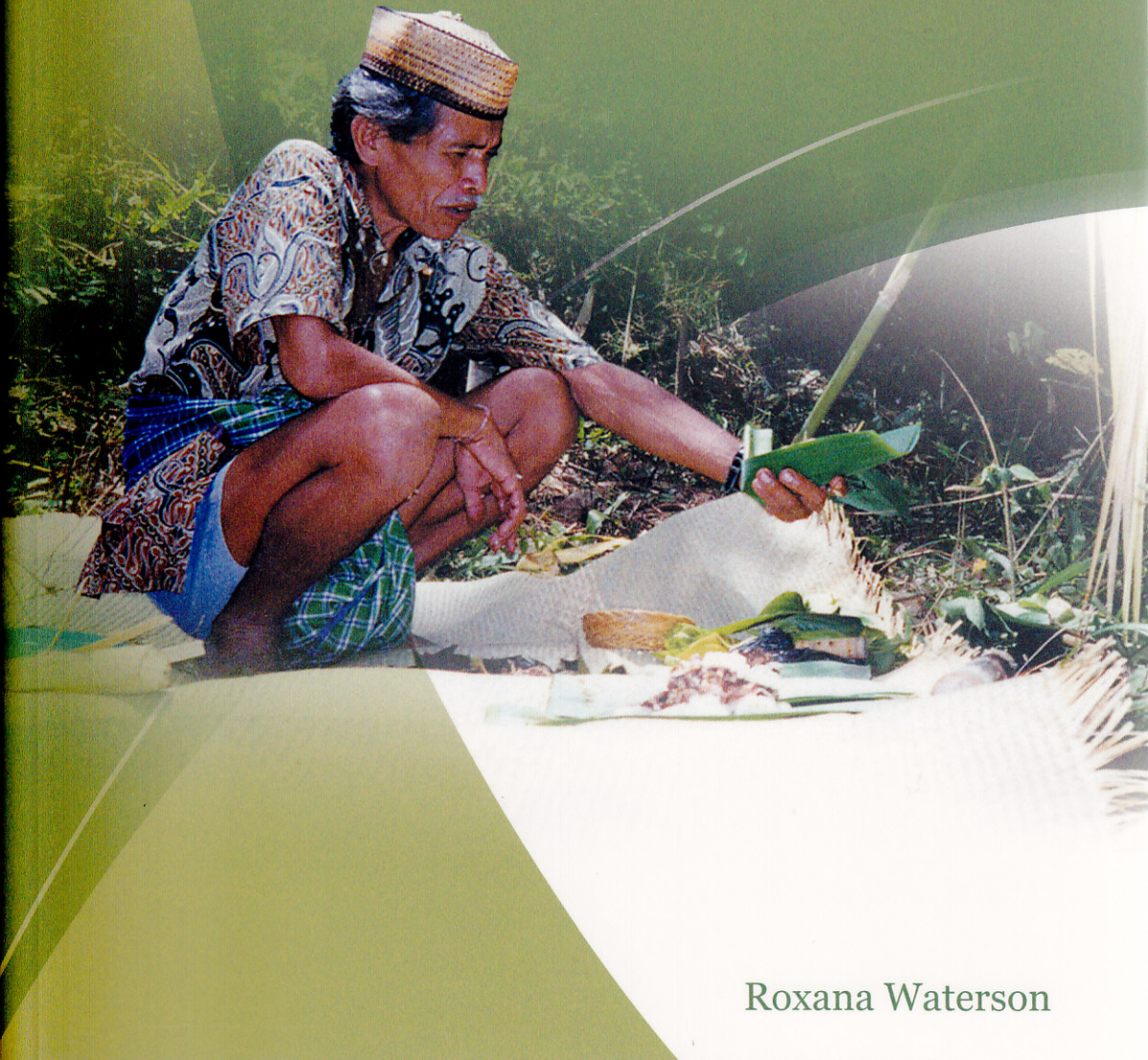


# Paths and rivers

Sa'dan Toraja society in transformation



Roxana Waterson

## PATHS AND RIVERS

'If we are condemned to tell stories we cannot control, may we not, at least, tell stories we believe to be true.'

James Clifford, 'On ethnographic allegory' (1986:121).

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ROXANA WATERSON

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Sa'dan Toraja society in transformation



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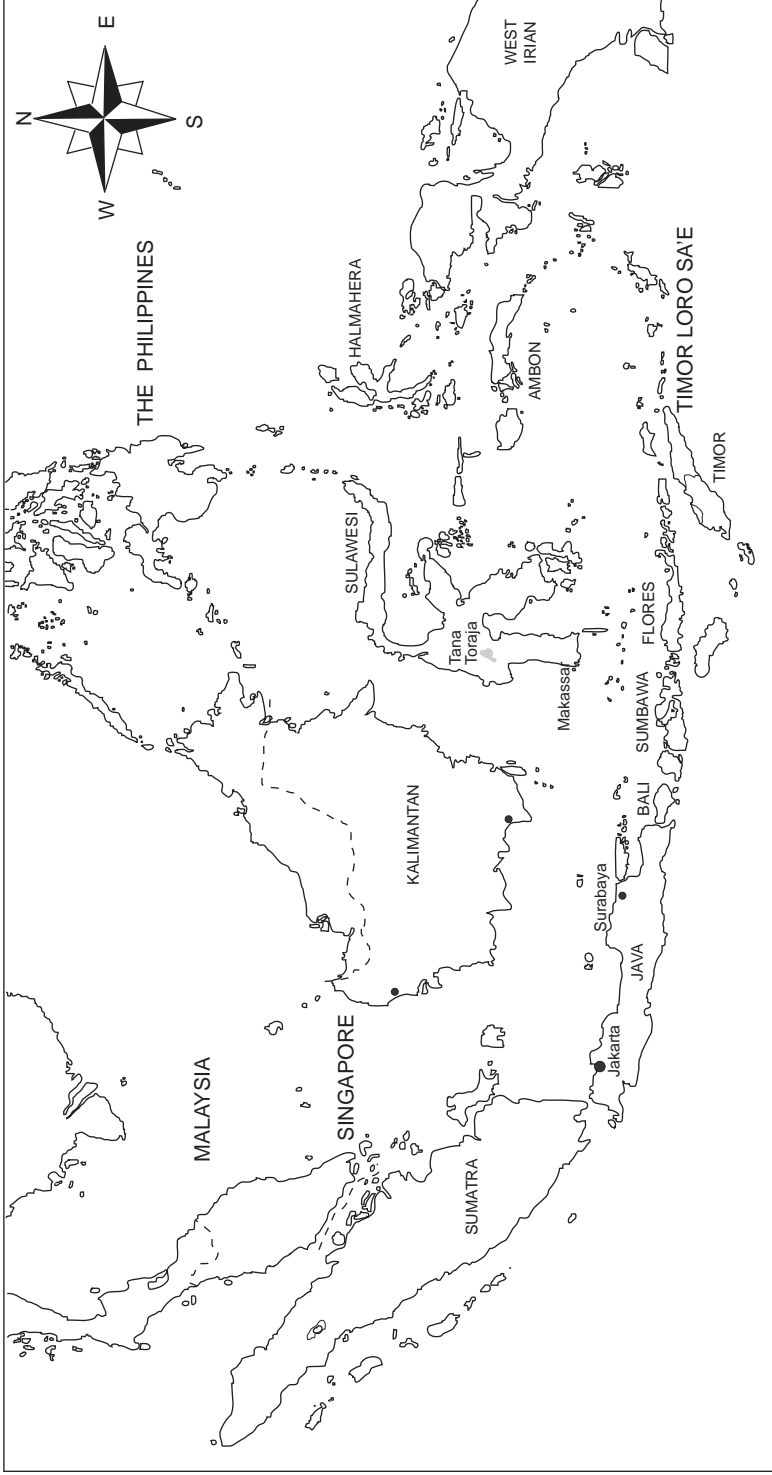
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## A note on orthography

The Toraja language is pronounced somewhat like Italian, with all letters in the word enunciated. This includes double letters (even double 'ng', as in *parengge'*, 'chief'). A distinctive feature is the glottal stop, rendered here with an apostrophe. Pronunciation in the western districts of Tana Toraja has the peculiarity that combinations of consonants, such as 'nt', 'mp', or 'nk', are pronounced as a doubling of the last consonant, as 'tt', 'pp', or 'kk'. Thus *punti* ('banana') is in west Toraja pronounced *putti*; *ampo* ('grandchild') as *appo*; *bungkang* ('crab') as *bukkang*, and so forth. In reporting the speech of people in Saluputti, I have retained this double consonant pattern. The abbreviations (T.), (I.), (D.), (B.) or (M.) in the text refer to Toraja, Indonesian, Dutch, Bugis or Makassarrese words respectively.



Map 1. Indonesia

## Introduction

Of Indonesia's thousands of islands, Sulawesi is among the largest. Unusually complex in its seismic history, its geology, and its biology, it is also culturally diverse. Much as its mysterious shape, its vast central forests and its unique flora and fauna may have excited the imagination of outsiders, large parts of it remained unknown to Europeans until the late nineteenth century. Even its name remains something of an enigma. Although the famously seafaring Bugis of South Sulawesi were undoubtedly acquainted with the whole island, they appear not to have given it a single name, but instead referred to its different parts by the names of kingdoms or the peoples residing in each region. The Portuguese traveller Tomé Pires, in his *Suma Oriental* (1512-15), mentioned the 'islands of *Macaçar*' (Pelras 1977:228), and was also the first European to use the term 'Celebes' in writing, though that name was not used in reference to the whole island until several decades later. Pires named the tip of the northernmost Minahasa peninsula as 'Punta de Celebres', the 'Point of Currents', as it was known to the neighbouring Sangirese, in whose language *sellirwe* means 'current'. Later Portuguese voyagers likewise failed to realize that Makassar and Minahasa were the opposite ends of a single, huge land mass. The earliest European maps drew on Chinese and Javanese sources, and all until 1546 showed the spreadeagled peninsulae as separate islands. From the seventeenth century, the Dutch in Makassar were using the name 'Selebessi', but it remains unclear whether this was a rendition of an indigenous, or a European term. It has been suggested that, if indigenous, it derives from the words *sula besi*, meaning 'iron dagger'. The name aptly enough brings to mind the abundant deposits of iron ore around Lake Matano in Central Sulawesi, which for centuries provided a valuable supply of raw material to the swordsmiths of the archipelago. Whatever its origins, the term Sulawesi began to replace 'Celebes' among Indonesian nationalists during the 1920s and 1930s, but only became general currency as late as the 1940s.<sup>1</sup> Like the rest of the Indonesian

<sup>1</sup> The above discussion is derived from Pelras (1977); Henley (1989); and Whitten, Muslimin Mustafa and Henderson (1987:82).



archipelago, Sulawesi is home to many distinct though related cultures, its peoples speaking 62 different languages. This book is about the Sa'dan Toraja, who live in the rugged northerly highlands of the province of South Sulawesi. Their homeland is the *kabupaten* (Regency, or sub-provincial administrative region) known today as Tana Toraja or 'Toraja Land'.

