

The Meaning of *Tugu* Construction (*Tambak Na Timbo*) in Batak Toba Life from the Religion Side in Samosir District, Indonesia

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Abstract: Batak Toba tribe since the ancient time until today still retains the traditional and religion values inherited from their ancestors, although sometimes it is contrary to religious teachings. The cultural phenomenon of the construction of the monument or *tugu* (*tambak na timbo*) and the *mangongkal holi* event is one of Batak Toba traditions that still survives and is preserved today in the origin area (*bona pasogit*) and in the overseas area (*parserakan*). This tradition persists because of the strong roots of traditional culture, cosmology and religion of Batak Toba that influence their cognition. The construction of *parsadaan tugu*, *saompu tugu*, *mangongkal holi* and *panangkok saring-saring* is one of the tradition aims to respect the ancestral spirits. Through these series of events, it is believed they will get *hasangapon* (prestige), *hagabean* (many children) and *hamoraon* (wealth). *Tugu* is derived from the Indonesian language and not from the Batak language but the term *tugu* has been used by Batak people extensively for *tambak* that resembles a house where the bones are inserted in the second cemetery is an old idea of respecting the ancestors. To honor the spirit of his ancestors, sacred events and sacrifices were performed ritually through *mangongkal holi*, *panangkok saring-saring* the construction of *parsadaan tugu* and *saompu tugu*.

Keywords: *tugu*; *tambak na timbo*; Batak Toba; Samosir

I. INTRODUCTION

Universally, the human's beliefs before entering and developing religion of revelation embraced the system of religion. In religion system they believed that there are supernatural powers that control all human life, nature and other living things. The oldest religion is animism which later evolved into polytheism to monotheism.

Batak Toba tribe since the ancient time until today still retains the traditional and religion values inherited from their ancestors, although sometimes it is contrary to religious teachings. Therefore it is not uncommon to find the phenomenon of syncretism, adaptation, acculturation of social-cultural values with religion adapted to the present day life. The cultural phenomenon of the construction of the monument or *tugu* (*tambak na timbo*) and the *mangongkal holi* event is one of Batak Toba traditions that still survives and is preserved today in the origin area (*bona pasogit*) and in the overseas area (*parserakan*). This tradition persists because of the strong roots of traditional culture, cosmology and religion of Batak Toba that influence their cognition. The construction of *parsadaan tugu*, *saompu tugu*, *mangongkal holi* and *panangkok saring-saring* is one of the tradition aims to respect the ancestral spirits. Through these series of events, it is believed they will get *hasangapon* (prestige), *hagabean* (many children) and *hamoraon* (wealth).

The religion basic and cultural values of traditional Batak Toba in implementing the event of *mangongkal holi* and *panangkok saring-saring* into *parsadaan* monument is because there is still a belief to this day in the Batak community, that living humans have a relationship with the spirits of the deceased ancestors. Batak Toba people believe that the ancestral spirits who have been inserted into the *saompu* monument, will give blessings to the descendants who are still alive. Such a concept of belief and culture encourages the Batak Toba people to carry out the construction of the *parsadaan* and *saompu* monuments. The factors behind the development of monument (*tambak na timbo*) among Batak Toba tribe are:

- a. The desire to elevate the social, personal, and family status of the clan to the home village reflects that the offspring are already rich, successful and the belief that success is inseparable from the blessings of the ancestral spirits (*sumangot*).
- b. Identity unifying clan/and ancestral ancestry called *sa'ompu*
- c. The Batak Toba belief that human is made up of flesh (*tubuh*), breath (*hosa*), and spirit (*tondi*). If man dies, his body back to the ground, the breath (*hosa*) returns to the wind (*alogo*), and the spirit (*tondi*) becomes *begu* (spirits). *Begu*, *sumangot* and *sombaon* will give blessing to their living descendants "(Pasaribu, 2011: 15).

