

History and National Integration: A Study of Collective Memory of Tamiang Monuments in Medan 1894

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the historical exploration and collective memory of the Tamiang Monument in Medan, Indonesia. This paper examines how monuments can build collective memory and link history to people's lives at a certain time so that it can be interpreted. Through historical methods, the study results show that the Tamiang Monument plays an essential role in the inheritance of collective memory about the conquest of Tamiang as part of the Aceh region by the Dutch colonialists. The monument is an important symbol to remind people of the greatness and courage in the struggle against the colonizers. However, after the Tamiang Monument was destroyed, all narratives and reminders of the Tamiang War were lost. The loss of this monument also has implications for the loss of the values of the legacy of tenacity, fighting spirit, and collective identity associated with this important event. Therefore, it is important to rebuild the Tamiang Monument as an initial step to revive collective memory and pass on the values of struggle to the younger generation. Monuments play an important role in building and maintaining the community's collective identity and strengthening the historical awareness of the Tamiang and Aceh communities.

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Introduction

Monuments are part of urban public spaces essential in forming collective memory and connecting history with people's lives (Cudny & Appelblad, 2019). In addition, monuments can be an essential source of historical data for understanding local history and culture (Kuo-An, 2023). Monuments are also part of public art that can complement public spaces in the city. Monuments have various essential functions: artistic, symbolic, memorial, political, social, religious, marketing, and mixed. The

existence of monuments reflects the transformation of contemporary ideas and social order. Monuments are the product of social relations, power, ideas, identities, and collective memories reflected in the city's spatial structure.

The concept of history and collective memory in urban public spaces and the role of monuments in shaping and maintaining the collective memory of society can be described as follows. The concept of history refers to a series of events that occurred in the past, as well as the interpretation and meaning given by society to these events (Rahman, 2017). History is not only in the form of facts and data but also involves different interpretations and representations depending on the perspective of the person experiencing it (Kuntowijoyo, 2008). Meanwhile, collective memory refers to the shared experiences of a group of people that shape shared identity, values, and awareness (Purwanto, 2019; Rahman, 2020). Collective memory also includes shared interpretations and meanings of critical past events to the group. Collective memory can be in stories, rituals, regulatory systems, social interactions, and individual memories formed culturally and socially (Wijaya, 2019).

The Tamiang War was one of the major events that occurred during the Dutch East Indies colonial period. The war took place from January 1874 to December 1897 in the Tamiang region, involving Acehnese and Dutch colonial troops. The Tamiang War ended after the last stronghold of the Acehnese troops in Lubuk Bathil and Tumpok Tengah was paralyzed by the Dutch on April 2, 1893 (Weekblad, 1893). In 1984, the Dutch colonial government built the Tamiang Monument in Medan to commemorate its soldiers who died during the conquest of Tamiang in 1893. However, the monument is now nowhere to be found because it was destroyed in the 1950s. The loss of the Tamiang monument has obscured the past, especially the battle in Tamiang between the colonial army and the Tamiang community in 1893. In addition, historical narratives, folklore, and community interpretations of the events that led to the monument's establishment have also disappeared without a trace.

Previously, there has been research on history and monuments, but the results are still mixed. Previous research on monuments states that monuments have various functions in urban public spaces. From a spatial perspective, the role of monuments depends on the different impacts on people's perceptions and interpretations of space (Cudny & Appelblad, 2019). In addition, monuments are also used to study social memory. That is because monuments can invite people to remember the past so that they can produce social relationships. The past can also be influential in forming group identity and creating a sense of the present because social memory brings the past to the present for the future (De Jong, 2019). In its development, changes in the meaning of monuments can occur. These changes in meaning can reverse the facts conveyed so far. For example, the Dutch are very sorry and ashamed of what their ancestors did in the Dutch East Indies. It can be seen from how they interpret the Monument of the Three Governors General (Coen, Daendels, and van Heutsz) (Khusyairi, 2011). For the Dutch colonial government, the Tamiang monument is used to commemorate the colonial army's persistence in conquering Aceh.

