funeral and reburial: those who were distinguished were people who had committed suicide, who had died in childbirth and who had died of Hansen's disease. The Toba I interviewed were unanimous in explaining that such people had been buried immediately by close relatives and had been excluded from the possibility for reburial even though they had grandchildren.

It can be thought that such harsh treatment of the deceased who committed suicide was intensified through the influence of Christianity which regards suicide as a mortal sin. Mr. MA, however, mentioned that in the period previous to the introduction of Christianity those who committed suicide were considered to have been punished by a god in higher world called "*Mulajadi na bolon*" (the great beginning of existence). Therefore I speculate that such people might be subjected to terrible treatment after death even in the pre-Christian period. According to Warneck [1909: 77], death in childbirth was regarded as the most dishonorable death and the *begu* of such women were thought to be extremely dangerous in the Toba concept of the spiritual world because they intended to revenge themselves upon other pregnant women. It is not obvious whether the ill treatment to those who died of Hansen's disease originates in the period before the contact with Westerners. However, I presume that such ill treatment was at least possibly intensified at the direction of Westerners in the Dutch colonial period, judging from the fact that there were no native term for Hansen's disease. It was expressed by the word *sakit kulit* (skin disease) in Malay or the word *lepra* which came from such western languages as German and Dutch. Additional supporting evidence came from some villagers who remembered that leprosy patients were segregated in an isolation hospital at Laguboti in Toba Holbung managed by the Rhenish Mission Society in the colonial period.

III The Outline of Reburial Rituals

In Toba Batak society the patrilineal clan having its own name such as Simanjuntak, Hutagaol and Tampubolon is called *marga*, which is also a unit of exogamy. The relationship among the following three groups — *hula-hula* (wife-givers), *dongan tubu* (one's own patrilineal clan) and *boru* (wife-receivers) — is termed *dalihaan na tolu* (three stones for placing a cooking pot). As well as being of marked importance in ritual contexts, it is fundamental to the social relationship of the Toba. The wife-givers are believed to be spiritually superior to the wife-receivers.

In a reburial ritual a patrilineal descent group which stems from an ancestor who is designated to be reburied constitutes *suhut* (the host group for the ritual). Among wife-givers and wife-receivers who have affinal relationship with the members of the host group, those who are invited are obligated to attend the ritual. Male adults of the *horja* who are not included in the host group and their affinal relatives are also expected to take the responsibility for the smooth conduct of the ritual.

The reburial ritual varies in accordance with several factors: the difference in generation between reburied ancestors and members of the host group; the duration of the ritual; the presence or absence of the traditional orchestra for the ritual dance; as well as the kind and the number of livestock for the ritual slaughter. According to the variations in these factors, three types of

reburial rituals — *turun*, *gombur*, and *partangiangan* — are usually classified. I will examine later how the Toba distinguish these three types. However, the reburial ritual generally consists of the following five main rites: (1) exhumation of the bones of the ancestor; (2) transfer of the bones into a reburial tomb; (3) ritual feast; (4) ritual dance; and (5) ritual distribution of portions of slaughtered livestock. Here I will give a brief explanation of the five rites respectively, mainly based on my observations and interviews on the reburial ritual in Toba Holbung.

A. *Exhumation of the Bones*

In the process of a reburial ritual the exhumation of the bones of the dead is called *mangongkal holi*: the word *mangongkal* means “dig”; while *holi* means “the bones of the dead.”⁸⁾ The Toba usually buried the corpse in the ground both before and after the introduction of Christianity.⁹⁾ In principle the tombs for the dead without grandchildren are simple mounds made solely with gathered soil; whereas those for the deceased with grandchildren are rectangular parallelepipedic mounds or odd (three, five or seven) stepped mounds, on both of which the bulbous plants of family Amaryllidaceae called *ompu-ompu* (*Haemanthus pubescens*) are planted for the purpose of representing the status of the dead having grandchildren. However, tombs of stonework finished with mortar also began to be constructed in the colonial period.

If the flesh of the dead has decomposed during several years after burial, the bones can be exhumed. The wife-givers, the wife-receivers and the representatives of male adults of the *horja* accompany the members of the host group at the exhumation of the bones. When the bones are located, the bones of the legs are retrieved first and the skull last. The descendants wash the exhumed bones with lime water. In some cases the bones of ancestors who were buried in the ground so long ago may not be found as a result of complete decomposition. In such a case, according to Mr. MA, the host group takes a lump of earth from the bottom of the burial ground and ask the attendants whether they may regard this earth as the bones of the ancestors or not. If the attendants consent to the proposal, the earth is laid in the reburial tomb as the substitute for the bones of the ancestors.

B. *Transfer of the Bones to the Reburial Tomb*

Transfer of the exhumed bones to the reburial tomb is called *panangkokhon saring-saring*. The

8) The word *mangongkal holi* or *mangongkal holi-holi* is also applied to when the Toba refer to the whole process of the reburial ritual which consists of the five main rites mentioned above.

9) There are variations in the way of dealing with dead bodies. Winkler reports: “After the week of mourning for an important chief, his body was not buried but placed in a coffin which was awaiting in the meeting room of the rice granary, where it was left for a year until the flesh had fallen away from the bones” [Winkler 1925: 131, quoted in Barbier 1983: 211]. Barbier [1983: 113] states that coffins are stored either in the open air or in the earth, depending on the region but that it is rare nowadays to see wooden coffins under a roof at the back or side of a house, or under a rice granary (*sopo*) [*ibid.*: 128]. According to Mr. HM, the coffin in which the dead body of one of the wives of his great-grandfather was placed was not buried soon after her death, but stored for a while on the stand made beside the house. During my own research, however, I have never met such coffins stored in or beside the house without being buried under the ground.

words *panangkokhon* and *saring-saring* originally meant “raising” and “skull” respectively. Hutagaol [1989: 42] interprets that *panangkokhon* is conducted in the hope that the status of the ancestral spirits might be elevated to *sumangot*, and that the standard of living of the entire descendants might be upgraded as well.

Quite a few of the Toba I interviewed told me that it was essential in Toba indigenous religion to proffer offerings to the washed bones of the ancestors in the reburial ritual as a direct interaction between the ancestral spirits and the descendants. Some of them elaborated that such offerings as palm wine, betel vine and cigarettes used to be made in order to ask the ancestral spirits for earthly blessings and protection. The bones were placed tentatively on the table set in front of the house of a member of the host group prior to the transfer to the reburial tomb.

According to Schreiner [1994: 174–175], a church regulation was established by the German mission in the first quarter of the twentieth century with the intention of excluding pagan elements from reburial rituals. Based on the regulation, the church elders have always tried to take strict charge of the exhumed bones under their supervision and have never failed to offer up Christian prayers and sing hymns led by them in order to make the Christian Toba conduct reburial rituals within the framework of Christianity [*ibid.*: 176–179].¹⁰⁾ Despite this restriction, however, Hutagaol [1989: 50] reports from his experiences as a pastor leading reburial rituals several times that some of those who feel themselves unhappy ask the ancestral spirits for earthly blessings and protection by crying over the bones of the ancestors and complaining of their distress.

C. *Ritual Feast*

At the *adat* rituals the Toba have a ritual meal together which consists of rice and *saksang*, which is pieces of seasoned pork boiled in the blood of slaughtered pigs. This is also indispensable at reburial rituals.

D. *Ritual Dance*

The most time-consuming part in the reburial ritual is the ritual dance. During the long time of the ritual dance, the host group stands in line facing with the members of other lineages of the same clan or the affinal relatives in order of genealogy and dances with them after exchanging ritual speeches. This rite is referred to as *manortor* (dance), which is usually accompanied by the *gondang*. The *gondang*, a traditional Toba Batak orchestra, consists of six drums of different sizes, four gongs and one or two wind instruments similar to oboe. It is comprised of at least seven performers. The word *gondang* can also be applied to the music played by the orchestra.

For the Toba *manortor* is not just a ceremony of dance but an occasion on which the wife-receivers obtain ritual and spiritual blessings from the wife-givers through the dance. When the wife-givers go dancing in front of the wife-receivers, some of the wife-givers dance holding *ulos* (traditional woven cloth) which is believed to be a symbol of spiritual power. Furthermore, some of the wife-givers give the *ulos* to the wife-receivers after covering their shoulders.