These traditional beliefs and cosmologies encourage the Batak Toba to build a *tugu* (*tambak batu napir*) as a place to resemble the *begu*, *sumagot* and *sombaon* peacefully and comfortably, even though they have lived in the modern world and have embraced religion. The strength of religion roots, cosmology and socio-cultural values is strengthening the ties of primordialism in the life of the Batak Toba tribe. The constructions of *batu napir*, *tambak na timbo*, *mangongkal holi* and *panangkok saring-saring* have religious and cultural meanings that influence the cognition of Batak Toba ethnic wherever they are. This phenomenon strengthens the integration ties on clan groups, *marga* clan, clan branch and main family.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Phenomenology Concept

The word Phenomenology comes from the Greek *phainomai* which means visible, *Phainomenon* refers to the visible. Phenomenon is a conscious fact, and entered into human understanding. Phenomenology as one of the branches of philosophy was first developed in German universities before World War I, especially by Edmund Husserl which was then continued by other philosophers (Kuswarno, 2009: 1-2). Phenomenology is about what is being consciousness, which includes various popular ways of talking about phenomena or visible things (Bertens, 1987: 3). Phenomenology is the science of the development of consciousness and the introduction of the human self as a science that precedes the science of philosophy or part of philosophy; Determining inference based on existing phenomena (Phoenix, 2007: 243).

Husserl said that experience is not only given to individuals but is intentional in the sense that the experience involves a person who directs his attention to the objects that make his experience that way. These objects are understood in past experiences and the attained knowledge produces a spontaneous apperception or giving meaning to what is given in perception sense. So, all consciousness is an awareness of an object and therefore partly an individual construction that directs its attention to the objects of consciousness.

Joseph Kokkelmans (1967: 24) describes phenomenology as a domain full of ambiguity and exaggeration. He points out that the term has a long history in philosophy, in which many scholars define it in various ways. But still Edmund Husserl first used the term phenomenology as the name of a systematic and different philosophical attitude.

2.2. The concept of *Tugu*

Tugu is derived from the Indonesian language and not from the Batak language but the term *tugu* has been used by Batak people extensively for *tambak* that resembles a house where the bones are inserted in the second cemetery is an old idea of respecting the ancestors. The ruling that embodies a modern painted sculpture (Henri and Reid, 2006: 185). *Tugu* is just like other monuments, a bridge to the past and the present where a *tugu* party brings back the Batak people to aspects of past history experience itself and his family. The event of *tugu* becomes one mirror of one's past, he departed from the secular world to a magical customary world of his kinsmen and together with his relatives and descendants, he shows his lineage (Brunner 1987: 145). *Tugu* is a building of art that contains meaning to warning an event or to honor the honourable person or group (Saragi, 2014: 6).

The concept of *tugu* is actually not from Batak Toba people but because there was no concept that matches the Batak Toba people in applying monuments to honor their ancestors then the Batak people took the word *tugu* as a fitting word in the mention of communal tombs at this time. Batak tribe has been using the term *tambak na timbo* (grave towering) for the process of burial. At the time of megalithic cemetery tradition on Batak people is sarcophagus. We can meet it in Samosir that is at the Tomb of King Sidabutar in Tomok area. Along with the development of time after the sarcophagus due to the entry of Christianity to the land of Batak came the term *tambak* for the title of the tomb, the mound of land that is shaped hill and rectangle. Then the last one is the *tugu* and *simin* that is a monument for ancestors built from cement with various shapes and types. There are several important meanings of ancestral monuments. First, for the nomads, go back to the village and pay homage to the ancestors in the form of monument means: revitalizing their identity as Toba Batak people. The one ancestor group (*saompu*) through the construction of a *tugu* with the arrangement of a bones digging (*mangongkal holi party*), against the collapse of the alliance. The fundamental need which contributes to the construction of a *tugu* is to guarantee genealogical unity, to plead and receive new blessings, to increase strength by showing the greatness of the offspring and securing the future for the descendants of the ancestors.