Tana Toraja's mountainous landscape is criss-crossed with paths and rivers. The people who live there were labelled 'Sa'dan Toraja' by the Dutch, after the broad, brown river Sa'dan which flows north-south through the middle of their territory. The north-south axis is significant in Toraja cosmology for other reasons. Houses are always oriented to the north, their fronts facing the direction associated with Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the heavens (a deity of the traditional cosmology who achieved promotion when Christian missionaries selected his name to be the translation of 'God' in the Bible). The south or southwest is the direction associated with the afterlife, Puya. The east-west axis is an even more important point of reference in the indigenous cosmology, for the path of the rising and setting sun is seen in parallel to the life course of human beings themselves. The great corpus of Toraja rituals is classified as belonging either to the east (those to do with the enhancement of life and fertility, chiefly addressed to the deities) or to the west (mortuary rites and those addressed to the ancestors), with just one or two rituals which effect a transition between the two.

When I first did fieldwork in Tana Toraja, in 1978-1979, I chose to live in the western district of Saluputti, or 'Banana River'. I learned how rivers and mountain tops are linked in Toraja mythology by stories of the *to manurun*, men of supernatural abilities who descended from the sky onto mountain tops and married equally magical women who emerged out of deep river pools. Travelling still further west into Simbuang, a three-day hike along small mountain paths, one crosses the Massuppu' River, claimed to be the home of crocodiles which, as mythical relations of human beings, should be addressed as *nene'* (grandparent) to ensure a safe crossing. Most Toraja are intimately acquainted with their landscape, at least their own immediate part of it, and can find their way with ease along the maze of small paths that wind along the top of rice field dykes, through streams, and up and down steep hillsides. Small children learn the paths as they play together or accompany their mothers and fathers here and there on countless day-to-day journeys. Even the elderly, after a lifetime of traversing this environment, often amazed me with the strength and agility with which they could still hike miles in the burning sun to join a distant funeral gathering, visit a remote hillside garden that needed weeding, or pay a call on a married child who had settled in another village.

Putting the experience of fieldwork on paper, and making of it some kind of comprehensible narrative, is a lot harder than learning to negotiate those

paths and finding ways not to fall over in the mud on rainy days (though there were days in the early stages of fieldwork when I felt that was all that I was learning). In spite of our best efforts, we may well fear to end up, as Hugh Brody has wryly put it, 'turning the gold of fieldwork into the lead of academic life'. For years this book obstinately refused to take shape, while the urgent anthropological debates of the past two decades, over the nature of ethnography and how it ought or ought not to be written, only seemed to render the task more intractable. In the end, it may seem a much more straightforward task to deconstruct someone else's ethnography than to write one's own. However, had I succeeded in finishing mine more quickly, the result would have been more of a snapshot of life in the late 1970s and early 1980s. If there is a benefit in having taken so long, it is that my data now cover a longer period, allowing me a somewhat deeper perspective on the tremendous changes that Toraja society has been through in the course of the twentieth century. The older people I was lucky to know on my first visits had lived through all or most of that century, which included the entire, brief period of Dutch colonialism, and they were also the bearers of memories about life in precolonial times, passed on to them by their own parents and grandparents. What is more, few people would have dared to predict, as the twentieth century drew to a close, how radically the political picture in Indonesia would change. But then came the Asian monetary crisis of 1997, followed the next year by the sudden collapse of Suharto's 'New Order' régime, which had dominated Indonesian life for 32 years. The millennium has been a watershed in Indonesian political life, not least (in fact most especially) at the margins. Within the space of a year, a radical plan for devolution of power from central government had already been set in motion, granting a large measure of local autonomy not just at provincial, but even more at regency and district levels. Although it is too soon to pass judgement about the changes this is effecting in Tana Toraja, since here as elsewhere in the country these are still working themselves out, I have tried to take account of it in some of what is presented here. Where the centres of power in Jakarta had once seemed so distant, in 1999 my village friends were gathered around their still new television sets listening to the talk shows in which previously taboo political topics were suddenly being openly discussed, while those in the towns, who had already had television since the early 1980s, were following the Presidential campaign with an enthusiasm they had formerly reserved only for soap operas.

In Tana Toraja, the events of the twentieth century have produced obvious and profound cultural changes, yet in the midst of these transformations, it is remarkable how certain distinctive elements of a precolonial cultural order have retained their vigour. This is not of course to suggest the stasis of 'traditional' culture prior to colonial intervention. Change is perhaps the only element of culture that can be guaranteed, and in this case, we know that Dutch

takeover was in fact preceded by a period of social upheaval in the highlands. Still, European colonisation, here as elsewhere, inevitably involved a collision with a radically different cosmology and different notions of what it means to lead a good or a successful life. In seeking to understand what the Toraja worldview had been, prior to this confrontation, I am struck by the tenacity with which some elements of that pattern have been maintained, even as other aspects are threatened with extinction, and new cultural patterns and ideas replace them. I hope that now I have been able to craft a somewhat broader and deeper picture of a society in transformation. The imagery of paths (*lalan*) and rivers (*salu*) helps me to think about continuities and differences, about the endurance of place and the flow of time, about the inroads made by outsiders into the highlands, as well as the outward journeys undertaken by Toraja migrants seeking their fortunes. Those images have salience to Toraja themselves in a number of ways. Paths through the landscape are of many kinds, not only those travelled by humans (*lalan naola tau*); they range from the tiniest 'mouse paths' (*lalan balao*) to the broad and muddy paths made by buffaloes (*lalan tedong*). One may also speak of the path of life (*lalan katuoan*) and the path of history (*lalan sejarah* – though here the word for history is a borrowing from Indonesian). From the human point of view, paths also link houses, which as birth places become sites of origin for people and which branch over time as descendants move to found new dwellings for themselves. To explain or talk 'about' anything is to speak of 'its path' (*lalan-na*). Things that should be kept apart, such as rituals of the east and of the west, must be put on 'separate paths' (*pattan lalan*). The imagery of rivers is even more salient. Discourse is the flow or 'river of words' (*saluan kata*). When people tell their genealogies, they 'river' their ancestors (*massalu nene*); the history of how any particular event unfolded is its 'river' (*passalu*). The flow of time is simultaneously the ordered progression of named ancestors from one generation to the next. Over and over again, Toraja acquaintances, telling myths and stories of the past, would end by tracing a line of descent from the ancestor they had been talking about to themselves, thereby legitimating their knowledge, their status, and their right to tell the story. Knowledge that has been passed down unbroken from the ancestors is said to have been 'preserved like river stones touching each other' (*disedan karangan siratuan*), for however many stones may be washed away by the rushing water, there are always others to take their place, and the river bed is never bare. *Massalu* is also to discuss any matter in detail, making it clear and putting things in order. The 'river' of a thing (*salunna*) is what is proper and correct; to 'go with the flow' of the river (*unnola salunna*) is to do things properly. To 'travel down the river' (*dipaolai salu*) of a problem or a dispute can mean to reach as fair a decision as possible; illnesses can traditionally be diagnosed (*dipasaluan*) by means of divination to discover if some prohibition has been broken. *Sanda*

*salunna* is the name for an aspect of *aluk*, the 'way' of the indigenous religion, which, embracing all the rest, means literally 'all its rivers'.

Paths and rivers are many, and such a sense of rectitude may easily evade the ethnographer. I am by now one of a growing group of outsiders who have traversed Toraja territory. Each of us has traced our own paths and followed our own rivers; we have found different ways to write about our experiences, and we owe our own debts to those countless Toraja who have offered us their friendship and taken the time to teach us what we know. If my title irks the reader with its indeterminacy, I have chosen it just because it reflects that sense of open-endedness, of incompleteness, of endless possible choices of routes to follow, which seems by now to be an inescapable part of the process. I make no claim to have followed the right or the only path in what follows; I join the conversation only to offer some account of my own particular, circuitous journey to an understanding of Toraja society.

### *A return journey*

In 1994 I returned to the Toraja highlands after an absence of eleven years. This journey was not like any of my earlier ones. Makassar, the provincial capital of South Sulawesi, was then still known as Ujung Pandang, the name given to it in the 1960s (it reverted to its more historic name in 1999). From here, in the late 1970s, it took a ten-hour bus ride to reach the highlands – a distance of 300 km. The journey was picturesque but torturous, crammed into narrow seats with mountains of luggage, trussed chickens, and a full load of passengers, some of them unaccustomed travelers who would be sure to feel sick as soon as the bus got under way and would soon be closing all the windows and retching into the 'Blue Band' margarine tins which were always kept handy under the seats. But as tourism developed, Tana Toraja came to have its own airfield, and a tiny propeller plane, capable of holding twenty or so passengers, for a time made daily flights (weather and cloud permitting) to and from the highlands. As ethnic violence was unleashed in Indonesia in the aftermath of Suharto's fall in 1998, the tourists suddenly stayed away from Tana Toraja and the planes stopped flying. So in more recent visits I have travelled by road once again.

But on this occasion I had decided to fly. We took off out of Ujung Pandang over rice fields and villages with domed mosques nestled in clumps of trees, flying at 7,000 feet all the way, which afforded spectacular views of the terrain which formerly took so many gruelling hours to cover. We flew over fallow rice fields, first dry, then flooded, reaching to the water's edge, with only the narrowest band of mangrove swamp separating them from the ocean, where a string of small islands lay in a turquoise sea marked by darker patches of



ultramarine. Around them small square fishing platforms could be seen scattered across the water. On the other side of the plane, to the east, stretched a ridge of jagged mountain peaks, their heads in the clouds. Strange limestone formations rose abruptly from the plain, looking like an underwater landscape. Their dark greens stood out against the light brown tones of the flooded rice fields. Every inch was cultivated, barely leaving room enough for the houses. A greenish-brown river snaked across the landscape, growing thinner and thinner as it disappeared towards its source in the mountains. It vanished into the foothills, and then we passed patches of vivid green where new rice seedlings were already being planted. We could see deep into highland valleys between the folds of the mountains. The hills rose ever more jagged, their forest cover punctuated here and there with small patches of dramatically contoured, terraced fields. Here the population was sparser, and the mountains loomed taller and closer, their slopes more heavily wooded. Tiny puffs of cloud could be seen caught in the valleys. Another river glistened in the sun. To the west the coastline was still in sight, with rice fields reaching to the shore. We left the small port town of Pare-Pare behind and began to turn inland, following the foothills east as they began to lift into the deforested cattle-grazing country of Enrekang. More silky green rice fields, then a wide brown river which must have been the Sa'dan itself, then deep blue mountains, hill slopes covered with the rounded reddish shapes of clove trees, and suddenly we were flying over the valleys of Tana Toraja, with the first unmistakable curved roofs and pointed eaves of houses visible on hillocks amid clumps of palm and bamboo, the rice here already half grown and brilliant emerald. We landed on the neat little airfield of Rantetaio, which a century ago had been the scene of more sinister activity, as a market for captives sold as slaves to the lowlands. Curved roofs in the traditional style topped the tiny airport building, where we exited through the doorway marked 'Departures', while a small herd of tourists waited to depart through the door marked 'Arrivals'. Few airports have a more casual and friendly atmosphere than this one. A few mini buses and jeeps were awaiting passengers outside. From here, a slow and winding drive down narrow lanes brings one, through an agricultural landscape of startling beauty, to the town of Rantepao. The two small towns of Rantepao and Ma'kale lie at either end of a plateau at an altitude of around 800 metres. Ridges of mountains ring this plateau and beyond them lie further valleys, while to the north of Rantepao looms the imposing profile of Toraja's tallest mountain, Sesean, whose peak, at 2176 metres, is often hidden in cloud.