Monuments are artistic creations or curations commemorating an event, person,

place, or phenomenon. Monuments transform something inherently short-lived, relatively quick, or temporary into something permanent, eternal, and recurring (Caporaso, 2020). Monuments are references for spatial and temporal interpretations. Monuments are timeless and send messages through space, but they are also messages in space itself. In addition, monuments can evoke memories and convey messages across time (Tudman, 2009). Monuments also act as memory aids that encourage us to remember some things and forget others. It is formed by making monuments, especially in openly contested places, that shape public memory and collective identity (Barbasiewicz, 2019; Mitchell, 2003).

Monuments hold memories of identity struggle, determine the direction of development and patterns of social life that shape the character of today's society (Lukman, 2020). Collective memory plays a role in forming social group identity, from the smallest social group, such as family, to the largest social group, such as society and nation (Effendhie, 2019). Monuments are built to commemorate something or someone, such as past events, people, supernatural forces, or other entities. Within the monument, there is a study of social memory that explores how society remembers the past together. Social memory can also bring the past into the present for the future. Scientific approaches to memory are often inspired by Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of 'created tradition', a series of new practices that seek to build continuity with the past. Through interaction with monuments, memories can be produced, manifested, and made meaningful to be visible and long-lasting. Monuments can form a sense of permanence and stability for ongoing interaction. In addition, monuments tend to outlive the people responsible for their establishment. Over time, their cultural meanings change, are redefined, or reused. In terms of continuity, consistency is needed in interacting with monuments (De Jong, 2019).

For the Acehese people, the Tamiang monument is interpreted as a symbol of their resistance and persistence in fighting the Dutch colonialists who tried to control their territory in 1893. The Battle of Tamiang succeeded in uniting regional leaders from various regions of Aceh to develop strategies and unite against the Dutch colonialists. After the destruction of the Tamiang Monument in 1958, the monument was then written as a historical work and provided information that had been interrupted about the events of the battle in Tamiang.

However, research on monuments' role in forming collective memory in Indonesia is still needed, especially in the urban context. Studies on history and collective memory in urban public spaces still need to be expanded, so further research is needed to understand the role of monuments in building and maintaining society's collective memory. Therefore, this study focuses on the Tamiang Monument in Medan because it leaves behind stories related to the colonial and post-colonial periods. In addition, the Tamiang Monument has a high historical and symbolic value for the people of Medan, so it can be an important reference in understanding the role of monuments in forming collective memory in Indonesia. This research is expected to contribute to the understanding of history and collective memory in Indonesia so that it can be a reference for research on monuments and other historical buildings.

Method

This article is arranged using a historical method through four stages: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2018). The primary sources used in this study are in the form of archival documents and newspapers. The documents include reports on the battle events in Tamiang, newspaper reports on the establishment of the Tamiang Monument, annual celebrations held at the Tamiang Monument, and other interpretations of the existence of the Tamiang Monument. The archives used in this research include *Notes Over de Atjelische invallen op Sumatra's Oostkust*, published in 1893, *Het Tabaksgebied ter Oostkust van Sumatra in Woord En Beeld* published in 1925, *Militairen en Voor Allen, Die in de Weerbaarheid En Onafhankelijkheid Van Nederland Belang Stellen* published in 1894, *Tijdschrift voor Neerland's Indië jrg 22 (2e deel)* published in 1893. Meanwhile, contemporary newspapers used in this research include military *Weekblad*, *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, *Java Bode*, *Deli Courant*, *De Nieuwe Courant*, *De Indische Mercur*, *De Sumatra Post* and *De Tijd* published from 1893-1958. The data was then supplemented with books related to the research theme, such as *Medan J Beeld van een stad* by M.A. Loderichs, published in 1997 and articles in relevant journals.

History of the Tamiang Monument

The Tamiang Monument was built in the city of Medan in 1894. The Dutch colonial government built the monument to commemorate its soldiers who died during the Tamiang conquest in 1893 (Colombijn, 2013). The embodiment of the Tamiang monument can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2.



Figure 1. The Tamiang Monument in Medan
Source: Kleingrothe, 1893.



Figure 2. The Tamiang Monument at the Esplanade Medan
Source: Courant, 1910.