2.3 Batak Toba Concept

Batak people are one of the Indonesia tribes in North Sumatra, who inhabit the highlands of the hill line around Lake Toba. Batak tribe is the sixth largest ethnic after Java, Sunda, Chinese-Indonesia, Malay and Madura. Batak tribe consists of six sub tribes, namely Angkola and Mandailing in the south, Dairi / Pakpak in the northwest, Karo in the north and Simalungun on the northeast Sea (Sibeth, 1991: 7-11). The origin of ethnic Batak today still has not found valid and reliable documents. There are several historians and anthropologists

who talk about the origins of Batak Toba, among others: Daniel Perret a foreign explorer and ethnographer in 1430 became the first person to name the place of *Batech* associated with a population that is cannibalistic and fond of war (Perret, 2010: 173). Explorers and other ethnographies F. Mendes Pinto who went exploring into the northern interior of Sumatra recorded the visit of “*raja orang Bata*” ambassador to the new Captain Melaka Pedro de Faria in 1939. Pinto reported that this king was a pagan believer in the name of *Batak* tribe. Batak is a wanderer; Adventurers and Batak is the name of the tribe in the area of North Sumatra (Phoenix, 2007: 118). Batak is one of the oldest ethnic groups in Indonesia that occupies the largest part of the region of North Sumatra (Sijabat, 1982: 464).

Batak Toba people are the people who live around Lake Toba and the southern part of Lake Toba which according to the territory of the State Administration of the Republic of Indonesia is included in the district of North Tapanuli (Togar Nainggolan, 2006: 62). Bruner (1972: 380) Batak Toba people refer to themselves as *halak kita* (our people). Our people come from the same ancestor: *Si Raja Batak*. They identify themselves on the basis of family relationships. Marsden (1975: 379) Batak name is derived from the name of the Malay people who live on the beach and they give that name to their neighbors who live in Sumatra. Then the name of Batak is used by Batak people themselves. Culturally this name has a double understanding. The Malay people consider themselves to be a civilized people with a place that have settled while the Batak people are seen as nomads and bar-bar. Batak people include one tribe in Indonesia who live in North Sumatra Province. Batak people live in the highlands of Barisan Hills around Lake Toba (Togar Nainggolan, 2006: 4-5). Batak Toba tribe is a sub ethnic Batak tribe who live in North Sumatra inhabit the Toba plateau of Toba Holbung, Silindung, Humbang, Pahae and Samosir Island (Saragih, 1980: 9)

Batak Toba Tribe is one ethnic group of Batak ethnic majority who live in Toba Samosir, North Tapanuli, Humbang Hasundutan and Samosir District. Batak Toba Tribe is a community who live around Lake Toba embraces patrilineal descent, *dalihan na tolu* with the philosophy of *hamoraon*, *hasangapon* dan *hagabeon*.

In its social interaction, the Batak Toba people pay attention to the relation of *dalihan na tolu* (the third stove), namely: *manat mardoman tubu* (carefully to the clan), *somba marhula-hula* (respect to the wife-giver) and *elek marboru* (persuade the recipient wife). This means that Batak Toba people must be approached with caution, respect and persuade or take heart. These three attitudes are needed in social interaction, especially when they want to involve their participation in various activities. With caution the error will be reduced, with the respect of others rewarded and by persuading us not to force others (Sibarani, 1999: 15-16).

The philosophy of *hamoraon*, *hagabeon*, *hasangapon* dan *dalihan na tolu* are noble values that are obeyed and upheld by the Toba Batak community. This philosophy is the spirit in carrying out all daily activities wherever they are. Toba Batak culture values on one side can be a force in development, while at other times can be used for certain interests that do not support development. Thus the value of Toba Batak culture in today's life is likened to a double-edged sword (Aditjondro, 2006: ix). The characteristics of Batak Toba people can be traced to the diversity of the Batak community and analyzed from traditional houses that are still encountered in the area of origin (*bona pasogit*). Besides, it can also be understood through the colors used in the life of the Batak Toba community, namely: red, black and white. The red color symbolizes the nature of courage and strength. The black color symbolizes darkness or where the spirits of the dead are interpreted as many problems and white color symbolizes purity, honesty and sincerity (Parlindungan, 2007: 27).