10) For the detailed description of the history of church regulations with regard to reburial, see Hutagaol [1989: 48–49], Schreiner [1994: 174–175] and Yamamoto [1991: 201–203].

E. *Ritual Distribution of Portions of Slaughtered Livestock*

The distribution of such portions of slaughtered livestock as head and rump to the participants in accordance with a fixed rule is called *jambar*, which is essential for the social recognition of the legitimacy of Toba *adat* rituals including reburial rituals. In principle, one or more water buffaloes or cattle offered by the host group of a reburial ritual are slaughtered and divided into several portions. Each portion is distributed by the host group during the rite in which representatives of the host group, the wife-givers, the wife-receivers and the male adults of the *horja* sit down on the ground taking respective sides of a square.

There are, however, minute differences among *horja* in the way portions are distributed. The distribution in LNH is usually conducted in the following way: if a couple (husband and wife) is reburied, the rump (*ihur-ihur*) is given to the wife's clan; the head (*ulu*) to the clan of the husband's mother; and the neck (*tanggalan*) to the clan of their eldest daughter's husband as the representative of the spouses of their daughters. Each cuts the given portion into pieces and distributed them further to their own groups. In addition to these distributions, the sirloin (*gonting*) is given to the male adults of the *horja*, the ribs (*panamboli*) to the helpers for the ritual meal, and the thigh (*tulan bona*) to the village chief (*kepala desa*).

As mentioned above, reburial rituals are divided into three types: *turun*, *gombur* and *partangiang*. I could not obtain a clear explanation of the origin of the words *turun* and *gombur* through my research in Toba Holbung. However, Schreiner [1994: 175] notes that the word *paturunhon* which derives from *turun* was the term which indicated, in the pre-Christian period, the action of taking the dead body out of the stilt house once it began to manifest symptoms of decomposition. He also mentions that the reason why the word *gombur* (which originally meant "muddy" or "turbid") is used as a term designating a kind of reburial ritual is quite uncertain [*loc. cit.*]. According to Mr. HM, German missionaries adopted the word *partangiang* (which originally meant "prayer" in Toba indigenous religion) as a word for Christian prayer. Some of my informants told me that it evolved to mean the simplified reburial ritual. Schreiner [*ibid.*: 176] comments similarly and adds that the word *partonggoan*, which primarily means the evocation of gods and spirits in Toba indigenous religion, indicates the same type of simplified ritual.

Despite a divergence in opinion among the Toba over the classification of these three types of reburial rituals, the explanation which is common to the majority of the Toba I interviewed can be summarized as follows: *turun* is the most splendid reburial ritual with a great size of host group and guests in which the ritual dance (*manortor*) accompanied by *gondang* is conducted for several days (sometimes for several weeks) and more than several water buffaloes are slaughtered for the ritual distribution of the portions. In *gombur*, the ritual dance with *gondang* is carried out for three days at the most, the size of the host group and guests is smaller than *turun*, and a water buffalo or cattle is slaughtered. *Partangiang*, which is conducted when the financial capability of the host group is insufficient, is a simplified reburial ritual without *gondang*. In such a case, a brass band usually accompanies the ritual dance.¹¹⁾

11) For the details of the process of reburial ritual, see the following studies: Hutagaol [1989: 42-53] gives a

IV Historical Changes of Reburial Tombs

A. Forms of Old Reburial Tombs

During my research in Toba Holbung, the Toba I interviewed frequently mentioned that there had been two types of old reburial tombs: *tambak na timbo*, which meant literally “high mound” and *batu na pir*, “hard stone.” Although the Toba have their own script similar to those of other Batak groups such as the Simalungun and the Karo, it was not customary for the Toba to inscribe the name of the deceased and the year of the construction on tombs. Therefore we have to rely on the interviews with the villagers who have kinship relations with the reburied in the tombs in order to verify the year of construction of “high mound” and “hard stone.”

According to most of my informants, the typical shape of “high mound” is an odd (three, five or seven) stepped funerary mound made of earth, on the top of which a seedling of *baringin* (*Ficus benjamina*) or *hariara* (*Ficus*) is planted. Actual observation, however, revealed that there are few “high mounds” which accord with the typical shape at least in Toba Holbung. As shown in Picture 1, the common shape of “high mounds” is a simple mound about one meter in height with a planted seedling on top. There are some “high mounds” utilizing natural mounds.



Picture 1 A Burial Mound Called “High Mound” (*Tambak na Timbo*) for Exhumed Bones

This is a single mound with a *hariara* tree photographed in Humbang. The year of construction is unknown.

“Hard stone” is a coffin, sculptured in most cases, made of a big stone produced by stonemasons. According to some elders in LNH, usually there were stonemasons who made stone coffins in any *horja*, yet some excellent stonemasons were invited from other *horja*. Most informants told me that the usual form of stone coffin was that of silhouette of the Toba traditional house called *ruma*, while some others said that motifs using chickens or locusts were common. The exhumed bones were stored inside the stone coffin which generally consisted of a lid and body which was hollowed out deeply.¹²⁾ Although volcanic tuff which is relatively easy to work is distributed around

↘ full account of the process, including planning, preparation, construction of a reburial tomb and execution of a reburial ritual; Yamamoto [1991: 196–200] reports an interesting case of a reburial ritual at a Toba settlement in the Simalungun area; and Sibeth [1991: 82–84] provides a brief illustration of a reburial ritual held at Toba homeland in 1981 with many color photographs. Tampubolon [1968: 58–69] gives a detailed explanation of the difference in the content of ritual between *turun* and *gombur*.

12) Some stone coffins have a monolithic structure without separation between lid and body; others have no body—only the lid-shaped coffin is placed on the ground. In such cases, I suppose that the bones were ↗

Lake Toba [Scholz 1983: 71], the big stone suitable for stone coffin which was available at restricted places had to be dragged to the graveyard from such places as the foot of the mountain and the river beach. Mr. MA told me that in 1936 he had witnessed several hundreds of people engaged in the work of dragging a big stone from the river beach to the village for a week, during the period of which water buffaloes and cattle had been slaughtered to feed the workers. Most of the Toba, including Mr. MA, stated that, in Toba Holbung, stone coffins were valued higher than funeral mounds as the symbol of socio-political or religious prestige, because only the outstanding figures were able to mobilize the villagers as a labor force.

Barbier [1983: 113, 124] reports that stone urns called *parholian*, which means “receptacle of the bones,” were made in and around the island of Samosir, but that he had not found them at all in Toba Holbung. I exclude stone urns from my discussion in this paper, because I myself never saw stone urns during my research in Toba Holbung and never heard the Toba in the region talking about their presence.

B. *Construction of Stone Coffins in LNH and Toba Holbung*

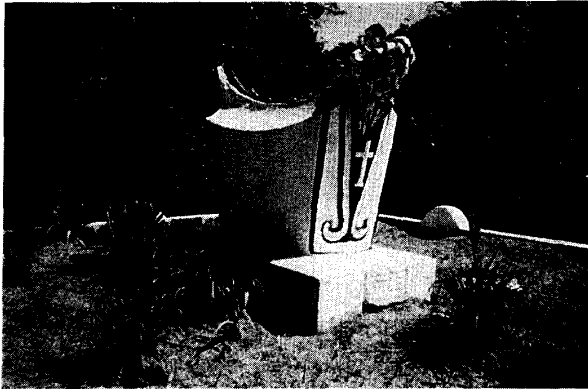
“High mounds” in Toba Holbung are not so many because of the reason I mentioned above. Although the construction of “high mounds” should, if possible, be examined in detail, there are no “high mound” in LNH in the strict sense defined above. At the side of the dirt road which penetrates LNH south to north, remains a large mound on which a *hariara* tree is planted. However, according to the villagers, this mound is a tomb which contains the dead bodies of a man and his wife who moved to LNH from the adjacent village in the pre-colonial period and those of his descendants. There is no oral tradition concerning their reburial.

Thus, here I will first examine in detail the construction of stone coffins in LNH, based on my own census data of all reburial tombs in LNH. Later I will extend my examination to stone coffins in Toba Holbung, mainly based on my observations as well as interviews in the region.