Tamiang is part of the territory of the sultanate of Aceh Darussalam. The battle at Tamiang was part of the Aceh War, which began in 1873 (Alfian, 1987; Anis, 2022). The peak of the Tamiang War occurred in 1893, which was marked by the Dutch colonial army's large-scale conquest efforts by sending a military expedition to Tamiang via the Tamiang River route. This expedition used a large ship in which there were also the commanders of the Sultanate of Deli (Harahap, 2016). The Tamiang expedition was carried out with great force, combining the forces of the land army and the sea fleet. The navy was tasked with supporting Dutch troops on land by blowing up enemy forts and territory, protecting forts that had been captured, and moving troops from one place to another. The navy had to keep beaches closed from contraband, prevent fishing, keep estuaries open and frequently send landing divisions ashore (Huut, 1936).

During the Tamiang war, the Seruway area became a symbol of the resistance of the Acehnese troops against Dutch colonialism. The Dutch also chose Tamiang as the point of their military invasion of Aceh, and the Kingdom of Bendahara was the main target. For the first time on March 29, 1893 with a large war fleet equipped with modern weaponry, the Dutch sent troops from Medan and began to enter Tamiang via the Tamiang River and landed at Tanjung Mulia (Pangkal Timbang) near Seruway to attack the Bendahara kingdom. Colonel Van de Pol led this expedition.

Seruway was also used as a defence post for the Dutch in strategizing and carrying out various attacks on the royal troops. In Colonial in Tamiang, the war of Lubuk Batil and Tumpuk Tengoh became a historical record as one of the worst wars that ever happened. Many casualties fell on both sides. Including several officers on the side of the Dutch army who died, including Seruway Command Post Let V / d Schroef, and Navy Troops Let. Mensert, Lt. Zelman & Let. Engelen and 128 soldiers with the Offisierens.

The Aceh troops in the Tamiang war were led by Nyak Makam, who came from Lamnga Mukim XXVI Aceh Besar (Putra, 2001; Rachmatsyah & Sahudra, 2022). Nyak Makam, with the help of Raja Silang Muhammad Raja Kejreun Karang Baru and Teuku Chik Athas Uleebalang from the State of the Iyu River, in January 1893 built a fort along the river not far from the Dutch military barracks in Seuruway. The strongholds of the Aceh warriors stretched from Lubuk Batil, the mosque village, to Upak (bordering Banyak Payed). Although the Dutch formed a defence on the Tamiang expedition under the command of Colonel van de Poll, the Dutch colonial troops were overwhelmed by the attack by the Aceh troops under the command of Nyak Makam. Even the Aceh troops could sink a small warship that passed through the Tamiang River and burned to the ground, and Nyak Makam troops successfully intercepted the Sindoro warship from breaking into Seuruway. In addition, the Nyak Makam troops continued to strengthen the Seuruway fortifications. In February 1893 Colonel de Poll requested additional assistance from Batavia, and two warships were brought in, namely the "Flores Warship and Anna Warship". The two ships from the Malacca Strait entered from Kuala Peunaga by crossing the Tamiang River to Seuruway fort. However, it was replaced by Sabilillah Nyak Makam's troops and sank to the bottom of the river with soldiers inside. Meanwhile, Colonel van de Poll, on board the Flores warship, turned his ship around and returned to his base at Pangkalan Susu (Putra, 2001).

Nyak Makam received the full support of the people of Tamiang, so it repeatedly made the area around the Seruway settlement unsafe for the Dutch troops. One of the strategies of the Dutch troops to fight the tomb attack and their troops were to blockade the rice supply route so that the rice supply in Tamiang became Langsa. The Dutch troops also tried to negotiate by inviting the Tombs, but they always received no response (Indie, 1893). Nyak Makam never gave up fighting and obstructing the Dutch troops on the east coast of Sumatra. In the second half of January 1893 Nyak Makam threw himself at Tamiang. On the 25th of January it became known in Seruway that a large group of Acehnese had occupied the Bendahara Grand Mosque. Then there was a major battle between the Aceh troops led by Nyak Makam against the Dutch colonial troops.