Batak Toba people seem to be rude, haunted in a loud voice when they speak, though in truth they are cool, sincere and honest. Batak Toba people are not accustomed to small talk, on the contrary they always say what it is, have a high fighting power, and not easily give up. On the other hand, the Batak Toba people are famous for imposing the will, *hosom* (hate), have the nature of *teal* (arrogant), *late* (dislike other people are more successful) and *elate* (envy) (Pasaribu and Marpaung, 2000: 34-35). The characteristics of Batak Toba community as compassionate, sincere, generous, faithful and honest are found in them to be arrogant, arrogant, suspicious, jealous, lazy, indifferent, miserly, passionate, warrior and warlike (Warneck 1987, Silaen, 2006: 203).

In the life of Batak Toba community there are frequent individual and social conflicts among their peers due to feeling hurt, differences of views in customs, seizure of inheritance, debts and the problem of *ulayat* land boundaries. Social conflicts have occurred since the ancient times even in today's modern life. Batak Toba people are often in conflict environment so that they are accustomed to life that always colored conflict. So in the life of Batak Toba people, conflict does not always have negative connotations (Aditjondro, 2006: 21-23). The belief in totality is subsequently decreased to human existence. The living human is the unity of three elements: *hosa* (life), *mudar* (blood) and *sibuk* (meat). Likewise with the element of society existence which is the totality of three elements of functional structural *dalihan na tolu* with elements *dongan sabutuha*, *hula-hula* and *boru*. These three elements are arranged and connected in a balance harmony (Silaen, 2006: 206). Along with the pattern of thinking totality, social order will be created when the three functional elements are united,

the same as the existence of human being which is the totality of life, blood and flesh or existence of *mula jadi na bolon* which is the totality of *batara guru*, *debata sori*, dan *mangala bulan* (Siahaan, 1979: 18-21).

With this totality of thinking, Batak Toba always tries to keep its unity, whether it is the bond of a clan, a relative or a genealogical bond. *Hula-hula* is considered a representation of *mulajadi na bolon*. Thus *hula-hula* is often referred to as the *debata natarida* (visible God). That is why *hula-hula* is so respected in Batak Toba society because it is considered as a place to ask for protection and blessing (*pasu-pasu*).

The traditional beliefs of Batak Toba are animisms that are reflected in the belief that all dead bodies and living things have spirits or strengths. This belief recognizes that the cosmos has three parts: the underworld (*banua toru*), the middle world (*banua tonga*), and the upper world (*banua ginjang*). These three worlds exist in a totality to achieve cosmic harmony, and are controlled by the three gods within whose union becomes the order of the cosmos. The three gods are: *batara guru* (as ruler of the underworld), *debata sori* (as the ruler of the middle world) and *mangala bulan* (as the ruler of the world over). The totality of these three gods is called *mula jadi nabolon*. *Mula jadi nabolon* is a harmony of life in the world and the hereafter as well as a union of three different world elements (Parlindungan, 2007: 26-28). Batak Toba tribe is one of the tribes that has a high level of mobility, in the sense of migrating out of his hometown. Factors encouraging them to carry out migration are a factor of poor social and environmental values. The socio-cultural values that drive Batak Toba people to migrate are: *Ndang marimbar tano hamatean* (not different land of death) and *pungkama hutam di parsarean*..