In many ways this was a joyful arrival, since it meant reuniting with friends not seen for many years. I had finally achieved respectable status as a married woman with children, entitling me, like other adults, to a teknonym; I enjoyed the fact that I could now be known as Mama' Sam, or 'Sam's mother'. When

my husband and children joined me for part of the time they were shown the warmest hospitality. In the village where I had once lived for a year, my adoptive sister insisted on slaughtering a pig so that the villagers, all of whom had converted to Christianity in my absence, might join us in a prayer meeting and feast to celebrate our arrival. The children adapted remarkably quickly to village life and their memories of their stay there remain vivid many years later. But my return was also tinged with sadness when I learned how many older acquaintances, valued teachers and informants, had passed away. That news brought home to me the reality of shorter life expectancy in developing countries. There were other changes to absorb, too, not least the decline of the indigenous religion, which had advanced much more sharply than I had expected. On the other hand, alterations brought by the now enlarged numbers of tourists coming to Tana Toraja appeared in my view largely positive. More and better hotels and restaurants were offering a variety of employment opportunities to local people, while others were taking new courses in their own culture and history in order to qualify as guides. The obvious interest shown by foreign visitors in Toraja culture and ceremonial life has given many Toraja reason to re-evaluate their own traditions, which at one time it might have been predicted would soon fall into decay. Perhaps in response to these developments, the interest of young people in learning English had intensified, and on this visit I noticed a number of new establishments offering language courses. One of these caught my eye with its promise of 'English Language of International'; large brightly painted signs outside declared: 'Ambition Has No Rest', 'Never So Fast To Say Die', and, more enigmatically, 'You Love Me Love My Dog'. The little town of Rantepao was a livelier place than it had been ten years earlier. But everything has its ups and downs: a few years later, the temporary collapse of the tourist industry left the hotels mostly empty and the guides with nothing to do.

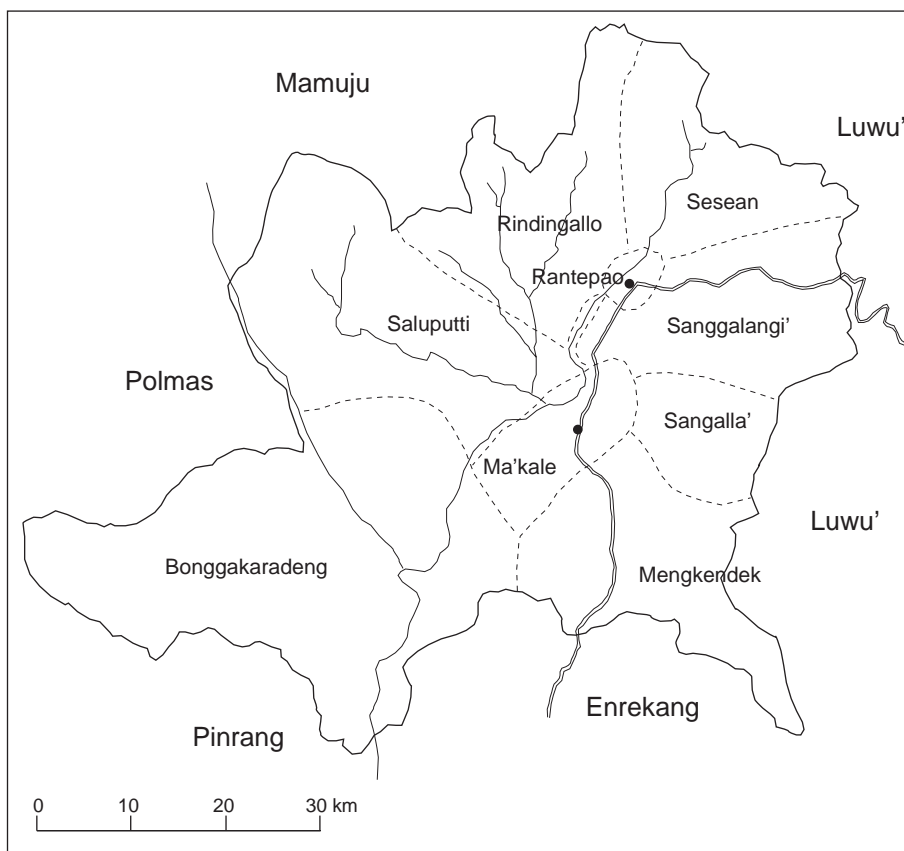
My first long spell of fieldwork in Tana Toraja had been in 1978-1979, when I did research for my doctoral thesis; this was followed by a second visit of 8 months in 1982-1983. At the time of my first trip, Tana Toraja was divided into nine *kecamatan* or districts, and I spent an initial six months visiting most of these and trying to gain some picture of the differences between them. Finally I decided to settle in the village of Buttang, in the *desa* (or sub-district) of Malimbong, part of the western *kecamatan* of Saluputti, where I lived for the next year.<sup>2</sup> I was attracted by the beauty of the landscapes in this rugged

<sup>2</sup> Maps 2, 3 and 4 illustrate changes in administrative divisions within Tana Toraja from colonial days to the present. The names of administrative units changed frequently under the New Order. Later, in the 1980s, *desa* became known as *lurah*, and *kampung* (villages) were renamed *lingkungan* or *dusun*. Many larger *lurah* were also subdivided, enabling each unit to claim its own administrative funds. Since the new Regional Autonomy ruling of 1999, some *lurah* have



- |             |              |               |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 Kesu      | 12 Piongan   | 23 Sangalla'  |
| 2 Tikala    | 13 Kurra'    | 24 Mengkendek |
| 3 Buntao'   | 14 Ulusalu   | 25 Mappa'     |
| 4 Rantebua  | 15 Sesseng   | 26 Buakayu    |
| 5 Tondon    | 16 Bittuang  | 27 Rano       |
| 6 Nanggala  | 17 Pali      | 28 Simbuang   |
| 7 Balusu    | 18 Ratte     | 29 Bau        |
| 8 Sa'dan    | 19 Balepe'   | 30 Banga      |
| 9 Pangala'  | 20 Malimbong | 31 Palesan    |
| 10 Dende'   | 21 Talion    | 32 Tapparan   |
| 11 Madandan | 22 Ma'kale   |               |

Map 2. Tana Toraja, showing the 32 districts at the time of the Dutch administration (after Seinstra 1940)



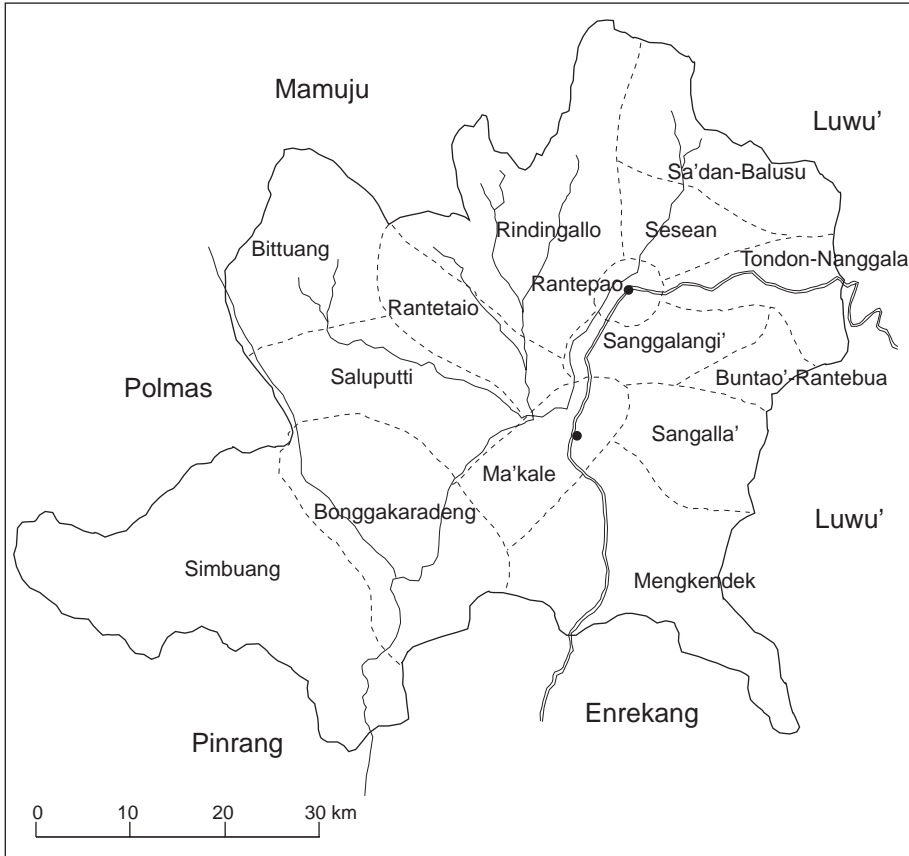
Map 3. Tana Toraja, showing the nine *kecamatan* (districts) into which the Regency was divided in the late 1970s

part of the country. Whereas many Toraja villages take the form of scattered hamlets, on small hillocks with space for only two or three houses grouped together, Buttang had the advantage of having a relatively large number of households – twenty-four at that time, expanded to thirty-two today – grouped together on a single hill that reared up steeply out of the sea of

---

reconfigured themselves and reverted to the older, Toraja term *lembang* (which had also been used in Dutch days) – mostly, so far as I could gather, in places where New Order boundaries had disrupted older patterns of community based on meat distribution at funerals. In 2002, the three *lurah* of Malimbong, Kole and Sawangan combined to form one *lembang* (called Malimbong), while neighbouring Menduruk and Lemo (also part of *desa* Malimbong when I first lived there) have joined to form *lembang* Menduruk.