Two stone coffins placed on the ground can be identified in LNH; and two more, according to Mr. HM and other villagers, are certainly buried under the large mound mentioned above.

Picture 2 shows one of the stone coffins which can be observed in LNH. It is now plastered with mortar. A stone plate, which is thought to have been made later and inlaid at the front of the stone coffin, indicates that the reburial ritual concerning this coffin was held in 1917. This information is inscribed on the plate in Toba Batak language in Roman script. The stone plate also indicates that this stone coffin was made when a man of the Simanjuntak clan (the 10th generation) and his eldest son (the 11th generation) were reburied with their respective spouses. Their descendants who live in LNH confirm this. According to many villagers in LNH, the eldest son was one of the key figures who played an important role in establishing a new communal irrigation system in the pre-colonial period. Additionally they told me that, as a result of hard work of his 14 sons in opening new paddy fields, the descendants of the eldest son came to have a large number of paddy fields in the central part of LNH. Although most of the villagers pointed out that the large number

↘ interred under the ground on which the monolithic or the lid-shaped stone coffin was placed. Barbier [1983: 113–139] exemplifies the variation of stone coffins in detail with many photographs.



Picture 2 A Stone Coffin Called “Hard Stone”
(*Batu na Pir*)

There is a stone plate on the front which indicates that the reburial ritual was held in 1917. Photographed in LNH.

of descendants of the eldest son had been significant as a background to the construction of this stone coffin, there are other factors we should consider. The construction of this stone coffin and the realization of the reburial ritual were considered to be made possible based on the socio-political prestige of the eldest son (the 11th generation) who was one of the leaders in establishing the communal irrigation system, and on the wealth which was brought about by the ample paddy fields opened by the 14 sons (the 12th generation).

The villagers in LNH assured me that the other stone coffin which could be identified on the ground was a reburial tomb for a *raja ihutan* (an administrative chief of a small administrative district called *hundulan* under the early stage of Dutch colonial rule), who was the 12th generation of the Simanjuntak clan, and his wife constructed by his sons. Before examining this stone coffin, it will be necessary to explain briefly the administrative system at the period.

In 1883, the Dutch colonial government installed a Controleur (European district officer) in Balige supported by 50 colonial soldiers in Laguboti, and from 1886 appointed such colonial chiefs as *raja ihutan*, *raja padua* (vice chief) and *kepala kampung* (hamlet chief) in villages in Toba Holbung [Hirosue 1988: 56–71]. Vergouwen [1964: 128] notes: “In Toba Holbung the *horja* were in most cases originally made into separate *hundulan* but later . . . combinations were often resorted to by the Government.” On the contrary, Castles writes:

In drawing the boundaries of the *hundulan*, the new administrators naturally paid attention to genealogical and other social and political realities, so far as they could perceive them, but they were harassed by demands for haste from higher authorities and in the interests of efficiency (to secure an adequate population for the *hundulan*) strange bedfellows were often brought together. This was particularly so in the Toba Holbung region . . . where the *horja* or smaller sacrifice-community was an important indigenous unit, but was generally too small to constitute a *hundulan*. [Castles 1972: 35–36]

As far as LNH and the neighboring villages are concerned, according to an elder in a village adjacent to LNH who has a thorough knowledge of the history of local administration, the colonial government appointed at the outset four *raja ihutan* from three *horja* among six *horja* which constituted a *bius* (a larger sacrifice community) including LNH.

According to the villagers in LNH, two *raja ihutan* were at first appointed in LNH as repre-

sentatives of two influential lineages respectively. One *raja ihutan* was the 11th generation of the Simanjuntak clan (hereafter referred to as “*raja ihutan* (a)”) and the other was the 12th generation of the same clan (hereafter referred to as “*raja ihutan* (b)”). As shown in the certificates of appointment kept by a villager in LNH who is a descendant of *raja ihutan* (a), they were appointed *raja ihutan* in 1887. Some villagers who are descended from *raja ihutan* (a) or *raja ihutan* (b) stated that at the time of appointment *raja ihutan* (a) had already been old enough, while *raja ihutan* (b) in the prime of manhood. They also informed me that both of the two *raja ihutan* had made an agreement with the colonial government to surrender the *hundulan* to another *raja ihutan* after the death of either. Because the younger *raja ihutan* (b) died earlier than elder *raja ihutan* (a), the latter took over the *hundulan* of the former. After the death of *raja ihutan* (a), one of his sons was appointed the third *raja ihutan* from *horja* LNH who governed LNH and an adjacent village. It is verified by the certificate of appointment for him issued in 1895.

An old man who is a grandchild of *raja ihutan* (b) told me that *raja ihutan* (b) died in 1903, but it is natural to think that he died between 1887 (the year of his appointment) and 1895 (the year of appointment of the third *raja ihutan*). According to the old man, the dead body of *raja ihutan* (b) was buried at first on the verge of his hamlet and, several years later, his bones and those of his wife who had died before his death were exhumed in order to be transferred to a stone coffin which was made of a big stone dragged about one hundred meters up to the hamlet from the shore of Lake Toba. Their sons (the 13th generation), according to the man, held a great reburial ritual using the name of *raja ihutan* (b).

Although I did not have a chance to identify directly two more stone coffins which were said to be buried under the large mound, the villagers in LNH affirmed that one of those two stone coffins contained the exhumed bones of *raja ihutan* (a) and one of his five wives; and the other contained those of his father (the 10th generation) exhumed by *raja ihutan* (a) and his brothers. The exact years when those two stone coffins were constructed are uncertain. However, judging from the year of the above-mentioned certificates of appointment, we should consider that *raja ihutan* (a) also died between 1887 and 1895; and as a consequence we may suppose that those stone coffins were constructed at the end of the nineteenth century. Mr. HM, a descendant of *raja ihutan* (a), stated that these stone coffins had been buried under the mound for the purpose of preventing burial accessories and bones from being stolen by the competing lineage which had intended to humiliate the rival lineage. Furthermore he added that, according to the story he had heard from his grandfather, it had taken about three months to drag the stone coffin for *raja ihutan* (a) from the shore of Lake Toba to his hamlet on bamboo tubes with rattan ropes, accompanied by the *gondang* to raise the morale of the workers. During this period, he said, calves had been slaughtered every day to feed the working villagers.

As is clear from the verification above, all of four stone coffins in LNH are likely to have been made in the Dutch colonial period and three of them turned out to be connected to the colonial chief, *raja ihutan*. If that is the case in LNH, then we should examine next the cases in Toba Holbung at large.

According to Mr. MA, the exhumation of the bones in the pre-colonial period was not as

frequent as the present day in Toba Holbung. He elaborates that only a few outstanding figures such as influential *raja huta* (those who opened a new hamlet called *huta* and their patrilineal descendants) and excellent *datu* (magicians) were actually reburied in the pre-colonial period because of their preeminent socio-political or religious prestige by the prosperous descendants. According to Mr. MA, although the right of constructing a reburial tomb has in principle no relation to the political status in the Toba *adat*, those who could afford the considerable expense necessary for the preparation of a stone coffin and the execution of a reburial ritual were limited practically to the people mentioned above.¹³⁾

Schreiner [1994: 171] reports that stone coffins are predominantly distributed in the island of Samosir as well as the southern and western shore of Lake Toba, among which the oldest may be about five hundred years old. However, despite considerable effort, I found no such old stone coffins similar to those reported by Schreiner in Toba Holbung on the southeastern shore of the lake. On the contrary, I was often told that stone coffins about which I had a chance to obtain information were reburial tombs for *raja ihutan* in the Dutch colonial period as is the case in LNH. The most recent stone coffin which I identified in my research contains the bones of a *raja ihutan* of an administrative section in Balige. According to one of his descendants, it was constructed in 1939. Although there may be some exceptionally old stone coffins, we should consider that most of the stone coffins in Toba Holbung were constructed in the period between the early stage of Dutch colonial rule which began in the 1880s and the end of it in 1942. As Castles [1972: 34–38] points out, some of the influential local chiefs consolidated their socio-political status in the early stage of colonial rule by being appointed *raja ihutan*, *raja padua* or other colonial chiefs. As far as Toba Holbung is concerned, I think it is highly probable that it was mainly such chiefs as mentioned above and their children who were able to make the villagers drag a big stone for a stone coffin and hold a reburial ritual by virtue of their socio-political prestige and the economic superiority based on possession of ample paddy fields and livestock.