2.4 History of the Tugu Construction in Samosir

If the relics of sarcophagus and other relics are observed, allegedly they are cultural elements that come from outside that at that time the ancestors of the Batak Toba still imitated the habits of the old tradition. The old tradition was imitated by the ancestors of Batak Toba people by burial the corpses of a group of descendants in the sarcophagus and stone crate that serves as a place of corpses storage and family bones. Such tradition developed in the life of Batak Toba people who in subsequent development imitated by the Batak Toba in the present. Remembering the process of making sarcophagus is not done anymore since the entry and development of Christianity in the land of Batak, then gradually began to be abandoned. Therefore the megalithic building (sarcophagus) was replaced with a tomb building made of cement, sandstone and tiles. People can no longer sculpt stones but are replaced by building a *tambak na timbo* with mixing from cement (Schreiner, 2003: 174-175). Before making the process of transporting building materials of *tambak na timbo*., first a good day selected and held a traditional ceremony. After completion of the building, then the custom ceremony to formalize it is performed (Setiawan, 2014: 244).

The above view reminds us of Batak Toba tradition in the implementation of the construction of *tugu* where the construction process (laying the first stone) begins with *tonggo raja* (consensus discussion) by close relatives. It is similar with the determination of the day as a good day of construction and the inauguration of the monument. The existence of the tradition of choosing a good day in the construction ceremony of *tambak na timbo* and the inauguration ceremony (*parsadaan tugu*, *saompu tugu*, and *family tugu*) because Batak Toba people especially those who live in Samosir Regency still often *maniti ari* (choosing a good day) for rituals and customs. Such a tradition until now is still maintained in the construction of *tugu* and *panangkok saring-saring* which is known as the term *parhalaan*.

Most of the activities carried out by ethnic groups in Indonesia including Batak Toba tribe recognizing the funeral of two systems, namely: the primary cemetery and the secondary cemetery. In Toba Batak community the primary burial is performed by burying the corpses in the soil accompanied by various graves. After performing the primary burial, then a secondary funeral begins with *mangongkal holi* (Setiawan, 2014: 248). This secondary cemetery is then performed by inserting the bones into the *tambak na timbo*. The secondary burial conducted by Batak Toba community today in Samosir is no longer in the sarcophagus but into the *saompu tugu* and *family tugu*. Instead of sarcophagi, stone cubes, some *tambak* or *saompu tugu* and *family tugu* are built that serve as ancestral bones are built.

The terms for ancestors that can be carried out secondary burial or *mangongkal holi* are: a. at the time of his/her life the ancestor has been achieved his/her ideals they are rich, have many offspring and honorable. It means that the life purposes of *hamoraon* life, *hagabeon* and *hasangapon* has been achieved, b. One or several of his/her descendants have also become respected, rich and have many offspring (Setiawan, 2014: 249). It is necessary to finance the rituals of the dead followed by many relatives and the villagers as the inauguration of the ancient bones. The tomb container is then known as *dolok na timbo* and *batu napir* (hard rock) (Warneck, 1909; Nainggolan, 2012: 38-39). The occurrence of the transitional building of grave sarcophagus in the form of *tugu* in Batak area begins with the construction of Tampubolon clan monument in 1934. According to Amudi Pasaribu that until the Second World War (1945) the monument or *tugu* is not known in the life of Batak Toba society, there is only elevated tiled cemetery and materials made of cement, sand and stone. Furthermore, according to A.A. Sitompul the construction of the *tugu* began in the 1950s. The monument was originally built

is *parsadaan tugu*. On *parsadaan tugu* the names of the grandmother or father of the ancestors are written. The *parsadaan tugu* does not serve as the storage of ancestral bones.