Map 4. Tana Toraja, showing the fifteen *kecamatan* (districts) into which the Regency is now divided

terraced rice fields around it. I reasoned that this would make it easier to get to know the community and its affairs, and moreover, Malimbong appealed to me because at that time, very few of its inhabitants had converted to Christianity. The indigenous religion, known officially as Aluk To Dolo ('Way of the Ancestors') or simply as Alukta ('Our Way'), and often more familiarly in conversation as *pa'kandean nene'* ('feeding the ancestors'), was an aspect of Toraja life that especially interested me. Its rituals marked the rhythm of the agricultural cycle, and punctuated the generally monotonous pace of village life with occasional spectacular events, when people would stay up all night dancing, singing and feasting. In *ma'bugi'*, a rite to ward off illness, the dancers would summon the *deata* – deities immanent in nature – to descend

from their mountain tops and possess them. I was lucky, in choosing to live in Malimbong at that time, to experience this integration of the rhythms of life and religion, for by the time I returned in the mid-1990s, many of these everyday experiences were already a memory. The last section of this book deals in more detail with the character of Alukta and with the process of its decline.

### *Life in Buttang*

When I first went to live in Buttang, the village lay 3 km from the nearest road, and could be reached only on foot by way of steep and narrow paths. The wide and fertile valley of Malimbong in which it stands is ringed by mountains and from the vantage-point afforded by the long, narrow hill on which Buttang is built, one can enjoy magnificent views toward the surrounding peaks of Messila, Sado'ko' and Ullin. The steep slopes of the hill on which Buttang stands are covered in huge clumps of bamboo, so that, seen from a distance, the village is quite hidden from view. Internally, its 24 houses were divided into five hamlets, though these divisions had little practical consequence in the daily lives of the villagers. The uppermost, southern end is called Buttang ('full of water'), after the pool formed by the stream which runs down from here along the western side of the village. This stream forms the main irrigation channel for the surrounding fields, being diverted to flood them when necessary. Then comes Tondok Tanga ('middle hamlet'), and below that, Papa Batu ('stone roof', after the old origin house or *tongkonan*, once roofed with stone slabs, which by the 1970s had been replaced with corrugated zinc). This house in its heyday had been wealthy enough to have six rice barns ranged in front of it, though now these were reduced to one. Lower down is a group of houses known simply as Tondok ('hamlet'), while the last section, at the northernmost end of the hill, is known as Bamba ('courtyard'). The average size of the households in Buttang and neighbouring villages which I surveyed was 5 or 6 persons. Most households consist of nuclear families, often augmented by the presence of a grandparent, an aunt, or additional grandchildren or foster-children. It is very common for grandparents, as their own children marry and form their own households, to request a child or two from them to keep them company and help with the household chores. There were other variations, too. At that time there were two village women whose husbands had gone to Palu in Central Sulawesi to work for logging companies. Too young to have grandchildren, they had each brought a younger sibling to live with them for company, and to help with the daily chores. I lodged in the house of Indo' Teken and her husband, Ambe' Teken, a fine timber house in traditional style, though without carv-



Sebo' (Indo' Bolle'), 2002

ing, with a leanto bamboo kitchen built on to the east side. The house was a branch of the origin house called Papa Batu. It held a ritual title connected to the rice growing cycle, the duties of which were officially held by Indo' Teken, since the house belonged to her family. When offerings were to be made, her uxorilocally residing husband took care of the man's job of slaughtering the pig required, while she prepared the rice. The household exemplified a Toraja attitude of religious tolerance, for Indo' Teken and several of her married children maintained their allegiance to the Aluk to Dolo, while her husband, who had been forced in the 1950s to join one of the bands of Islamic guerrillas from the Darul Islam movement, which at that time had roamed the highlands, had converted to Islam and had subsequently remained loyal to his new faith, bringing up one of his daughters as a Muslim; some of the other children, under the influence of schoolteachers, had become Christian. The household at that time contained three grandchildren, along with the three remaining unmarried children of a set of ten siblings. The older ones had already formed their own households in nearby villages, and often dropped by to visit. In the absence of electricity or television in the 1970s, children were seen not least as a source of entertainment and pleasure, and a household without them was considered uncomfortably quiet. When darkness fell, the hurricane lamp would be pumped up and hung from the ceiling while we waited for the evening rice to cook, and besides the occasional game of dominoes or cards, it was the children who provided the main source of amusement. They were never put to bed by themselves, but would stay awake as long as they cared, eventually crawling into the lap of a parent or grandparent and nodding off. These arrangements for the borrowing of children between households are rather flexible, for by the time children are about ten years old they exercise a great deal of independence. If they are not happy in one household, they are quite capable of moving to another. The grandparents may spoil them to encourage them to stay, or the parents may miss them and try to lure them back home. At the time I first got to know the Buttang households, there was a neighbour's boy staying in one house, who had been there for about a month, and seemed to have decided he preferred it to his own home. He was currently accepted as a member of the household; nobody knew how long he might stay, and nobody asked him.

During the year I spent living in Buttang, I had the opportunity to join in all kinds of everyday tasks (at most of which I was hopelessly inept, though my efforts at least provided a source of amusement for everyone else), including rice planting, harvesting, and gardening. I often kept company with the youngest daughter of my adoptive household, a young woman of seventeen named Sebo'. From her I learned a great deal about all sorts of everyday matters. Not much attracted to school work, she had attended the local primary school for only two years, but she was already very competent at all the jobs

she would need to know as a farmer, and practically ran our household, since her parents were already quite old and appreciated her energies. Nowadays, Sebo' lives in neighbouring Menduruk, and has three children of her own. Toraja people practice teknonymy; when a person has their first child, they become known as 'Mother of' or 'Father of' their child. So Sebo' and her husband Rerung are known now as Indo' Bolle' and Ambe' Bolle'. With grandparenthood, one's name changes again; if one's first grandchild is called Pare, for instance, one will become known as Nene'na Pare, 'Grandparent of Pare'.

Every household has its pig-pen, and also its collection of variously-coloured chickens scratching in the yard, and sometimes ducks. The pigs are fed twice daily on a mush cooked from chopped vegetables, sweet potatoes and the chaff and broken grains of rice left over from pounding. Usually there will also be a dog, and a cat whose favourite place is in the warm ashes of the kitchen hearth. As a wise old Menduruk villager, Ambe' Ka'pan, explained to me, a house is not considered complete without its dog, its cat, its long wooden mortar (*issong*) for pounding the rice, and its cockerels and chickens. The cock 'guards the eaves' of the house (*kappa longa*) and acts as an alarm clock; the dog 'guards the porch' (*kappa tangdo*) and barks to announce the arrival of visitors; the rice-mortar 'sings out' (*ma'noni*) when rice is being pounded for the evening meal. It would be tempting to add the cat to this trio as guardian of the hearth, though Ambe' Ka'pan did not express it thus – perhaps because the cat does not add so significantly to the cheerful noises of life as the other three do. But cats are greatly respected in Toraja, and there is scarcely a house without one. In a well-known folk tale, told to me by Ambe' Teken in the early months of my residence in Buttang, the cat is indeed the guardian of the family's wealth. When hit on the nose and denied a piece of fish by an ungrateful owner, she summons all the family's livestock, their stores of rice, and their heirloom valuables to follow her. Assuming human shape, they all depart to seek a more generous master, leaving the original owner destitute. Sebo' expressed the necessity of having a cat by the saying, *Moi ponno bulaan dianna ke tae' sese'* ('Even if [the house] is full of stored gold, [it's no good] without a cat').

To be truly complete, a house must also have its rice barn, always facing it on the north side. The barn is the 'husband' (*muanena*) or 'pair' (*balinna*) of the house, which is female. Alternatively, the pairing is expressed in terms of mother and child: 'the house holds the barn in its lap' (*banua ria alang*) the Toraja say, evoking not a simple binary opposition but the image of an organic relationship. Every afternoon in Malimbong, the characteristic sound of the rice mortars would echo to and fro across the valleys from one hamlet to another as women and children gathered to share the hard work, made more congenial by being done together. When the harvest season commenced, the

atmosphere would be very joyful, and pounding sometimes continued into the night, for it meant an end to the hungry season (*elo*) when most people's rice stocks had been exhausted. It was customary then for the young men to come and join in with the girls. Some would pound while others knocked the long bamboo pounders in complex rhythms against the sides of the mortar, providing a welcome excuse for flirtation, while other boys would play on trumpets (*pelle'*) made from a huge leaf wrapped into a cone. Then the village on its hill seemed to me truly a world unto itself, riding like a great ship above the sea of rice fields.

Nearly every family in Buttang could trace some link, through kinship or marriage, with the others. Many of these ties, especially sibling links, were through women, for the vast majority of marriages (20 out of 24 households) were uxorilocal, a socially declared preference that was reflected equally in a wider household survey I made of neighbouring villages. The villagers of course also had numerous kin ties to people in surrounding villages, and our frequent attendance at funerals in neighbouring communities gradually helped me to learn more of these connections. In 1978 many of the houses, including the one I lived in, were built in traditional style, with extended roof ridges and high, curved eaves. In 1982 there was a severe drought, and no rain fell for eight months. Just before I made my second long visit to Malimbong, a disastrous fire destroyed many of the houses. A woman had taken her oil lamp with her as she went to feed the pigs after dark, and the flame from the lamp had set her thatch on fire as she left the kitchen door. The fire had swept up the hill, destroying houses and barns, though the people had escaped unharmed. Over the ensuing years, the houses were rebuilt, but almost all of them now in the Bugis style popular in the lowlands, with large rooms and glass windows, which people nowadays find more convenient than the traditional style. Three out of four of the old noble origin houses (*tongkonan*) have been rebuilt, though the woodcarver once resident in the village has passed away, and carpenters from more distant places had been sought to decorate them. By 1994, a road had been opened past Buttang and on into Menduruk, and mini-buses plied up and down several times a day, making access much easier. On my next visit two years later, electricity pylons were marching up the hill as part of the national government's programme to bring electricity to rural villages across the country. By the late 1990s, four houses had installed satellite dishes and for the first time the villagers could watch television, crowding into the front rooms of those households for an evening of communal viewing. Far more than radio, it struck me, this brought politics closer to the people, since at least they could now see what their politicians looked and sounded like. This was a contrast with the 1970s, when what happened in Jakarta had seemed very remote. (Newspapers have never been readily available in Tana Toraja; even in the towns, they are available only to those





The house of Indo' and Ambe' Bolle' in Menduruk, 2002. The small building on the left is the one in which they started their married life, and which still houses the kitchen. Gradually they were able to construct the larger one (in the Bugis style now widely preferred in the highlands) next door.

who pay regular subscriptions, and rather few people take them.) What may be the effects on local culture of access to international TV channels no-one has yet studied, but already by the time of my most recent visit, in 2004, the number of televisions had grown from four to nineteen.

In the past few years, Buttang has expanded with the addition of some extra houses, bringing the total number of households to 32. While a new generation are now resident in the village, there is nevertheless a strong sense of continuity in the practice of naming children after their grandparents. People who figured as elderly grandparents, or already deceased ancestors, in the genealogies I collected in 1978, now have living replacements in the children growing up in Buttang today. In small ways such as these, though so much has changed, the villagers continue to weave comforting threads of connection with the past.