C. *Background to the Construction of Mortar Reburial Tombs in Toba Holbung*

In LNH, like other villages in Toba Holbung, there are some graveyards, as shown in Picture 3, filled with many reburial tombs finished with mortar. Such tombs are also found along the village paths. When did this distinctive landscape become common in Toba Holbung?

Quoting some passages from the works written in the Dutch colonial period will be helpful as the first step in answering the question. Warneck, a German missionary mentioned above, describes: “Finally the bones are buried and a high mound is raised over the grave which is often decorated with a cement structure” [Warneck 1915: 357, quoted in Sibeth 1991: 80]. Since his first missionary work in Tapanuli was conducted in the period 1892–1908, it will be clear from this passage that the early utilization of cement for tombs may be traced back to around the turn of the

13) In addition to these occasions, according to Mr. MA, bones were exhumed, for example, from a village where a man lived uxorilocally so as to transfer to the village of his origin. However, he added, there was no particular ritual and construction of a reburial tomb on such an occasion, unless the financial capability of the descendants of the deceased was sufficient.



Picture 3 Mortar Tombs in a Graveyard on the Northern Edge of LNH
Attendants of a funeral are walking toward a reburial tomb.

century. Bartlett, who stayed in North Sumatra twice both in 1918 and in 1927, notes in a paper primarily presented at an academic meeting in 1928 that the Toba had already begun to construct concrete tombs (built up of rubble and then plastered over with cement) by that time, and that between 1918 and 1927 few of those new tombs had seemed to be erected [Bartlett 1973: 236]. Whereas Vergouwen [1964: 71] comments in his book originally published in 1933 that the exhumed bones at that time were placed in new graves made of cement, called *simen*.

Such new tombs are often referred to in papers as “concrete tomb,” “*simin* (or *simen*)” after the vernacular word for cement, or “*tugu*” which means a monument in Indonesian. However, I employ here the term “mortar tomb” instead, which seems the most appropriate for three reasons mentioned below.

- (1) Those new tombs are rubble stonework or brickwork finished with mortar. According to Ching [1995: 157], mortar is a “plastic mixture of lime or cement, or a combination of both, with sand and water, used as a bonding agent in masonry construction.” He also delineates that concrete is an “artificial, stonelike building material made by mixing cement and various mineral aggregates with sufficient water to cause the cement to set and bind the entire mass” [*ibid.*: 42]. Davey [1961: 121–122] defines: “In modern practice the aggregates for mortar normally pass through a sieve with 3/16-inch square openings, whereas mixtures with aggregates coarser than this would be classed as concrete.” Mortar contains fine aggregates (namely sands), while concrete includes coarse aggregates such as gravel and crushed stones too. If a tomb is cast from concrete using forms of wood panels, there is no need of rubble stone or bricks. From the architectural point of view, reburial tombs which dot the landscape in the Toba highland should not be called “concrete tombs.”
- (2) Some of those tombs are finished solely with lime mortar (a mixture of burnt lime, sand, and water) including no cement. I consider that the term “*simin* (or *simen*)” which derives from cement is an inappropriate expression for mortar in general. Therefore I refer to reburial tombs finished with cement mortar, lime mortar, and the combination of both as “mortar tombs.”
- (3) Some *adat* experts including Mr. MA explicitly objected to refer to mortar tombs as

“*tugu*” on the ground that a *tugu* as a monument contains nothing in it, whereas every mortar tomb includes the bones of ancestors and bears a religious meaning.

Prior to examining mortar tombs, it will be desirable to describe the technical background to the construction of mortar tombs in Toba Holbung.

Portland cement, generally called “cement,” was invented in 1824 in England and put to practical use in the middle of the nineteenth century in Europe [*ibid.* : 97–127]. In Toba Holbung, however, modern construction such as offices of the colonial government, churches, irrigation systems and bridges began in the 1880s when Dutch colonial rule reached there. According to an old mason who follows in his father’s and grandfather’s footsteps, barrels filled with cement were carried at that time into Toba Holbung from Sibolga on the western coast of North Sumatra through a steep mountain path by porters or on horseback. However, he was not sure where the cement had come from. It was usual in the early stage of the colonial period, he said, to use rubble stone readily available from places such as the lakeshore, the riverside and the foot of mountains as a building material. He added that mortar constituted of sand, water, and lime (sometimes mixed with cement) had been used then for joining rubble stone together and finishing even when the modern buildings had been constructed, because the short supply of cement had resulted in extra high prices. According to the old mason, there were no mortar tombs until the plasterwork techniques which made use of lime mortar was taught by Europeans who identified the high quality of the burnt lime produced in a village near Balige as a building material which had been used for *sirih* (betel chewing) since the pre-colonial period. So far as my research in Toba Holbung can establish, it is in the twentieth century that the utilization of Portland cement mixed with lime for tomb construction began in small numbers.

Si Singa Mangaraja XII, a Toba Batak divine king who fought against the Dutch colonial government, was killed in a battle in 1907 [Sidjabat 1983 : 286–296]. Consequently, all the indigenous communities in North Sumatra were for the first time integrated as parts of the same larger polity under Dutch colonial rule in 1910 [Langenberg 1977 : 95–96]. Cunningham [1958 : 85] pointed out in relation to Toba migration that the roads which broke through in 1915 from the rapidly growing East-Coast plantation area to Balige facilitated new contact between the Simalungun area and the Toba highland. The distribution of commodities would have also been activated by the newly-opened roads not only from the Simalungun area but also from Medan (the capital city of North Sumatra in the east coast area). Most of the Toba I interviewed stated that the utilization of cement as a building material had become popular in Toba Holbung in the 1920s, because the improvement in land transportation by automobile from Medan had made the increasing supply of cement possible. According to Mr. HM, an engineering contractor from his father’s generation, the cement transported from Medan, often mixed with lime, was commonly used, until the cement from West Sumatra hit the Tapanuli market in the 1950s.

Aritonang [1994 : 172–173] notes that the first industrial school operated by the German mission was opened in 1900 at Narumonda in Toba Holbung so as to answer the needs of Toba society for trained persons in the technical fields and in fields requiring skilled workmen. The head teacher at the school, which was moved to Laguboti later in 1907, was a German missionary who

was an excellent craftsman as well [*loc. cit.*]. According to Mr. HM, stonework and woodwork were the sole Toba indigenous construction skills before the contact with the Europeans. He stated that the graduates of the industrial school had played a key role in spreading western construction skills including plasterwork techniques.

Some of the Toba I interviewed remembered that the brick production business had once been tried even in Toba Holbung in 1942, which had resulted in a failure because of the low quality of clay and the poor skill of calcination. Most of them also stated that bricks had begun to be used as a material for the construction of the buildings including tombs from the 1950s. According to a leading brick producer in a village near Lubuk Pakam in the district of Deli Serdang, the brick production industry developed in the former plantations from the 1950s and its products have been traded even to Tapanuli as a result of the improvement in truck transportation.

D. Examination of Mortar Tombs in LNH

I found 67 mortar tombs in LNH at the time of my research in September 1994, two of which (one of them was constructed in the 1930s and the other in the 1940s) contained no bones at that time, because the bones were re-transferred to other reburial tombs constructed recently.

Table 1 shows the number of reburial tombs in LNH constructed in each decade, classified into five categories according to the shape.¹⁴⁾ One of the most noteworthy facts in Table 1 is that the construction of mortar tombs in LNH began in the 1920s and increased considerably in the 1930s. However, the construction of mortar tombs boomed after the end of the Revolution. Among the 67 mortar tombs, 50 (74.6%) were constructed after 1960. In the previous studies by some Toba scholars, there is a divergence in opinion over the period when the construction of mortar tombs began to boom: Hutagaol [1989: 185] notes that mortar tombs have increased along the roads in North Tapanuli since the 1950s; whereas Lumbantoruan [1974: 94] observes that the boom began

Table 1 Historical Changes in the Number of Mortar Tombs in LNH according to the Shape Type

| | 1920s | 1930s | 1940s | 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s* | Total |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Stone coffin type | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Step type | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 13 |
| Box type | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 31 |
| Traditional house type | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 9 |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 1 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 9 | 67 |

*: Figures as of September 1994.