According to Lothar Schreiner that the construction of *tugu* in the land of Batak began around the 1950s where at that time Mausoleum (magnificent grave) was ordained to *Raja (Datu)* Sisingamangaraja XII. The bones of the king of Sisingamangaraja XII and his two children are: *Raja Anggi Patuan* and *Raja Patuan Nagari* removed or dismantled from Tarutung and transferred to Sopo Surung Balige. The *tugu* of XII Sisingamangaraja contains the bones of the XII Sisingamangaraja and the bones of their two children. The XII Sisingamangaraja bones are placed in the center of the monument, while the bones of both children are placed on the left and on the right. Besides, in the land of Batak on January 10, 1969 there was also inaugurated of DI Panjaitan *tugu* in Balige as a form of appreciation and respect for the heroes of the revolution in defending the unity of the republic of Indonesia from the G 30S / PKI. The last meaning of Sisingamangaraja *tugu* is to inspire the Batak Toba people to carry out the construction of *parsadaan tugu* and *saompu tugu* in the future. They view that the Sisingamangaraja XII *tugu* is not merely as a hero's monument but also as a clan monument. Therefore, the clans in the land of Batak carry out the construction of ancestral *tugu* and *parsadaan tugu*.

Around the 1990s until now the construction of *tugu* is very rampant in the area of Samosir. The increasing number of *tugu* with various models and ornaments and very expensive price cannot be separated from the economic success; the migration of Batak Toba in various regions in Indonesia and abroad. The descendants of various groups and clans have occupied strategic positions, political in government and as successful entrepreneurs in big cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Medan and other cities in Indonesia. The nomads agreed to build the *tugu* of their ancestral father in the area of origin because they have become successful people.

III. DISCUSSION

The construction of *parsadaan* and *saompu* monuments is performed by all the offspring of the main clan where they are located. In the *tugu* they prepare a place for the bones of their ancestors. Before the bones of their ancestors were removed, they usually used the services of *datu* to find the exact location of the grave, so there was no mistake in the event of *mangongkal holi*, because the mistake can cause anger from *somangot* grandmother clan ancestors. The majesty of the monument is a sign of the many *pasu-pasu* or blessings received by the clan descendants of the spirits of their ancestors. All the blessings symbolize the greatness of *sahala* spirits, so it is proper to give the spirits a place of honor, as an expression of gratitude from all its descendants (*pinomparna*).

The placement of the ancestral *saring-saring* in the *saompu tugu* meant giving the honorable place to the ancestral spirits in the presence of other dead spirits, as well as before the Batak community. This is the form of glory (*hasangapon*) given by the descendants of a clan to its ancestors. All the *tumpak* (donation) given by all the clan descendants is a diversion of some of the vitality they have to the spirit of their ancestors. Giving *tudu-tudu sipanganon*, whether it is a buffalo or a pig slaughtered to the *hula-hula* clan, is a sign of the offering and conquest all the offspring to *debata*, which is the origin of the spirits of their ancestors. With that offering, it is asked for a much greater blessing from *debata* and the ancestor's legacy to all the clan descendants. The meaning of the construction of *tugu* for Batak Toba people in Samosir District viewed from the perspective of religion can be described as follows:

3.1 The Meaning of Sacralization

The monument built by Batak Toba community, especially in Samosir Regency is one of the buildings considered sacred by Batak Toba people. Through the construction of the monument all the ancestors are respected by his descendants, after death which is realized through *tonggo-tonggo*, ritual, sacrifice and offerings to the ancestors. Batak people really appreciate human life in life and after death. This is seen in the expression "*martondi na mangolu, marsomangot dung mate*" which means to have *tondi* at the time of life and to have *somangot* (spirit) after death.

Although Batak Toba people have been religious monotheists a few hundred years ago but the religion has not become a fundamental belief for them. This is seen when a family member Batak Toba suffered bad luck, they will encourage him to ask a *datu*. For example, the *datu* said that he suffered bad luck for forgetting his ancestors, and suggested that he hold a ritual of honor to his ancestors, so he will do it soon. The religion or tradition of Batak Toba defeats the religion of which they are more obedient to the spirit of the ancestors than to God.