While I lived in Buttang, I tried to learn as much as I could by joining in everyday activities. Although I could speak basic Indonesian by the time I moved there, this was insufficient for research purposes, since the villagers for preference spoke Toraja among themselves, and many older people did not speak Indonesian at all. Toraja shares a few items of vocabulary in common with Indonesian, but it is a very distinct language with its own unusual grammatical features, including a variety of particles which have to be inserted into a sentence to give it the proper rhythm. My efforts to learn Toraja in the absence of books and grammars provided plenty of amusement, since my attempts to string sentences together were usually grammatical failures. A friend who was a schoolteacher in town tried to help me by lending me his Toraja-language copy of the New Testament. This had been translated by the unusually gifted Dutch linguist Van der Veen into the higher registers of the Toraja language, so refined and poetic that Toraja themselves sometimes said they found it hard to understand. Regrettably it bore little resemblance to the everyday manner of speaking, and so was not much help to a beginner. In my ignorance of the proper ways of doing things, I often made mistakes, and since Tumonglo, a two-year-old grandchild who was the youngest member of our household, was in certain respects more culturally competent than I was, it was not surprising that I sometimes found myself being treated rather like him. Anyone who has done fieldwork in a culture different from their own has similar stories to tell of the sometimes painful process of being remodelled and re-educated to behave in ways that at least (it is hoped) will not too seriously embarrass one's hosts. The villagers of Buttang were extraordinarily kind and tolerant of my awkwardness, and I can only express my deep gratitude to them for their freely proffered friendship and the general good humour with which they put up with my inadequacies and my constant and sometimes intrusive questions. Tumonglo at that time had his hair cut in the traditional manner for children, leaving a tuft at the front of his head, and



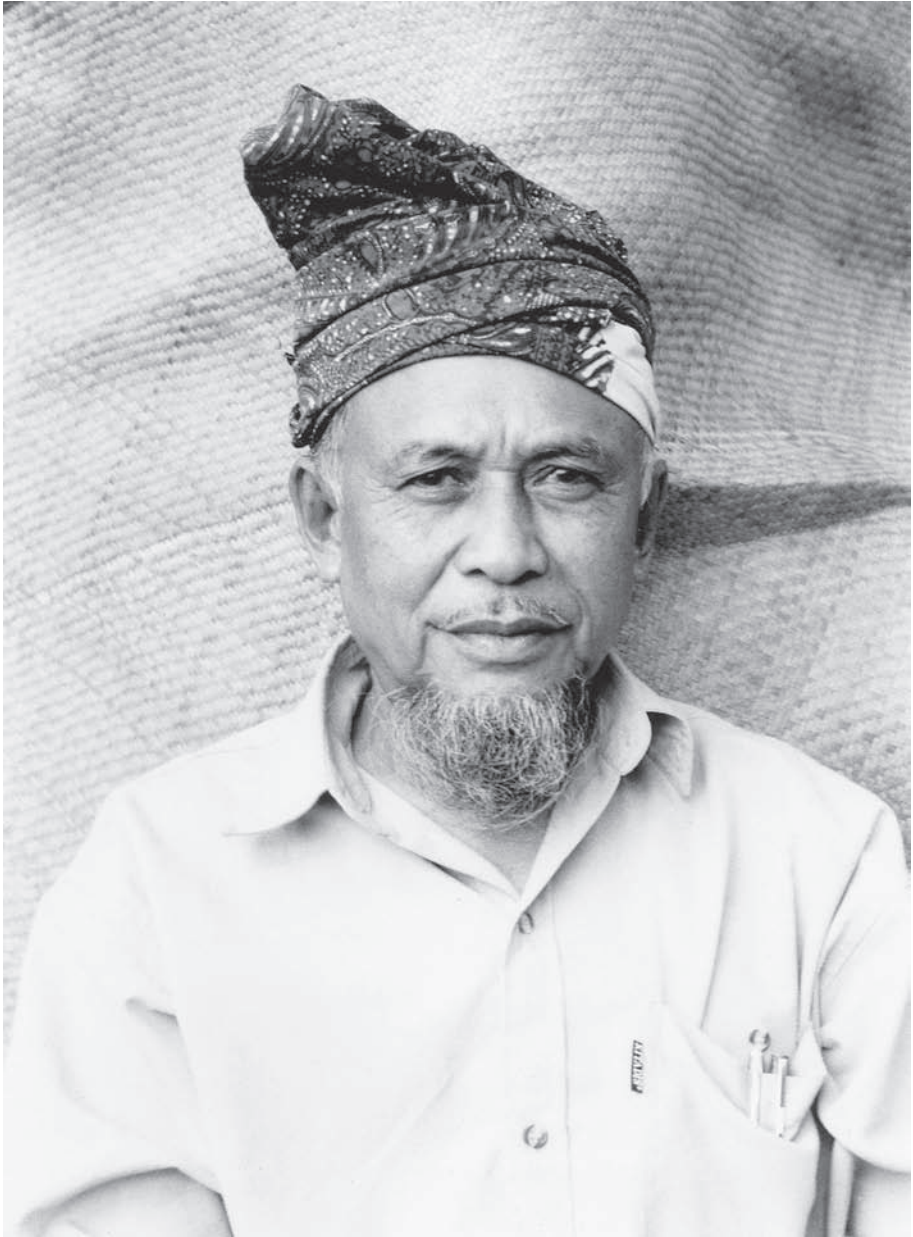
mostly went naked but for a protective string of old silver coins around his neck. His childhood, too, now seems to belong to an older era. I never saw him again; in the years I spent away from Buttang, he became a teenager and left the village to seek his fortune, taking ship to Kalimantan where he joined the steady trickle of migrants who slip across the border into Sabah to find work on Malaysian plantations. He had never been back to visit, but the family kept a letter from him with his photograph, looking cool in dark glasses and a brightly coloured shirt.

Besides the people of Buttang, there are many other individuals to whom I must express a debt of gratitude. For the most part, I have not used pseudonyms in this book, except for purposes of discretion in rare instances. Although this used to be common ethnographic practice, it seems more important to recognise the debts owed especially to the many older people with great stores of cultural knowledge, who taught me so much of what appears in these pages. I came to know a range of such people in different parts of Saluputti as well as in other districts, and visited most of them many times over. Basso (1996) prefers to call such cultural experts 'consultants', a more respectful and accurate word than the commonly used but uncomfortable term 'informants', and I follow his example here. Most anthropologists owe enormous debts to these individuals who share their knowledge with us. By changing our vocabulary, we cannot simply dissolve away the power dimension which continues to adhere in the relationship between academics from wealthier countries imposing themselves on less wealthy communities, either within their own country (as in Basso's case) or in the developing world. But we can at least strive to show our respect for their expertise, and acknowledge their importance to our endeavours. The names of some of these individuals will recur many times in my text, where I have tried to maintain transparency about the sources of my information. In Saluputti itself, they include Pak Mangesa' (Ambe' Pakiding), who lived at Parappo, and was a former Kepala Desa (Desa Head) of Malimbong. He taught me a great deal about *ada'* or customary law, including the rules of inheritance and the complex patterns of meat sharing that bound villages together over time. Then there was Bine' of Tombang, a diminutive aristocratic old lady with impressive force of personality, who was known (unusually for a woman) for her eloquence in meetings of local village councils, when they were called to hear disputes; Sambayang of Menduruk, an elderly man of lively energy whom I visited in his village way up on a steep hillside and who would talk for hours explaining aspects of ritual and variations in local customs; Pak Tolele of Sawangan, whose father had been a District Head under the Dutch and who shared his remarkable knowledge of local history; Indo' Rembon of Ta'do in Talion, with whom I often stayed, and her sister the storyteller Indo' Salea. In neighbouring Ulusalu, I met Isak Tandirerung and Y.B. (Butungan)

Tandirerung, both of whom had extensive genealogical and historical memories and deep knowledge of customary law in that area. In Rantepao I was fortunate to know Pak Bua' Sarungallo, an aristocrat of Kesu' and an acknowledged cultural expert from that region, who knew by heart a body of Toraja myth preserved in thousands of paired lines of poetry. Most important as a teacher of religious and ritual matters has been Ne' Sando Tato' Dena', of Mandetek in Tambunan, Ma'kale district. He bears the title of *to minaa sando*, a special priest of the Aluk To Dolo, who officiates especially in Rites of the East. This hereditary title is attached to his origin house, *tongkonan* Mandetek, which has produced generations of *to minaa*. Trained by his father, he is the bearer of an astonishing corpus of ritual verse and genealogical knowledge. Pak Ulia Salu Rapa', who inherited from his mother, Si Indo', his position as the leading noble of Nanggala, east of Rantepao, often shared his knowledge of that area. He is renowned throughout Tana Toraja for the unrivalled extent and quality of his funeral sacrifices. Pak Kila', B.A., is another unusual individual to whom I owe a debt. Originating from the northerly Sesean district, he is a former civil servant, who before his retirement had worked in the local Department of Education and Culture. He had once been a Protestant but, most unusually, had reconverted to Alukta long before I met him. He served for many years as leader of the organization known as the Parandangan Ada', a committee of representatives of Alukta from each of the different *kabupaten* in Tana Toraja. His life has been something of a crusade to preserve the indigenous religion, and the cultural riches that go with it, in the face of its inexorable erosion by the forces of Christianity. Pak Banti (Papa' Mawiring),<sup>3</sup> a secondary school teacher who comes from Sa'dan, north of Rantepao, and his wife and family, have been especially generous in their friendship over the years; his searching insights into many aspects of culture, especially to do with funeral sacrificing, have been invaluable. The family of Fritz Basiang in Rantepao, and their relatives on the high slopes of the mythical Mount Ullin in Saluputti, and Frans Dengen and his wife Mama' Gory in Ma'kale, have likewise been close friends and teachers, especially about contemporary politics.

At Alang-Alang, beside the Sa'dan River south of Rantepao, I had the enjoyable experience of meeting Pak Tandiruru, a descendant of the house of Nonongan. He was a genial raconteur who once talked with me for six hours without stopping, and who often illustrated his points most effectively with lines of traditional poetry. In more recent years, I have learned much from my acquaintance with Pak Paulus Pasang Kanan of Sangalla', another person of

<sup>3</sup> Now that they have a grandchild, Papa' and Mama' Mawiring are also known as Nene'na Regina; but since this makes it impossible to distinguish between them (the term *nene'*, 'grand-parent', not differentiating between genders), I have retained their original teknonyms here.



Pak Kila', B.A., 1994

profound knowledge, who from childhood could have trained as a *to minaa* (or priest of the traditional religion), since the position ran in his family, but instead became a Catholic and a school teacher. There are many others who deserve my thanks, but these are the names that will recur most often in the pages ahead, wherever I have referred specifically to what I learned from them about myth, history and culture.