- 14) On mortar tombs the Toba normally record such information as the names of the reburied (usually their teknonym and *marga*, for example "Ompu si Gani Simanjuntak"), the year of birth and death of the reburied, as well as the year of the construction of the tomb. As far as mortar tombs in LNH concerned, 53 (79.1%) out of 67 tombs including those which were constructed in the Dutch colonial period had such records on them. As the villagers in LNH pointed out, the practice of recording such information might have been influenced by Christianity.

in the 1960s. Mr. MA stated that the Toba in increasing numbers began to talk about the projects of reburial in the 1950s, soon after the end of the Revolution, when the number of Toba emigrants increased; and that their plans for reburial began to be realized in the 1960s. The case of LNH, I consider, positively supports this statement of Mr. MA.

Many of the Toba agreed that, because there were no regulations as regards the shape of reburial tombs, it was decided according to the will of the host group. In LNH, mortar tombs which had the bone repository imitating the form of stone coffins (the stone coffin type) were constructed mostly during the colonial period and seldom after Indonesian independence. The favored successors to the stone coffin type were stepped tombs with several steps (the step type); box-shaped tombs functioning both as the bone repository and as the place for dead bodies mostly with an additional small bone repository on it (the box type); and tombs resembling the box type in the appearance of the lower part, on which the bone repository elaborately imitating the traditional Toba house (*ruma*) is placed (the traditional house type). As Table 1 demonstrates, among mortar tombs in LNH, those of the box type are the most common as a whole. Those of the traditional house type have been built increasingly since the 1960s. I suppose that one of the reasons for the increase of the tombs of this type was the improvement in plasterwork skills, which made the elaborate work possible.

Next I will examine the functional aspect of mortar tombs in LNH. The word "burial chamber" in Table 2 means the space inside of the mortar tomb. I employ the term "burial chamber" in this paper because there is no particular Toba term indicating the space and the Toba usually express it by the Indonesian word *ruangan* which means "room" or "chamber." It is usual in the case of mortar tombs with the additional bone repository on them that the bones of the ancestors in the earliest generation are stored permanently in the bone repository above and those of younger generations on the shelf made inside of the burial chamber. As shown in Picture 4, which shows the inside of a mortar tomb in LNH, the bones are deposited on the shelf and the dead bodies put in the wooden coffin are placed on the floor. Fifty three mortar tombs (79.1%) in LNH have the burial chamber, while 10 (14.9%), without the burial chamber, have a division of burial ground for the dead bodies. It can be said that 63 tombs (94.0%), the total of the two mentioned above, are constructed with the intention of storing the dead bodies as well as the bones. I infer from what Table 2 shows that migrants who demonstrate the initiative in reburial as chief sponsors tend to regard the reburial tomb not only as the place for storing the bones of their ancestors but also as the grave for

Table 2 Historical Changes in the Number of Mortar Tombs in LNH according to the Type of Burial Space

| | 1920s | 1930s | 1940s | 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s* | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| With burial chamber | 1 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 12 | 8 | 53 |
| Bone repository with burial ground | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Bone repository only | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 1 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 9 | 67 |

*: Figures as of September 1994.



Picture 4 The Inside of a Mortar Tomb in LNH
There are skulls and little wooden coffins containing bones on the shelf, while big wooden coffins containing the dead body are placed on the floor. This mortar tomb was constructed in 1980.

themselves. At the point of my research in 1994, 43 mortar tombs (64.2%) contained one or more dead bodies.

Table 3 indicates the number and the types of reburial rituals in each decade. The total number of reburial rituals analyzed (71) outnumbers that of mortar tombs in LNH, because in some reburial rituals the bones were stored in the mortar tomb which had already been constructed previously at the time of the first reburial ritual. According to some villagers in LNH, there were no *turun* type rituals except those which followed the construction of the stone coffins in the early stage of the colonial period. When I asked the type of reburial rituals which followed the construction of mortar tombs, most of the villagers answered, "It was *gondang*" or "It was just *partangiang*an." The most important criterion, namely, is whether the ritual included *gondang* music or not. Consequently, the simplified reburial ritual without *gondang* is called *partangiang*an. Table 3 reveals that not all reburial rituals in the 1930s under Dutch colonial rule were conducted

Table 3 Historical Changes in the Number and the Type of Reburial Rituals in LNH

| | 1920s | 1930s | 1940s | 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s* | Total |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| <i>Gondang</i> | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 11 | 10 | 5 | 40 |
| <i>Partangiang</i> an | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 28 |
| Scheduled | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 1 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 19 | 15 | 12 | 71 |

Note : Although the total number of reburial tombs in LNH is 67, the total number of reburial rituals in LNH is 71, because on some of the reburial rituals the host group did not construct a new reburial tomb but utilized old tombs which already existed. Since the reburial ritual is not always held on the same year as the construction of reburial tomb is completed, the total number of reburial tombs constructed in each decade shown in Table 1 and Table 2 does not always coincide with the total number of reburial rituals in each decade shown in Table 3.

* : Figures as of September 1994.

with *gondang*; and that, since the 1970s, the reburial rituals with *gondang* have increased, while those without *gondang* have also been carried out according to the financial capabilities of the host group.

V Case Studies of the Construction of Mortar Tombs in LNH

When the Toba talk about mortar tombs, they quite frequently refer to the financial support of the migrants. Therefore I will first describe briefly the history of migration from LNH as a background to the increase in construction of mortar tombs, mainly based on my interviews with the villagers.

Since the establishment of Christian missions and Dutch colonial rule in the 1880s, the Western system of education has prevailed in Toba Holbung [Aritonang 1994: 153–175]. In LNH, some of the young people whose fathers were colonial chiefs or such church functionaries as church elders and teacher-preachers could take advantage of educational opportunities, and in consequence could elevate their socio-economic status. It was mainly the children of such colonial chiefs as *raja ihutan* who won the confidence of the colonial government and could afford the great expense of higher education. Having western education in Dutch, they could acquire positions as clerks in the plantation office or as colonial government staff. It was, on the other hand, chiefly the children of church functionaries who graduated from the teachers' training school run by the German mission and were placed in all over North Sumatra as teacher-preachers. Some children of common villagers could also become foremen called *mandur* or laborer contractors for public works of the colonial government, if they could obtain sufficient reading and calculating capabilities through primary education in the vernacular language in the village school. As Cunningham [1958: 85] notes, the influx of Toba migrants into the Simalungun area, whose skills in irrigation were highly esteemed by the Dutch colonial government, began in the mid-1910s. He considers that this influx was caused partly as a result of the invitation of the government which intended to establish vast paddy fields in the Simalungun area in order to supply sufficient rice to the increasing number of plantation workers in East Sumatra [*loc. cit.*]. Quite a few migrants from LNH achieved economic success in the new settlements which caused an improvement in their standard of living compared with the villagers who remained in the homeland. Some of these migrants raised their social status by being appointed the village chief in the settlements. As transportation improved from the 1920s, the new wealthy who were involved in business began to augment their economic power.

Cunningham, who conducted research both at a Toba village adjacent to LNH and at a settlement in East Sumatra, mentions that a great number of Toba migrants occupied the plantation lands which had formerly been owned by Westerners and its surrounding area in order to open illegal farmlands profiting from disorder at the time of the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch colonial government to the Republic of Indonesia [*ibid.*: 91–95]. Since the 1960s, furthermore, migrants to such cities as Pematang Siantar, Medan and Jakarta have increased, among which quite a few people took high positions such as civil servants, teachers, police and military officers, or succeeded in business.

On the following pages, I will examine three cases of reburial tombs in LNH which were

constructed by lineages of the Simanjuntak clan whose genealogy is relatively unambiguous. Forty eight (71.6%) out of 67 mortar tombs in LNH were tombs of the Simanjuntak clan. By exemplifying the kinship relation between the exhumed ancestors and the descendants who constituted the host group of the reburial ritual as well as their socio-economic backgrounds, I will illustrate the relationship between the migrants and the villagers in Toba homeland.