Under Nyak Makam's leadership, the Acehnese troops achieved much progress in their efforts to uphold Aceh's territorial sovereignty. Attack after attack from the Acehnese troops was very troublesome for the Dutch troops so they panicked in the face of attacks from various forts; Kampai, Tamiang, Langkat, Bahorok and Besitang Islands and Pangkalan Brandan. After attacking the Sungai Pandan fort on July 30 and

succeeding in controlling the Dutch Oil Port (BPM) in Pangkalan Susu, Teuku Nyak Makam left the Tamiang area to return to Sagi XII Uleebalang XXVI Mukim, Aceh Besar Tiga Sagi Region. The capture of Nyak Makam in 1896 marked the end of the Tamiang War (Putra, 2001).

The Tamiang War impacted the Dutch colonial troops and the Acehnese troops. For the Dutch troops, the Tamiang expedition was met with fierce resistance, resulting in many casualties, apart from the Dutch navy and the Sultanate of Deli commanders. In the Tamiang expedition, were 4 people killed and 37 injured; among the latter was infantry first Lieutenant Van Derschroeff, one of the first on the enemy parapet, was mortally wounded and died the next night of the wounds received. Lieutenant at sea class 1 Mensert, commander Hr. Ms. the steamer "Madura", also the commander of a naval landing division, received a gunshot wound to the head, while two other officers were slightly injured. The Acehnese killed 63 people (Weekblad, 1893). Furthermore, in April 1890, to maintain security and order in the concentration line of defence, the Dutch established the "Marechaussee Corps", a kind of special force. Million florins (gold coins) spent on the war, 1280 people were killed, and 5287 people were injured (PDIA, 1977).

On the side of the Acehnese troops, warlord Raja Banta Achmad (A. Rahman et al., 2020) and 63 warriors died in the battle. Warlord Banta Achmad is buried on high ground in Kampong Hilir Sungai Iyu. After facing various attacks from the Dutch at the end of 1893, the resistance of the Kerajaan Bendahara and Kejuruan Muda weakened.

To commemorate the Dutch colonial troops who died in the Tamiang War, the Tamiang Monument was later built in the middle of the city, precisely on the Esplanade field in 1894 (opposite the station). The Esplanade or Medan city square, is a milestone in the formation of Medan City. This Esplanade originates from a fairly wide open space where various city buildings stand on four sides before and after. The Esplanade itself was built in 1880, a year after Medan was made the capital of the Deli afdeeling, where the Assistant Resident was based (formerly in Laboehan). The Dutch government has designed the esplanade as the center of government and a symbol of modernization (Rukayah & Juwono, 2018).

The Tamiang Monument has become an important site for the military in Medan since it was built. To strengthen the military spirit and commemorate its heroes on the battlefield, the Tamiang Monument is often used as a tribute site. The Tamiang Monument on the Medan esplanade is considered a miniature of the *koningsplein* (wide field) in Batavia (HNVD, 1928). In the 1900s, the Tamiang monument became one of the colonial landmarks in Medan, side by side with other landmarks such as the Deli Sultan Palace and the Binjai Mosque. It was adopted it as a postcard (Courant, 1901).

The Tamiang Monument is a place to remember what happened in Tamiang (the conquest of Tamiang), especially considering the services of the colonial soldiers who had done many great deeds for colonial interests (Preangerbode, 1918). The Tamiang Monument became a sacred place for the Dutch colonial government. The symbolic

events carried out by the Dutch colonial government were always present to make the Tamiang Monument an important part that had to be involved. As an example, the visit of the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies to Medan in 1925 had many agendas. One of them is visiting the Tamiang monument on the Esplanade by carrying out a wreath-laying procession by the Governor General accompanied by music from the military battalion (Courant, 1925).