What follows is divided into several sections. In Part One, 'The uses of the past', I begin by outlining what can be ascertained about the history of the Toraja highlands, drawing on both written historical research and the orally transmitted accounts that have survived in collective memory and which I learned from my consultants. We shall see how the highlands passed through a period of extreme social disruption in the late nineteenth century, when the indigenous status system, with its rather 'closed' system of rank, suddenly became caught up in a wider and more 'open' commercial network, which linked Toraja chiefs to leaders and mercenaries from lowland kingdoms. They combined forces to raid remote and vulnerable villages, whose captured populations became human merchandise for sale in the lowlands. The profits from trade, either in slaves or in coffee, were at this time being fed by the chiefs into the purchase of firearms, or into ritual expenditure, for they had few other things on which to spend their wealth. This began a process of ritual inflation which, whenever economic conditions allow, has continued until today. In the twentieth century, there followed all the transformations of Dutch colonialism, Japanese Occupation, and the struggle for a free and independent Indonesia; then changes of a different order, though in their way just as radical, under the modernizing régime of Suharto's New Order, and finally, in 1998, the abrupt transition to a new and still evolving democracy, with its sudden devolution of power to local levels of government. My main concern in these chapters is to examine the forms and contexts within which social memory has been preserved in Tana Toraja, and how these continue to have a bearing on present-day concerns. The final chapter in this section seeks to assess the impacts of the Dutch colonial period, for although this was very short, spanning a mere thirty-five years, in retrospect the full extent of these changes could only be appreciated later.

Part Two, 'A House Society', focuses on concepts of kinship, structured around houses as sites of origin. I argue that Toraja society provides an excellent opportunity to explore the potentials of Lévi-Strauss's (1983) concept of 'House Societies' as a means toward a better understanding of the workings of kinship systems in Indonesia. This is a theme that has been a major preoccupation in my research and which subsequently led me to a wider comparative study of indigenous architectures in Southeast Asia generally (Waterson 1986, 1990, 1995a, 1995b, 2003). Because I have written at such length on this theme in previous work, I do not rehearse here all of the com-

parative theoretical arguments about 'House Societies', but the material in this section is intended to provide a sufficiently detailed account of the Toraja kinship system to show how structurally central is the place of houses within it. Part Three, 'Village life', reflects my own experience of living in Buttang, focusing on gender relations, marriage, and the ties to the land which provide the basis for the subsistence economy which still sustains most Toraja today. Part Four, 'Smoke of the rising and the setting sun', concerns the indigenous religion, Aluk to Dolo or 'Way of the Ancestors'. In it, I seek to record how a local religion was harmoniously adapted to a particular landscape and way of life, and trace the progress of its increasingly rapid decline. In my final chapter, I attempt to explain what for outsiders presents itself as the greatest puzzle of Toraja life – the continuing escalation of the ceremonial economy bound up with the celebration of mortuary rites, which appears to have defied the drastic changes in world view brought about by conversion to Christianity, as well as integration into a monetized global economy over the course of the twentieth century, and which has survived even the strain of Indonesia's monetary crisis of 1997. This chapter attempts a synthetic approach to ritual life and economy, showing the embedding of the ceremonial economy within systems of kinship, social and political relations, which it serves dynamically to express and reproduce, even if in changing forms.

In my Conclusion, I speculate as best I can about the directions which a still evolving sense of ethnic identity as 'Toraja' seems to be taking in the new political landscape of Indonesia. Since the restoration of democracy in 1998, and the subsequent devolution of power from Jakarta, the regions have rediscovered an array of possibilities, both for self-definition and the design of local administration, as well as potentially for redefining relationships with neighbouring districts, and the formation of new provinces. At present these possibilities are still being worked out in highland South Sulawesi, and it is too soon to say whether further changes may yet materialise. Let us now set out to trace the paths and rivers of social memory through the highlands.

**PART ONE**

**The uses of the past**



## CHAPTER I

# Toraja and their neighbours

## Historical perspectives

In this chapter I aim first of all to situate the Toraja within the Austronesian world of which they are a part, and then in relation to their immediate neighbours in South Sulawesi. New advances in the history and archaeology of South Sulawesi make it easier to present this picture than it used to be. I shall give a brief account of events leading up to Dutch intervention in the highlands in 1905, as well as sketching some of the transformations in Toraja society that were to result from the ensuing colonial experience and the events of the twentieth century. It is within this context of continued transformation that my own account, based on my experiences of the late 1970s to the present, must be placed. That account is inevitably partial, and itself is witness to just a tiny part of the tremendous changes which have taken place this century, in which the speed of social transformations world-wide has been unprecedented. This historical summary will also provide a framework within which, in Chapters II-V, I go on to consider some of the ways in which the Toraja themselves recall the past, and press it into service in the present. This part deals with a complex mixture of myth, genealogy, legend, and orally transmitted memories of the more immediate past. It has more to do with memory and its sedimentation in landscape, places, and symbolically significant stories, than with history in the conventional sense of formal, written accounts of the past. The study of social memory has flowered over the past decade, criss-crossing the disciplinary boundaries between anthropology, history, psychology and sociology, and producing a new literature which offers us many fresh understandings of the political importance of memory and its transmission in social contexts. Prominent among theorists of social memory is Pierre Nora, whose germinal work, *Realms of memory* (1996-98), points the way to a new form of history. This history, he writes, would be one 'less interested in causes than effects [...] less interested in events themselves than in the construction of events over time [...] less interested in "what actually happened" than in its perpetual reuse and misuse, its influence on successive



presents; less interested in traditions than in the way in which traditions are constituted and passed on' (Nora 1996:xxiv). Other writers such as Tonkin (1992) and Fentress and Wickham (1992) have also been a source of inspiration in my efforts to make sense of Toraja memories of the past.

*On modes of remembering the past*

History is constantly being produced and refashioned within particular social and political contexts, whether in a professionalised, literate tradition or a predominantly oral one. It can also take many forms. Tonkin (1992:8) has argued persuasively for the need to broaden our definitions of what counts as history, and pay attention to the way all forms of recording the past involve some shaping by narrative conventions. 'Historians,' she notes, 'have labelled as "myth" what seem unrealistic ways of representing the past, but it can sometimes be shown that mythic structures encode history, that is, they register actual happenings or significant changes. "Realism", on the other hand, is an equally culture-bound judgement of likelihood.' The problem of even trying to distinguish 'myth' from 'history' in predominantly oral societies has been astutely pointed out by Fentress and Wickham (1992:82), who observe that: 'There is no inherent incompatibility between mythology and genealogy, or, indeed, between either of the two and true narrative history [...]. As a rule, oral tradition combines mythology, genealogy and narrative history rather than holding them apart.' I will show how essential this understanding is for an interpretation of social memory in Toraja.

Tonkin's studies of the forms taken by oral history among the Jlaos of Liberia shows how – as in many West African societies – they have a strongly performative element. Specialised musicians and praise-singers are the bearers of local history, shaping and reshaping their renderings of the past according to the occasion and the audience. Among the Toraja, too, some stories of the past have been kept alive by their performance in ritual settings, and also show signs of adaptation by different narrators in different areas. Another typical feature in Jlaos' mythic accounts of their origins – which likewise bears comparison with the style of Toraja accounts – is that they are structured by the record of people's movements through a landscape, with much topographical detail built in to the narrative. Such progressions through a landscape (which in the Toraja case are generally associated with the sites of origin-houses), are such a distinctive characteristic of oral historical narratives in Austronesian societies that Fox (1997:8) has introduced the term 'topogeny' to describe them. He defines a topogeny as 'the recitation of an ordered sequence of place names', representing 'a projected externalization of memories that can be lived in as well as thought about.' It is a form which

can serve a variety of functions – relating migrations, establishing claims to precedence, explaining the origins and transmission of objects – but it has not, until recently, been identified as a distinct means for the ordering and transmission of local knowledge in Austronesian societies. In a broader sense, however, intimate connection to landscape has been more deeply and widely typical of human communities: Fentress and Wickham (1992:113-4) remark on how ‘peasant’ memory tends to display recurrent patterns cross-culturally, including ‘the constantly recurring importance of local geography as a structure for remembrance’.

In thinking about the connections between oral, written, performative and other genres of conveying historical knowledge, Tonkin (1992:121) concludes that:

there is practical history as there is practical reason and through it the past informs the present. Trying to reconstruct ‘what really happened’ in the distant past is a tiny proportion of historical action and discourse in any community.

It is not a matter here of belittling, still less of abandoning, the historian’s project, the fascination with ‘what really happened’; that in any case might be a cultural impossibility for many of us. In an area like South Sulawesi one must also take into account the fact that people have their own very significant indigenous tradition of historical writing, developed from the seventeenth century. The source materials it provides are invaluable to modern historians, though unfortunately for our purposes, Toraja society remained peripheral to this tradition. But as anthropologists we may rightly seek the broadest possible definition of ‘historical action’. There is much to be learned about the workings of any society from an understanding of how the past is put to use in the present.

The inclusion of individual narratives and memories is also important to the development of a richer and more nuanced picture of the past. Larson (2000) has vividly made this point in his exploration of the effects of the slave trade on processes of state formation in Madagascar from the late eighteenth century – concerns which have some resonances with my own in the following chapters, for Toraja too still carry historical memories of a brief but intense period when they were threatened with enslavement, when some of their own chiefs willingly became local instruments of a commercial network of trade in human beings that was at one time spread across the archipelago. Like the rulers of emergent kingdoms in highland Madagascar, those chiefs too sought to translate their profits from the trade into an expansion of political power, though unlike the Merina case as it turned out, their efforts in this direction came to little. Larson points out that certain dimensions of the history of enslavement in Africa, especially its very variable forms and their diverse impacts on different societies over time, have tended to be obscured

in the abstractions and statistics of studies on the large scale. He also argues that a preference for written, European sources over African oral memories has impoverished reconstructions of Africa's traumatic past, and that every personal narrative of enslavement, however fragmentary, is important in breaking down the anonymity both of victims and perpetrators, an anonymity which has only been perpetuated in macro-studies. Larson therefore argues as a matter of urgency that professional historians, or what he calls 'guild history', 'must engage popular memories and draw from their interpretations of the past, contextualizing those interpretations with other forms of available evidence' (Larson 2000:xvii). From this perspective, history and memory must be viewed as interdependent, '*complementary* – not equivalent – representations of the past' (Larson 2000:283; italics in original).