〈Case 1〉

The villagers said that the mortar tomb of the stone coffin type shown in Picture 5, located beside a hamlet in the center of LNH, was constructed in about 1930. This tomb is rubble stonework finished with lime mortar and one of the oldest mortar tombs in LNH. The following information concerning the mortar tomb is based on an interview with A21 in his fifties, one of the descendants of A1 shown in Fig. 2, who earns a living from wet-rice cultivation in LNH and is a church elder.

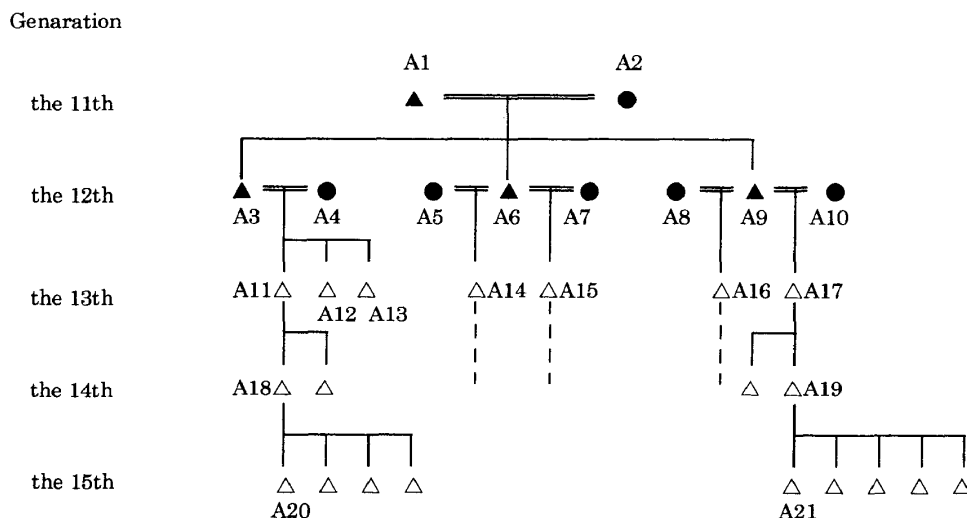


Picture 5 A Mortar Tomb in LNH Examined in Case 1

This tomb was constructed in about 1930.

(Refer to Fig. 2 for information about the relationship between the reburied and the host group.)

This tomb was built with the intention to store the bones of the ancestors of the 11th and the 12th generation. When the reburial ritual was conducted in 1932, the bones of a man (A1) of the 11th generation and his wife (A2) as well as his three sons of the 12th generation and their spouses (from A3 to A10) were exhumed and transferred to this tomb. Born in a hamlet founded by his father adjacent to this tomb, A1 lived a life as a common peasant in LNH without any particular great deeds, though he had the *adat* authority over the land use in the hamlet as a *raja huta*. The bones of A1 and A2 were exhumed from the graveyard in LNH, while those of the others were brought from Siantar. When the villagers refer to “Siantar,” it means not only the central city in the Simalungun area but also its environs. A21 does not have information on the years and motives of migration of his ancestors (A3, A6 and A9 of the 12th generation and their spouses) to Siantar and their occupations there. However, it may be surmised that the migration of these people of the

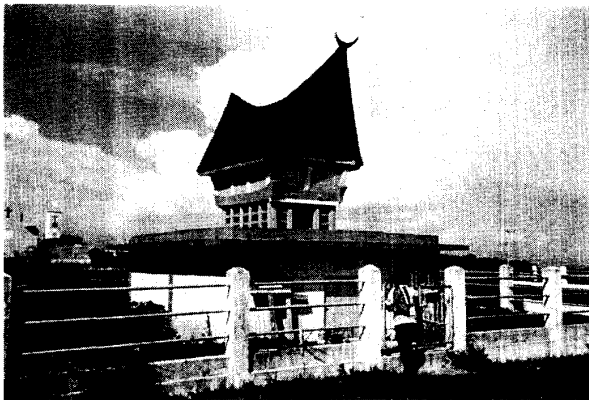


the old tomb shown in Picture 5, together with the bones of the migrants (the 13th and 14th generation) as well as their spouses were exhumed from graveyards in Siantar, and transferred to the new reburial tomb. As a result, the old tomb is abandoned at the present time.

〈Case 2〉

The mortar tomb shown in Picture 6 was constructed in 1980. It is located in a graveyard on the northern edge of LNH. Using bricks as building materials and being finished with cement mortar (a mixture of Portland cement, sand, and water), this reburial tomb's bone repository on the box-shaped burial chamber elaborately imitates the Toba traditional house. I obtained information on this tomb from B9 in Fig. 3 who was born in 1918 and had long been a church elder, as well as from his eldest son born in 1942. Both of them earned a living from wet-rice cultivation in LNH.

At the reburial ritual in 1981, the bones of B2 and his two wives were exhumed from the burial ground around a mortar tomb constructed in 1939 in which the bones of grandparents of B2 and the descendants with their respective spouses were stored. The bones of B2 and his wives were



Picture 6 A Mortar Tomb in LNH Examined in Case 2

This tomb was constructed in 1980.
(Refer to Fig. 3 for information about the relationship among the reburied, the buried and the host group.)

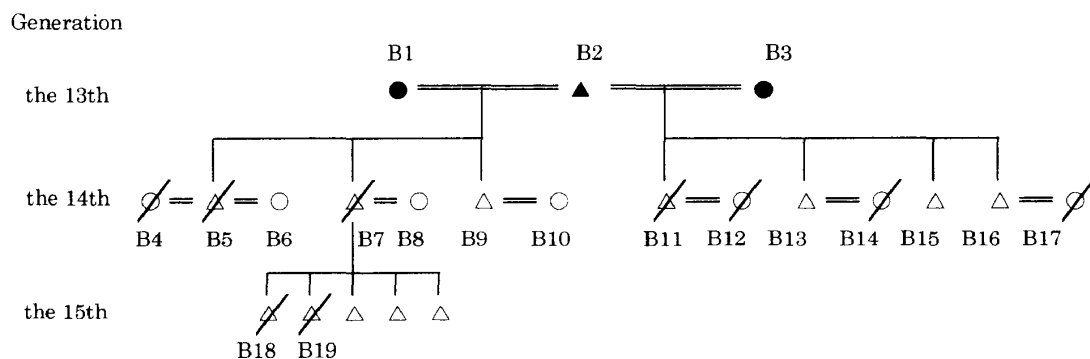


Fig. 3 Reburied Ancestors and Their Patrilineal Descendants in Case 2 (Picture 6)

Those who were reburied or buried in this tomb are designated by the following symbols.

- ▲: Male whose exhumed bones are stored.
- : Female whose exhumed bones are stored.
- ⊗: Male whose dead body is stored.
- ⊙: Female whose dead body is stored.

transferred to the bone repository imitating the Toba traditional house. In Toba society, the foundation of a new hamlet by a newly married young man who leaves his father's hamlet to begin an independent life is referred to as *manjae*. As regards the tombs, transference of the bones of people which have already been stored in the parents' or ancestors' reburial tomb to a new reburial tomb constructed for them is also expressed by the same word, *manjae*.

The above-mentioned *raja ihutan* (b) had three sons. B2 was his third son. According to the villagers, the second son who assisted the colonial government as a tax collector (*kepala rodi*) in the village was superior to his brothers (the first son of *raja ihutan* (b) and B2) both in social status and in economic power. B2 did not migrate and lived as a common peasant in LNH all his life. He converted to Christianity.

The construction of this mortar tomb originated in an offer from B5 who was born in LNH in the first half of the 1910s and acquired a position as a government official in Medan in the colonial period. Since he had no desire to be buried in Medan far from his homeland, he consulted with his younger brothers about his hope of building a tomb for himself and his wife. B9 suggested in response that they could construct a new reburial tomb to store the bones of their father (B2) and mothers (B1 and B3). Thus the mortar tomb shown in Picture 6 with a large burial chamber was constructed on the consensus of the brothers of the 14th generation.