The Dutch expedition to Tamiang is commemorated yearly through a simple traditional ceremony in front of the Tamiang monument (COURANT, 1939). The ceremony is always accompanied by military parades and parades, followed by the laying of wreaths by military commanders, mayors, and other important officials. For the old group, the ceremonial procession at the Tamiang monument has a very special meaning. Some of them may have personal memories of the Tamiang Expedition. In 1940, Captain Moleabrugge and other officers (among them the Commander of the Troops Major Lindgreen and Captain Kühr), present day-to-day Medan City Government, Assistant Resident of Deli and Serdang O. Treffers and Head of Local Government Superintendent van Gelder attended the ceremony at the Tamiang monument (Post, 1940). An overview of laying wreaths in front of the Tamiang monument can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

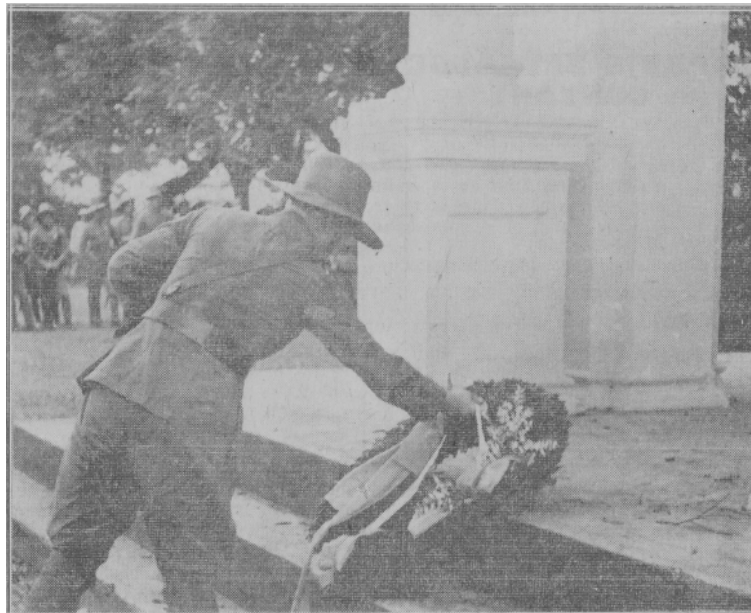


Figure 3. Laying a wreath at Tamiang Monument
Source: Courant, 1938.

Moreover, the birthday of H. M. Queen of the Netherlands is commemorated with a parade of troops in full uniform. The parade was carried out towards the Esplanade field, with the final goal being the Tamiang monument. At the event, troop commanders and mayors laid wreaths at the Tamiang monument, followed by giving eulogies to the soldiers who died in the Tamiang expedition (Courant, 1938, 1939; Post, 1941). From 1942 onwards, information about the Tamiang monument could not be found.



Figure 4. Celebrations at the Esplanade (Tamiang monument) in memory of the military expedition that ended the 'rebellion of 1893'
Source: LODERICHS, 1997.

When the fifth Indonesian Independence Proclamation Day (1950) was celebrated at the Esplanade, the Tamiang monument was still there. The Chairman of the Celebration Committee was GB Josua (Sumatra, 1950). GB Josua is one of four Republicans who chaired the committee for transferring sovereignty from the State of East Sumatra (NST) to the Republic of Indonesia. On the commemoration of the sixth Proclamation of Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia (1951), which the Governor of North Sumatra chaired, there was a desire to dismantle the Tamiang monument when the name of the Esplanade was changed to Merdeka Square. The Tamiang Monument was dismantled in 1958 during the era of North Sumatra Governor Sutan Komala Pontas (Harahap, 2016).

The Tamiang Monument, National Integration, and Collective Memory

The Tamiang Monument can no longer be found at this time. The monument was demolished in the 1950's. Based on an article by the daily *De Tijd*, Tamiang monument was proposed to be demolished in 1958 by the local newspaper *Mimbar Umum* (*Tijd*, 1958). Before being destroyed, the Tamiang Monument had stood for approximately 64 years. During this period, the Taming Monument has passed on various stories about the hegemony of colonial power in Taming, and the public has multiple interpretations of the monument. The destruction of the Tamiang monument has the same period as the destruction of other colonial monuments in Indonesia that occurred in the 1950-1960s (Lukman, 2020), caused by decolonization factors.

The loss of the Tamiang monument has obscured the past, especially the battle in Tamiang between the colonial army and the Tamiang people in 1893. All stories of historical narratives, folklore, and the community's interpretation of the events behind the monument's establishment have come to a halt. Monuments as objects of communication are not replicas of reality, but are realities. Thus, the current generation

can no longer get the reality contained in the Tamiang monument. The community where the monument was erected has yet to learn about the existence and messages conveyed at the Tamiang monument. Likewise the Tamiang people, who are the reason the monument was built.