The aim here is not so much to distinguish what, in these narratives, might represent a 'kernel' of historical truth, though I do not deny that there may be one. Some oral testimony can in fact be shown to be historically accurate to a surprisingly high degree, like the Rotinese genealogies and oral narratives which Fox (1971b) was able to compare with written Dutch accounts dating back to the mid-seventeenth century. But even here, as Fox reminds us, the concurrence of 'facts' in no way determines the meaning that may be drawn from an account of historical events, which depends on who is telling the story, within what framework, and to what end, so that 'events are meaningless without their explanatory structures' (Fox 1971b:70). Moreover, it is essential to recognise the similarities that exist between the rhetorical devices, and the political intentions, of written histories in Western cultures (or more generally in nation-states) and those produced by cultures with predominantly oral traditions. These parallels are convincingly demonstrated by Peel (1984) in his analysis of historical traditions among the Yoruba of Nigeria. He shows how strongly mythical themes, such as the 'myth of destiny', shape the writing of national histories too (De Gaulle's conceptualisation of 'La France', for example). No history is free of myth, if we understand by this those 'persuasive schemes of meaning' which provide the framework within which fact and argument are presented (Peel 1984:128). And often enough, to sift 'fact' from 'myth' is an unrealisable goal. Writing on questions of truth and proof among the people of Lamalera, in eastern Indonesia, Barnes (1995:259) comments that, while he is convinced that there is a historical truth in the migration narratives that clans tell to account for their present locations, 'the "proofs" available to me are no sounder or different than theirs'. Whatever their historical truth may be, the stories he collected were also clearly carried by a pattern of stereotypical elements which recur widely throughout eastern Indonesia. At some point in a particular story, one may find one has succeeded in 'crossing the bridge between myth and oral history' to arrive at a point firmly linked with modern chronology (Barnes 1995:256). Yet at the

same time, legend and myth still have the ability to 'come to life' and exert a powerful influence on present-day events and decisions.

Rather than debating degrees of historical accuracy, then, my purpose will be to try and illuminate how Toraja have positioned themselves in relation to their neighbours, as well as the bearing that accounts of the past may have on internal relations in Toraja society today. In this sense any account, even if it appears not to fit with verifiable historical fact, may still offer a certain kind of meaning.<sup>1</sup> At first I was puzzled by the apparent fusion of history and myth in the accounts I collected, and the ability of my informants to engage in heated debate about the details of accounts that to me were clearly mythical, while at the same time infusing accounts of what might be historical events with mythical elements or what appeared to be folk tale motifs. Some informants elided and confused the details of separate historical incidents which happened hundreds of years apart.<sup>2</sup> On other occasions, people debated which myths should be regarded as 'true myths', and which should be seen as 'just stories'. But on repeated occasions I came to understand that the reasons these stories remained alive had much to do with the purposes to which they could be put in the present. They are often used as a means to establish precedence, either within Toraja or even in relation to outsiders. This is one of the reasons why so many variants of stories exist, so that one could never supply a 'definitive' version; on the contrary, different versions are maintained in order to press the competing claims of different areas and houses. It is interesting in this context to note the perceptive comments made by Chabot (1996:122, note 53) in his study of Makassar oral traditions, for his remarks say a lot about the nature of oral history and the conditions in which it is likely to be recounted:

Oral traditions are always fragmentary. Each kin group counts only a few men or women who know anything about the history of their kin group. Their knowledge is limited, however, to a few events, and only those events which prove the greatness of the group. A regular narrative can never be obtained. Only in a concrete difficult situation does one of the most important members of the group tell how formerly in a similar situation the solution was found, and how, in his opinion, the conditions at present should be viewed and the difficulties solved. The narrator in so doing chooses his words so casually and easily that it is clear that he does not regard himself as tied to a certain text or even to details. On the contrary, one receives the impression that he improvises and illuminates the present-day state of affairs by the aid of a few data, just as seems to him best for his group at that

<sup>1</sup> The work of Portelli (1981a, 1981b, 1990) offers many sensitive insights about the kinds of truth which oral histories may present to us.

<sup>2</sup> Pelras (1977:253) describes the same kind of 'telescoping' of different time periods in oral accounts he collected in Bugis areas; compare Peel (1984:119) on how stereotypy in narrative forms may facilitate the merging of distinct episodes over time.

moment. At the same time, he seems to be completely convinced of the 'objective' correctness of his representation of the historic facts.

This reminds us that the context in which a narrative is elicited may have a powerful bearing on how it is told. At the same time, Toraja memories are not always so casual and fluid; ritual poetry has been an area of the greatest cultural elaboration and experts in it have been able to commit thousands of lines to memory, so that I believe certain individuals would be capable of presenting a more or less fixed form of a narrative on different occasions.

In presenting a historical sketch I rely heavily on the thesis of Terry Bigalke (1981), whose impressive scholarship has added so much to our detailed knowledge of Toraja social history.<sup>3</sup> Given the difficulties which I have encountered in deriving any coherent picture of the past from the conflicting and – to an outsider – often highly confusing accounts which most informants have to offer, my admiration for Bigalke's achievement remains profound. At the same time, I have also tried to come to terms with the way in which Toraja tell their history, with its strong admixtures of what strikes the outsider as myth and legend. If Bigalke's work on the Toraja past describes, further than one could have thought possible, the events that a historian can recognise as having 'really happened', I shall try to show how some of the accounts I was given may appear to fit, or lack fit, within that picture, and account for the strong element of folk tale by means of which the memory of past events appears to have been distilled into a durable set of images. I am especially interested to trace how houses themselves, and the genealogies that belong to them, are used as a vehicle for historical memory in Toraja society – a theme that will be developed over the next few chapters. Local oral accounts make clear how real historical events have had sharp impacts on the rising and falling fortunes of founding origin houses and their branch houses. Here, as elsewhere in Indonesia, important houses have frequently been burned and destroyed in times of war and civil disturbance. Sometimes the descendants have eventually managed to rebuild them, while at other times they have not. Thus, the way that houses relate to each other (which I depict in terms of general principles, in Part Two of this book) has often been dramatically affected by local historical developments. Before developing this theme, however, I want to situate the Toraja highlands more broadly within the landscape of the Austronesian world in general, as well as within the more detailed picture that is just now emerging of the history of South Sulawesi in particular.

<sup>3</sup> The thesis has now been published by Singapore University Press (Bigalke 2005).

*Toraja in the Austronesian world*

Recent studies have greatly enhanced our understanding of the historical dispersion of Austronesian-speaking peoples, and of the genetic, linguistic and cultural connections between them (see especially Bellwood 1978, 1985; Bellwood, Fox and Tryon 1995). Austronesian languages are spoken across half the world's circumference, from Madagascar to Easter Island, and constitute the largest family of languages on earth. Over 1000 Austronesian languages are spoken by 270 million people, representing about a quarter of the world's surviving languages. These include nearly all of the languages of island Southeast Asia, and coastal pockets of New Guinea, as well as those of Micronesia and Polynesia, parts of the Malay peninsula, South Vietnam, and Taiwan. Austronesian speakers, of basically Mongoloid physical type, came originally from the mainland in the area that today is southern China, and migrated into island Southeast Asia through Taiwan. Linguistic reconstructions point strongly to Taiwan as the original 'homeland' or dispersal centre of Proto-Austronesian, which existed by about 6000 years ago. Three of the four highest-order subgroups of Austronesian continue to be spoken here, while the fourth, Proto-Malayo-Polynesian, became the ancestor of all the Austronesian languages spoken outside of Taiwan, and must have been carried by a small population who left the island and moved south into the Philippines around 3000 BC. From there, further dispersal into Sulawesi, Borneo and the Moluccas took place in the late third and second millennia BC, and thence on into eastern Indonesia and Oceania, as well as west into the Malay Peninsula and Vietnam some time after 1000 BC. Of course the Austronesians were not the first people to settle in island Southeast Asia, for Sulawesi and other islands of the archipelago have been inhabited since Paleolithic times. Glover's excavations in the rock shelter of Leang Burung 2 near Maros, north of Makassar, yielded dates between 19,000 and 31,000 years ago, with the implication that a more primitive tool assemblage recovered by Bartstra from Cabbéngé in the Walennaé river valley, in the centre of the peninsula (which were unfortunately not in dateable deposits) should be considerably older.<sup>4</sup> These original settlers of the region are known to archaeologists as the Toaleans; their remains have recently been studied by Bulbeck, Pasqua and Di Lello (2000). The evidence suggests that the Toaleans hunted, fished and gathered, occupying the landscape at relatively high densities along the south coast of South Sulawesi, and had developed a commensal relationship with the Celebes boar that would have bordered on domestication.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See Glover 1984a, 1984b; Bellwood 1985:65.

<sup>5</sup> There is growing evidence from New Guinea and Maluku that taro, sugar cane and sago



Reconstructions of Proto-Austronesian clearly show that its speakers were cultivators. Initially cultivating colder climate species such as rice, millet and sugar cane, as they moved south into more tropical zones they began to cultivate taro, yams, and other tubers, breadfruit, bananas, coconuts and sago. They had pigs, and probably dogs and chickens, and they supplemented their agricultural activities with hunting, fishing and collecting shellfish. They had tools of bone, wood and shell, and had mastered a number of different fishing techniques, as well as the making of pottery and the sailing of outrigger canoes (Pawley and Green 1975; Blust 1976; Bellwood 1985:114-5). Significantly, terms reconstructed for the Malayo-Polynesian subgroups include several that relate to house construction, including those for ridge-pole, rafter, thatch, house post, storage rack above the hearth, notched log ladder, hearth, and public building. These suggest that the Austronesians already built their houses on piles, with pitched roofs and other features still recognisable in many Southeast Asian dwellings today (Blust 1976; Waterson 1990). Although history proves the Austronesians to have been extraordinarily adventurous colonisers and traders, and their technologies would have given them an edge over Australoid hunter-gatherers, it is improbable that they simply displaced through violence already existing populations. The high degree of genetic admixture in the region today tells us that the groups assimilated with each other; Bulbeck proposes (in contrast to the general picture suggested by Bellwood) that in Sulawesi the Toaleans more likely absorbed the newcomers, rather than the reverse.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest Austronesian settlers of Sulawesi, then, came from the north. However, over time the languages of South Sulawesi came to form a distinct subgroup, which shows some links with, but also a separate development from, those of Central Sulawesi. This group has been demonstrated to have such a close relation with the Tamanic languages of central Borneo as to justify placing them together as a single subgroup (Adelaar 1994, 1995:84-7). The Tamanic languages show phonological developments in common with Bugis in particular; together these may be seen as forming a separate branch within the South Sulawesi language group. Adelaar proposes that the split between Bugis and Tamanic must have occurred in the distant past with the migration of the original Tamanic speakers from South Sulawesi to Borneo.<sup>7</sup>

were all originally domesticated there, then spread westward through the islands as far as Luzon, though at present there is insufficient evidence to say whether the Toaleans might have been cultivators of any of these, in addition to foraging (Bulbeck, personal communication, April 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Detailed examination of the anatomical features evident in early human remains from South Sulawesi, and their implications, can be found in Bulbeck (2004).

<sup>7</sup> On the grouping of South Sulawesi languages, see also Mills (1975), Sirk (1975), and Grimes and Grimes (1987). A survey of linguistic studies is provided by Noorduyun (1991).



