

The Batak Mandailing of Indonesia

The Mandailing and the Angkola are two closely related Batak people groups who live in the South Tapanuli Regency of North Sumatera Province. The Angkola people live in the northern part of the regency and the Mandailing in the southern part of the regency.

Most Mandailing people live by working the rice fields. They consider themselves more polite than other Batak groups. Like most other Bataks, the Mandailing people group is very proud of their culture. One of the most significant characteristics of Batak culture is dalihan na tolu (3 Hearths) which is a carefully established stratified relationship system between three kinship groups.

Almost all of the Mandailing are Muslims. Many of their traditional activities have been adapted to Islam. The Batak people have 3 key ideas about the body and soul. First, tondi is the soul or spirit of a person. Tondi can be separated from the body for a time if a stronger and greater being, called sombaon, takes it captive. If this happens, a special ceremony is performed to return the tondi to the body of its owner. Second, sahala is the quality and amount of spiritual power that a person owns. Third, begu is the soul belonging to the dead. They live in a "reverse" world: what people do during the day, the begu do at night.

At this time the Mandailing need to develop agriculture and education. Many are leaving their region to continue studies or to find better economic opportunities. The area is rich in natural resources such as zinc, sulphur, limestone, granite, gold, copper, lead, petroleum and kaolin. There is tremendous potential that has yet to be developed by professionals. There must be investment in order for this to happen. While business and trade is strong, it still needs to be developed further. Among other needs, clean water supplies remains underdeveloped.

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Image
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Primary Religion:

Islam

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

0.001%

Churches:

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Population (date):



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Item Name	Item Note
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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	0.001%
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Countries Where People Group Lives

Country Name	Indonesia
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Society & Culture

Social Habits/Groupings

The Mandailing live in a village called a huta. Traditionally the huta keeps control of the land and only gives permission to members of the village to work the land. Members are allowed to work the land as if it were their own, but they are not allowed to sell the land without the permission of the village. This permission can be obtained through a ceremonial discussion with the village residents.

Comment (Culture)

Ancestry and family names are important to the Batak peoples. The ability to trace their family ancestry has great meaning to the Mandailing people. Most of them are able to trace their ancestry back for 20 generations - some even further back. Because of this, if a Mandailing couple does not have any children, it is regarded as a disgrace by the community.

If one were to leave home, a Mandailing would tend to find land and a house to live in as is expressed in the proverb "halului anak halului tana" (look for a child and look for land). Children and land are viewed as a part of one's self-worth (sahala hasangapon) that contributes to receiving status and respect from the community. If someone succeeds in settling in a different area, he is thought of very highly.

Profile Summary

Group Description

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