The people of Batak Toba are convinced that the level of position possessed by the spirits in absolute terms depends on the level of worship that their grandchildren have imposed on them. The high and low quality of the worship value is largely determined by the social circumstances of the children and grandchildren who respect it. This can be seen from the size of the property sacrificed for the ceremony. Therefore the higher the level of social condition of the offspring, the greater the sacrifice and honor given to the ancestral spirits and the

higher the position of the spirits in the world of the dead. The worship of the ancestral spirits has two rationales on one side, they worship the spirits so that they may find joy in the "opposite" world and on the other side, so that the abandoned descendants obtain *sahala*. Batak people believe although their ancestors died but the spirit of their ancestors still able to provide *sahala* to the living.

3.2 The Meaning of the Spirit Position

Through the construction of a *tugu* and the excavation of bones and offerings to the spirits of the ancestors, it aims to please the spirit. The spirits of Batak ancestors will be higher in their positions through the ceremonies. If Batak people have not yet carried out the excavation of the bones, it is as if they still have the debt to the ancestral spirits, but if they have done so, they will feel secure and believe to be blessed.

The use of the *tugu* in Toba community will make the descendants live a better life, happy, peaceful, safe and comfortable. Besides that, the ancestral spirits also expect their surviving offspring to treat their bones well in order for their offspring to gain a higher, successful and successful position.

3.3 The Meaning of Blessing

Through a special event for *tondi* blessing and the excavation of bones of Batak people expect a better life. With this event the descendants of the deceased ancestors will be blessed by the ancestors. In Batak Toba society anyone who builds *tugu* and *tambak* for their *ompu-ompu* will be blessed and loved by the *ompu*. The descendants will get richness, fertile plants, many children and peace in their daily lives. With events like this they will get help from their ancestors, not just salvation, but also for blessing requests.

The Batak Toba community established a monument based on the traditional beliefs that believe in the existence of ancestral spirits in their lives. The worship of the ancestral spirits was manifested in the construction of the *tugu*. Symbolically the *tugu* expresses a worship of the ancestral spirits that arise and the expectation will be added agricultural products in their economic activities and blessing the ancestors in obtaining offspring.

Based on the belief of Batak Toba people that human is composed of body (flesh) or *sibuk*, breath (*hosa*) and spirit (*tondi*). If the man dies, the body returns to the ground, the breath (*hosa*) returns to the wind (*alogo*) and the spirit (*tondi*) becomes *begu* (spirits etc.). The *begu* of dead people for Batak people have a level according to age and social position in their lifetime. *Begu* from parents who have many descendants become *somangot* or *sombaon*. This *somangot* or *sombaon* has the power to condemn and bless the living descendants. It is driven by this conviction that Batak Toba people raise the grave (monument) as the highest honor to the spirit of their ancestors.

The traditional Batak Toba tribe, besides recognizing the concept of *tondi* namely *sahala*, *begu sumangot* and *sombaon*, see *sahala* as the implementation, or endorsement of the power and strength of *tondi*. *Sahala* is the embodiment of the power of *tondi*. People who perform *sahala* will gain the respect and appreciation from the person who receive the *sahala*. Meanwhile *somangot* is a calling for the status of higher *begu* from the *begu* level. In other words, *sumangot* is a *begu* but has a higher status. The spirit of this ancestor wants to be honored with the offerings (*sombaon*), in order to continue to promote the welfare of their descendants, but if *somangot* is neglected, the disaster will befall their offspring. If they are honored in a good way through the construction of a *tugu*, it will give blessings to the offspring and vice versa if they are ignored, it will bring disaster to his offspring. The construction of *tugu* is related to the respect for the ancestral spirits because the ancestral spirits are regarded as divine, so it needs respect.

IV. CONCLUSION

Understanding the meaning and symbols embedded in the monument or *tugu* in the form of: models, ornaments, shapes and plants that exist around the *tugu* are used the theory of meaning, symbols, and signs. The meaning of the *tugu* construction can be analyzed from a perspective. In the perspective of religion contains the meaning associated with the sacralization, the position of spirits and blessings. To honor the spirit of his ancestors, sacred events and sacrifices were performed ritually through *mangongkal holi*, *panangkok saring-saring* the construction of *parsadaan tugu* and *saompu tugu*.

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