The leader of the reburial ritual with *gondang* held in 1981 was B7, who was the village chief of LNH at that time. As of the reburial ritual in 1981, three of the seven brothers of the 14th generation lived outside of LNH: namely B5 was a government official in Medan; similarly B11 in a small city in East Sumatra; and B13 was a plasterer in Medan. The others mainly earned a living from wet-rice cultivation in LNH. B16 was a teacher at a primary school in an adjacent village. Although B9 avoided making a detailed explanation of the allotment of expenses for the reburial, I suppose that the expenses were born not only by the migrants but also considerably by the brothers who remained in LNH, judging from the fact that the standard of living of B7 and B9, having a large size of paddy fields, was significantly higher than ordinary villagers in LNH, and from the comments of other villagers concerning this reburial tomb.

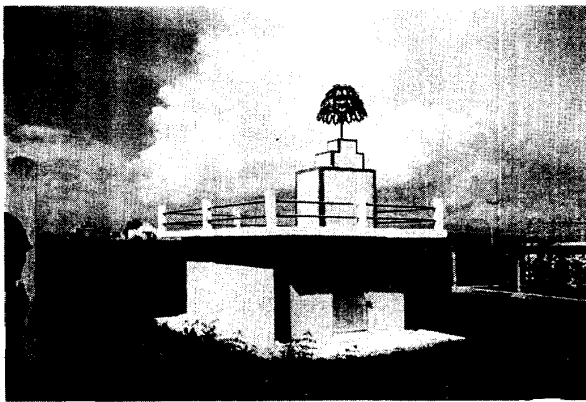
The burial chamber of this tomb now contains seven corpses of people of the 14th generation and bodies of two men of the 15th generation who died after the reburial ritual in 1981. Among those nine persons, it was only B7 who died in LNH. Although B17, an ex-teacher at a secondary school, had lived in LNH with her husband, she died at a hospital in Medan and her body was carried to LNH. Those who died in Medan and whose corpses were carried to LNH were as follows: B5 and his wife (B4), the wife of B13 (namely B14), B18 who was a soldier, and B19 who was a guard. The dead bodies of B11 and B12 who died in a city in East Sumatra were also carried to LNH and placed in the burial chamber of this reburial tomb.

〈Case 3〉

The mortar tomb of the box type shown in Picture 7 which was constructed in 1993 belongs to the group of smaller mortar tombs in LNH. This tomb adjacent to the mortar tomb in Picture 6 is built of bricks joined together and finished with cement mortar similar to the tomb in Picture 6. On the

burial chamber was made a bone repository whose motif is thought to be "high mound." A villager told me that this design without cross was adopted because there were Muslims among the members of the host group. The following information on this tomb was provided by C20 born in 1937, the only person who still remains in LNH among the descendants of C1 documented in Fig. 4. C20 earns a living by wet-rice cultivation.

C20 referred to the reburial ritual in 1993 without *gondang* as *partangiangan*. The bones of the following 13 persons were exhumed at that time : C1, his wife (C2) and his patrilineal descendants with their spouses. The bones of all of them were disinterred from the grave spots in LNH, except the bones of C8 who had lived in East Sumatra with one of her sons after the death of her husband (C7) and had been buried there. The bones of C1 and C2 were transferred to the bone



Picture 7 A Mortar Tomb in LNH Examined in Case 3

This tomb was constructed in 1993.
(Refer to Fig. 4 for information about the relationship between the reburied and the host group.)

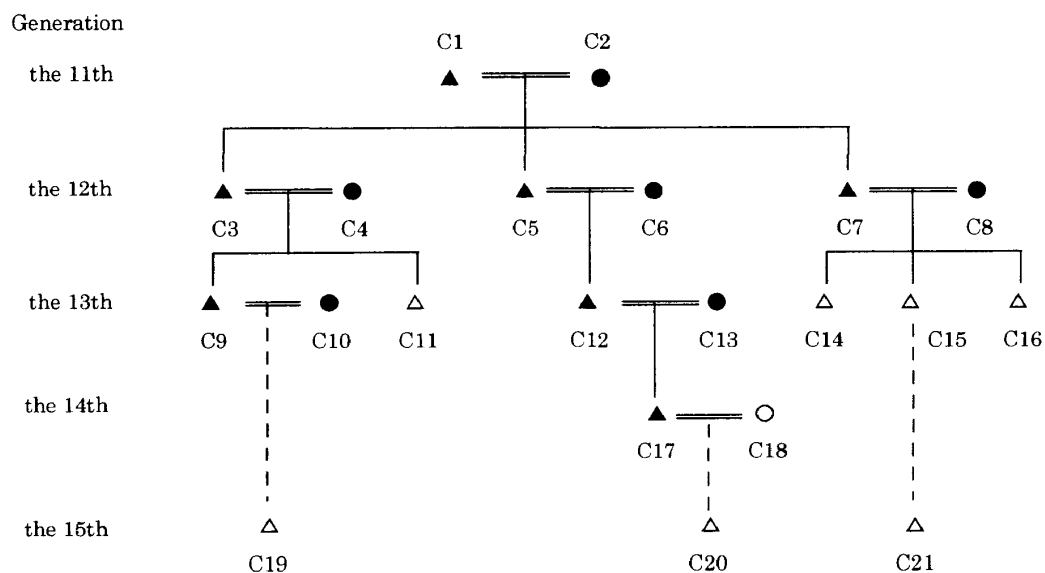


Fig. 4 Reburied Ancestors and Their Patrilineal Descendants in Case 3 (Picture 7)
Those who were reburied in this tomb are designated by the following symbols.

- ▲ : Male whose exhumed bones are stored.
- : Female whose exhumed bones are stored.

repository on the burial chamber, while those of the others were stored on the shelf inside of the burial chamber. C1 was born in LNH and moved, as soon as he married, to another hamlet in LNH which had just been founded then. Since C1 lived all his life in LNH as an ordinary peasant, C20 talked about no particular feats of C1 as well as of his descendants.

C5 had only one patrilineal descendant, namely C12. It was the same with C12. C17 was born in 1897 in LNH. After a brief experience of school education in East Sumatra, he was obliged to return to LNH and earn a living by wet-rice cultivation because he was the only male successor to C12.

C20 had no detailed information concerning the migration of the descendants of C3 and C7. However, among the patrilineal descendants of C3, those of the 14th generation may have migrated from LNH, since C19 was born in Siantar. On the other hand, judging from the fact that C8 was buried in East Sumatra, persons of the 13th generation among the descendants of C7 possibly emigrated to the area. C21, a descendant of C7, was born in Siantar.

According to C20, C21, whose occupation had been a government official in Surabaya, had scarcely any social interaction with LNH, the origin of his patrilineal ancestors. On one occasion, he met a man of the same patrilineal clan who came from LNH and heard that he was a descendant of C1. Consequently, C21 visited LNH to see C20. C20 made no explicit comment on the motive for constructing the reburial tomb. However, it is possible that such an opportunity, under an agreement with C19 who was a descendant of C3 and carried on business in Siantar, facilitated the development of a plan for constructing the reburial tomb. Although the basement of the tomb was built in 1986, construction ceased for some reason which was not explained by C20. Several years later, C21 who was urged by his two sons studying abroad in the USA at the time took the initiative in the completion of the reburial tomb. As a result the reburial ritual could be realized in 1993.

It is not usual for the members of the host group of a reburial ritual to explain the actual share of the expenses by each member. Fortunately I obtained such information on this reburial from C20. According to C20, the expenses both for the construction of the reburial tomb and for the execution of the reburial ritual amounted to about Rp 10 million (approximately equivalent to US\$4,800 at the time of my research in 1993), which were shared by C19 and C20 who financed Rp 2.5 million respectively as well as by C21 who provided Rp 5 million.¹⁵⁾ Since there should have been more members involved than these three men, it is unlikely that the expenses were shared solely by the three men. Therefore we should understand that these three men played central roles as the leaders of the descendants of three ancestors of the 12th generation (C3, C5 and C7) in collecting the allotment from the members of each lineage and their wife-receivers; and that they substantially bore most of the expenses as main sponsors.

There are no dead bodies in the burial chamber of this reburial tomb at present, because it is

15) Gultom shows a more detailed example of the expenses related to reburial. According to his tentative calculation as of 1988, the travel expenses of some members of the host group who reside in Jakarta cost Rp 13.5 million, the expenses for the ritual consumption cost about Rp 6.9 million, and the expenses for the construction of a mortar tomb of middle size (15.5 m²) cost Rp 5.3 million, the total of which amounts to Rp 25.7 million [Gultom 1991: 52–58].

not so long since the completion of the tomb. However, it is highly possible that, in future, the dead bodies of the descendants of C1 will be carried from their present dwelling places such as Siantar and Surabaya back to LNH in this tomb.