The Tamiang Monument should be important in building collective memory and connecting history with people's lives at that time. Since its establishment in 1894, this monument has become a symbol representing the success of the Netherlands in conquering Aceh. Over time, the meaning and role of this monument have changed and been influenced by the socio-political dynamics in society. The Tamiang Monument can be interpreted as evidence of the success of the Aceh troops in fighting back the colonial forces in the past.

The Tamiang Monument can also serve as a means of overcoming the problem of historical accuracy. Over time, history can be changed, manipulated, or destroyed. The Tamiang Monument, with its symbolism and narrative, acts as a source of information that reminds the public of important historical events. The monument can become a marker that remains present in public space and communicates the version of history desired by the people and represents a collective memory of their struggle and identity.

The Tamiang Monument plays an important role in building collective memory and connecting history with people's lives at that time. Through these monuments, people can recall important events that happened in the past and strengthen social and cultural ties between different generations. The Tamiang Monument is also a symbol that unites people in respecting history and culture, and a reminder that a great nation respects and values its own history.

The Tamiang Monument is a testament to the power of national integration and collective memory, commemorating a pivotal chapter in Aceh's and Indonesia's history. This chapter illustrates a resolute spirit of unity and unwavering struggle. The monument symbolises the Tamiang people's courage in combatting oppression and is a tribute to the sacrifices made to safeguard their homeland from colonial influences. Beyond its physical structure, the Tamiang Monument embodies a community's shared memory, uniting them in the face of challenges.

The Tamiang Monument fosters a sense of belonging and a shared identity through its presence. This reinforces the significance of national integration, transcending cultural, ethnic, and societal distinctions. Monuments serve as unifying symbols, encouraging individuals from diverse backgrounds to acknowledge a common history and shared experiences.

The Tamiang Monument assumes a crucial role as an educational tool, imparting valuable lessons to future generations about the essence of unity and cooperation. By recalling past struggles, the younger generation is inspired to make constructive contributions to the present and future development of the nation. In essence, the Tamiang Monument serves as compelling evidence of the influential force of collective memory in fortifying national unity. It underscores the urgency of comprehending history, valuing shared experiences, and collaborating for a harmonious tomorrow. As

time passes, the restoration of this monument will persistently remind us of the potency derived from unity and the preservation of shared memories that bind nations together.

Conclusions

Currently, the Tamiang community seems to have little knowledge about the Tamiang monuments and the Tamiang war that occurred in the past. One of the factors causing this lack of awareness is the loss of the Tamiang monuments, which has led to a reduction in collective memory in the community. Monuments play an important role in preserving shared memories and uniting the community to appreciate their history.

However, some of the remaining Tamiang war monuments are scattered separately, not integrated, and not all people understand that they are relics of the terrible Tamiang War. This condition shows that monuments are no longer effective in building collective memory and strengthening historical awareness among the Tamiang people.

Therefore, efforts are needed to rebuild the Tamiang monument as the main monument to revive the collective memory of the persistence of the Tamiang people, in particular, and Aceh in the struggle against colonialism in the past. By rebuilding the monument, there will be an opportunity to pass on the values of persistence and values of struggle to the younger generation.

The reconstruction of the Tamiang monument will be a crucial step in revitalizing historical consciousness and the collective memory of the Tamiang people. The rebuilding of the Tamiang monument can be seen as a tribute to the warriors who sacrificed their lives to defend their territory from the Dutch colonial army's attacks. This monument holds profound and symbolic significance for the people of Tamiang because, through its reconstruction, they immortalize the sacrifices and courage of local heroes who fought for the independence and sovereignty of their land.

The Tamiang Monument in Medan is a historical symbol and a vital medium in shaping the collective memory of society and education for national integration. This monument illustrates the importance of dialogue, negotiation and cooperation in achieving common goals relevant for future generations to study. The Tamiang Monument is a powerful learning tool, connecting young generations with their nation's history and inspiring a spirit of unity. Through a deep understanding of the struggles and diplomacy that this monument represents, young people are empowered to value diversity and contribute to building an inclusive future.

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