By showing examples I explained here how the villagers in Toba homeland and the migrants interrelated closely concerning reburial. In the above three cases, an official of the colonial government in Siantar (A20 in Case 1), a government official in Medan (B5 in Case 2) and an ex-official of the government in Surabaya (C21 in Case 3) as well as a merchant in Siantar (C19 in Case 3) played key roles respectively in realizing the reburial in close cooperation with the villagers.

Conclusion : Changes in Requirements for Reburial and Reburial Rituals Today

In this paper I elucidated historical changes of Toba reburial tombs which have tended to be discussed without sufficient verification, based on research in Toba Holbung especially in LNH. Although stone coffins were widely known as the old type of reburial tomb, most stone coffins in Toba Holbung might have been constructed in the Dutch colonial period, connected to such colonial chiefs as *raja ihutan*. The census figures of mortar tombs in LNH indicated the first peak of construction in the 1930s and also the rapid increase from the 1960s.

The increase of reburial means a growth in the number of reburied ancestors. When a monetary economy was underdeveloped, it would have been difficult to mobilize villagers to drag a big stone for a stone coffin solely by paying cash. In the reburial ritual celebrating a stone coffin, as is clear from the cases in LNH, only a limited number of ancestors were actually reburied, because what was needed for reburial at that time was the prestige and fame which made the mobilization of the villagers as a labor force possible and the sufficient economic power which enabled the slaughter of scores of livestock to feed the laborers and to serve the guests of the ritual. However, in the reburial ritual celebrating a mortar tomb, even a mere peasant could be reburied, if the descendants achieve economic prosperity. Quite a few of the Toba I interviewed including the villagers in LNH stressed that the social status and the economic power of the descendants were more important than those of the dead ancestors as requirements for reburial when the mortar tombs were constructed. Barbier [1983 : 134] also points out that the transfer and the depositing of bones depends nowadays less on the reputation of the deceased during his lifetime than on the wealth of his descendants. In conclusion, it can be considered that the requirements for reburial have changed so greatly in the present day that no other condition than having grandchildren is required, and that nowadays the ancestors who are designated to be reburied are chosen according to the will of the descendants.

However, according to the Toba *adat*, the decision for reburial of ancestors must be based on the complete consensus among all of the lineage members who derive from the designated ancestors. Therefore, in case there is disharmony among the lineage members or a discrepancy of understanding about the order of birth of the ancestors or themselves, the consensus on reburial of some ancestors may not be established and as a result the reburial plan would not be proceeded with, even if there are some wealthy persons among the descendants.

Based on the consensus of the descendants, the members of the host group agree in principle to bear the expenses together. When I asked the name of the principal reburial sponsor, most of the Toba replied that all of the descendants of the designated ancestors had constituted the host group and had borne the expenses together. As a matter of course anyone who joins the host group certainly takes a share in the expenses and the members living in the homeland contribute additionally by supplying their labor. Even though one or more wealthy members bear most of the expenses, the names of the chief sponsors and their respective shares are never announced formally in the reburial ritual. The wealthy members also appreciate that they will be thought ill-mannered (*hurang maradat*), if they are arrogant about the great size of their contributions. However, the participants of a reburial ritual usually infer the amount of expenses from the size of the reburial tomb, the number of livestock slaughtered and the amount of ritual meal; and moreover they speculate about the share of expenses based on the evaluation of the social status and financial capability of the key members of the host group. Since some members of the host group often talk about the share of the expenses at informal opportunities, other people come to know how much the wealthy members contributed to the expenses. Thus, contrary to the principle of bearing the expenses together, we can suppose that the reburial ritual is an opportunity for the wealthy migrants to display their wealth without arrogance, and for the other members to realize the socio-economic potential of their lineage and to show it off to others. A villager in LNH referred to the reburial ritual as “the exhibition of wealth and power” (*pameran kekayaan dan kekuasaan*). This remark expresses adequately the meaning of reburial in the contemporary Toba society.

Lastly, I would briefly discuss three factors which were supposed to cause the dramatic increase of reburial tombs in Toba Holbung.

In my opinion, the first is the continuance of the concept of ancestral spirits. According to Mr. MA, although Protestant doctrine teaches that only God can give holy blessings to human beings and that spirits of the dead in the presence of God are separated completely from living people, the Toba indigenous concept of ancestral spirits has continued in principle as a religious background to reburial, despite the transformation under the influence of Protestant doctrine: ancestral spirits are still believed to give earthly blessings and protection to the descendants who venerate them. I suppose that such a concept is widely shared by the migrants of today, considering the account of Mr. MA that the urban migrants who demonstrate the initiative for reburial quite often express their intention to give thanks to the ancestors for giving them earthly blessings and protection against ill fortune resulting in their socio-economic success. An ex-official from LNH who lives in Siantar told me that most of the migrants sponsored reburials, hoping that their income would increase as a result of the blessings and protection given by the reburied ancestors. The latent desire for reburial based on such a concept of ancestral spirits, I believe, has continued among the Toba.

In addition to this, we also should consider the flowing back of wealth from the migrants as the second factor. The preparation of a stone coffin needed the socio-political or religious prestige of the exhumed ancestor which made the mobilization of the villagers possible, while the construction of a mortar tomb did not need labor mobilization. Mortar tombs could be constructed by craftsmen who received wages, most of which were provided by wealthy migrants. In order to obtain social

acknowledgment in accordance with *adat* as a proper reburial tomb, the important condition is not materials or the form of the tomb but the execution of a reburial ritual. The Toba regard mortar tombs as a variation (*variasi*) of former reburial tombs, namely stepped funerary mounds planted with *baringin* or *hariara* tree and stone coffins; and accordingly in the ritual speech they refer to reburial tombs as “high mound, hard stone” (*tambak na timbo, batu na pir*) even in reburial rituals of today which celebrates mortar tombs. As Cunningham [1958: 82–87] suggests, the increasing opportunities for employment outside the highlands of Tapanuli under Dutch colonial rule, as well as high population pressure in the homeland villages, caused the augmentation of Toba migrants who raised their socio-economic status. The construction of mortar tombs is considered to have begun because of sponsorship by such migrants who could provide much money obtained regardless of paddy fields, dry fields and livestock in their homeland village and of the socio-economic power in the village context. I suppose that the construction of reburial tombs has been spurred on by rivalry among lineages because under the Toba *adat* the right of demonstrating the initiative in reburial is not restricted by order of birth. Quite a few of the Toba I interviewed stressed that the construction of reburial tombs would have not been so popular without the flowing back of wealth from migrants. It is understood that the marked increase in urban migrants since the 1960s has made this tendency more and more conspicuous.

The third factor which is supposed to be important for the augmentation of reburial is the lowering of mortality as a result of the sanitary guidance and the improvement in medical service by the Dutch colonial government as well as by the German mission, and the resultant population growth. It is highly possible that the lowering of mortality prolonged life expectancy and consequently increased the number of people who had grandchildren. Thus it is thought that many people, having male grandchildren as patrilineal descendants, came to fulfill the requirement for reburial generally referred to as “being an *ompu*.” I suppose that the reduction of infant mortality would have increased the number of descendants required to bear the expenses of reburial.¹⁶⁾

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- 16) I shall discuss these factors in detail at another opportunity. Scholars and the Toba themselves often point out that the wealthy migrants demonstrate the initiative in reburial so as to elevate their social status. However, opinions of my informants differ on this point. Some of the Toba including Mr. HM mentioned that the chief sponsors for reburial obtained high status in the clan, *dalihan na tolu* (kinship relations including affinal relations) and the village, and that their opinions were highly regarded; while others like Mr. MA insisted that the wealthy were respected solely on the practical ground that they bore most of the expenses and that they never attained an exalted social status as well as political power in the village and the clan. This point needs further discussion based on the corroborative evidence from the analysis of some particular reburial rituals, examining the planning and the execution of the reburial rituals, as well as the change of the social relationships after the rituals.

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