The Austronesians, then, in the words of Bellwood, Tryon and Fox (1995:4) should be thought of as sharing 'branching but not sealed lines of common ancestry spanning the past 6000 years or so'. This common ancestry is reflected not only in language but in cultural patterns. The fascination of this region for the comparative ethnographer lies in the many common threads of identity which are woven through its extraordinary diversity of cultural practices, giving rise to certain cultural 'themes' that recur widely throughout the archipelago and which point to a common heritage. Over time as I have grown more aware of these underlying themes, I have come to see Toraja society in a comparative light more fully than was possible for me at first. This has become part of my efforts to make sense of Toraja cultural patterns, and where relevant I shall use comparative data to illuminate these connections. Ideas about the nature of power in the cosmos, and of vitality and life processes, the use of botanical metaphors to talk of kinship relations and social processes, and the possibility of seeing Austronesian patterns of social organization as a set of linked variations (Fox 1985), at the heart of which we find the house as the focus of organization – these are some of the distinctive themes which, recurring across the archipelago, enable us to interpret Toraja society as a distinctive, and yet in many ways characteristic, member of the Austronesian family.

### *Naming the Toraja*

Bigalke, whose study begins with the 1870s, puts the name 'Tana Toraja' (Toraja Land) in inverted commas, and reminds us that Sa'dan highlanders' adoption of the name Toraja does not predate the 1930s. The name itself, like that of so many peoples who have become the object of ethnographic study, turns out to have been given them by outsiders. Though tourist brochures have sometimes combined a false association with the Indonesian term *raja* ('king', 'ruler') with reference to myths about individuals who descended from the sky, to make bombastic claims about Tana Toraja as the 'Land of Heavenly Kings', the name Toraja in fact derives from the Bugis *to ri aja*, or 'people of the uplands', as opposed to *to luu* ('people of the sea', or 'coastal people').<sup>8</sup> This term was taken up by the Dutch missionaries Nicholas Adriani and Albert Kruyt, who came to work in the Poso area of Central Sulawesi in 1892. They applied it to the peoples of Central Sulawesi, whom they divided into two main linguistic groupings, the 'East' or 'Bare'e' Toraja and the 'West' Toraja. The Sa'dan highlanders of South Sulawesi they called the 'South' or

<sup>8</sup> From whence the name Luwu' is also said to derive (Hamonic 1987:12).

'Tae' Toraja.<sup>9</sup> It seems that Kruyt decided on the term 'Toraja' as an alternative to the derogatory *alfuru* ('heathen', derived from a Ternate word meaning literally 'wilderness, forest') which up to that point had been borrowed by European explorers to refer loosely to the unconverted in eastern Indonesia generally (Aragon 2000:52). However, links between the peoples of Central Sulawesi and the Sa'dan Toraja are more remote than these labels would suggest. By the time Adriani and Kruyt came to write the third volume of their work on the Bare'e Toraja, they had decided that the Sa'dan Toraja were culturally and linguistically distinct from the Toraja of Central Sulawesi, and that in fact they were more closely related to the Bugis and Makassar of South Sulawesi. The position is made clear in two notes in the *Adatrechtbundels* (Vol. 17:129 and Vol. 33:369). In the latter (1918) Adriani writes: 'Indeed, I am of the opinion that the Sa'dan Toraja are not closely linked with our (that is, the Bare'e) Toraja; their language has much more of a Buginese character than the Eastern and Western Toraja languages.' More recent linguistic studies confirm this conclusion. In fact Sa'dan Toraja shares more cognates (about 50%) with Bugis than Bugis does with Makassar (about 40%).<sup>10</sup>

Ironically, it is only among the Sa'dan that the name 'Toraja' has stuck. In post-colonial times, Central Sulawesi peoples have rejected the label and now prefer to be known by more distinctive local names, while in the South Sulawesi highlands a new ethnic identity has been crafted under the name 'Toraja'.<sup>11</sup> The terms Bare'e and Tae' have not lasted either. They were taken from the word for 'no' in the respective languages; this curiously negative classification is no longer appreciated by the people concerned. The emer-

<sup>9</sup> See Adriani and Kruyt 1912-14, III:1; A. Kruyt 1923-24, 1938; A. and J. Kruyt 1922.

<sup>10</sup> Grimes and Grimes 1987:19. The distinctiveness of the Makassar language leads to the conclusion that Proto-Makassar was the first language to split off the main line of descent of the South Sulawesi languages; at that time its speakers may have been living in the coastal area north of Pare-Pare, where the lower reaches of the Sa'dan River then flowed into the Strait of Makassar (Mills 1975). Pelras's (1996:41) idea that Makassar speakers, having migrated into the south of the peninsula, might have remained geographically cut off for a long period by a large inland sea, is deduced from descriptions found in the La Galigo epic cycle. On the contrary Macknight (1993:35), wary of the 'seductiveness' of using La Galigo too literally to reconstruct the past, insists that 'the concept of an "age of I La Galigo" must be strenuously resisted'. Caldwell has put the idea to the test by having geological core samples taken from the western shores of Lake Tempe which confirm definitively that the lake has been stable in size for thousands of years (Ian Caldwell, personal communication, September 1999). Scenarios for the diversification of the South Sulawesi languages will likely continue to be rethought and refined as new excavations yield fresh archaeological data (such as pottery sequences) to integrate with the evidence from historical linguistics.

<sup>11</sup> In the Toraja language, 'y' often replaces the Indonesian 'j', and in spoken Toraja the name is pronounced 'Toraya'. However, since for national and administrative purposes, the name Toraja is now standard usage, and Toraja people themselves use the two more or less interchangeably, I have used this spelling.

gence of ethnic consciousness had a great deal to do with the colonial experience. The label 'Toraja', Bigalke (1981:16) points out, 'was a conceptual unity imposed on the highlanders along with boundaries, taxes, and schools, which helped to change their view of themselves.' Approaching the Sa'dan highlands through the old Bugis kingdom of Luwu' to the east, the Dutch were influenced to define 'the Toraja lands' as a dependency of Luwu' (Bigalke 1981:120). Under Dutch administration, the region was joined to the *afdeeling* or administrative unit of Luwu', from which it was separated only after World War II. Within this unit, the Toraja area itself was split into two subdistricts or *onderafdelingen*, Ma'kale and Rantepao. Since Indonesian Independence became a reality in 1950, 'Tana Toraja', or 'Toraja Land' has been the name given to the present sub-provincial district (*kabupaten* or 'regency').

*Intimacies and enmities: Toraja relations with the Bugis*

As the close linguistic relationship might suggest, Toraja and Bugis cultures share more underlying similarities than might at first sight be supposed. These would undoubtedly have been more obvious in the distant past, and especially prior to the early seventeenth century, before South Sulawesi lowlanders accepted Islam. Paiva, a Portuguese traveller who visited the Makassarese of Siang (Pangkajene) in 1544, witnessed an elaborate and festive funeral, evidently taking place in two stages (as is still customary among the Toraja), with the corpse being wrapped in cloths and placed in a wooden coffin in a way which sounds strongly reminiscent of former Toraja practice:

The custom of these people was that when a person died they kept him in the house for three months in a great arc of wood [...] and they put in it all the rich cloths, *patola*, and other fine white cloths, and gold, according to the status which each possessed [...] At the end of this period [...] the coffin is placed on a great wagon in which they carry it to the place where it is buried [...] At the burial there are great celebrations and games with no mourning; they eat and drink at this burial as we do in Portugal for weddings.<sup>12</sup>

At a later date, the adoption of Islam led to a great simplifying of funeral practices in the lowlands, and it is tempting to speculate that all of the ritual elaboration formerly vested in the funeral (with its implications for social display) subsequently became displaced onto weddings. These are now *par excel-*

<sup>12</sup> See Jacobs 1966. *Patola* are double-ikat silk textiles produced in Gujerat and traded into Indonesia in exchange for spices from at least the fifteenth century, perhaps much earlier (Guy 1987). As a luxury item in Indonesian societies they are treasured as heirlooms and are frequently deployed in rituals.

lence the arena for status competition among lowlanders, whereas in Toraja weddings were traditionally very modest occasions, and funerals remain the most highly elaborated social events.<sup>13</sup> Hamonic (1987), in his wide-ranging study of Bugis texts and the liturgies of Bugis transvestite ritual specialists (the *bissu*), has also revealed a number of similarities between Bugis and Toraja culture, myths and traditions. Many details of the rites described, for example, in the famous Bugis epic *La Galigo*, have no parallels in current Bugis practice, but show great similarities to still extant Toraja ritual.<sup>14</sup> All of these former similarities have tended to become obscured as Islam came to mark a distinction between lowlanders and highlanders, perhaps most deeply felt in terms of a shift of emotional attitudes towards the pig, which remains an essential feature of the Toraja prestige economy.<sup>15</sup> A number of historical incidents involving aggressive incursions of Bugis into the Toraja highlands have become enshrined in oral memory in Toraja, where, I shall argue, they have come to serve a certain purpose in defining 'Toraja' identity through opposition to their neighbours. This feeling of opposition has been reactivated by more recent hostilities – including the slave trade of the late nineteenth century and the guerrilla activities of the 1950s – until it has come to obscure the long periods in which peaceful co-existence, cooperation and trade were the norm.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the Toraja nobility of several areas have

<sup>13</sup> Millar (1989) provides a most illuminating analysis of Bugis weddings as 'rituals of social location'.

<sup>14</sup> These include buffalo sacrifices, kickfighting, a kind of small drum described in the epic as being used by the *bissu*, also used by Toraja priests (*to minaa*) and priestesses (*to burake*), and details of ritual performance paralleled in the Toraja *maro* rite (Hamonic 1987:36-7).

<sup>15</sup> It is curious that the Toraja word for Muslims, *sallang* (said to be a corruption of 'Islam') is identical to another (though apparently etymologically unrelated) term meaning 'enemy'; Tammu and Van der Veen (1972:513), in their dictionary of Toraja, give as an illustrative sentence: *sisallangraka nene'mu tu bai, mumokara ungkandei tu duku' bai?* ('Were your ancestors enemies of the pig, that you should refuse to eat pork?'). Historically, attitudes to the pig have tended to be the defining feature of the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims in Sulawesi. All the same, it would be a mistake to see Toraja-Bugis opposition as having been intrinsically religious, since it was only in the 1950s, when Islam became a focus of South Sulawesi's guerrilla movement, that it began to be cast in those terms.

<sup>16</sup> These points are also made by Pelras (1996:16), who notes the close ties which have existed historically between Toraja and Luwu', as well as other Bugis areas. He observes: 'A number of seignories [domains of chiefs] in north Wajo' and in Sidenreng are even said by the Bugis themselves to have been created some time around the fourteenth century by Toraja aristocrats from Sangalla'. Steven Druce (1999) has analysed *lontara*' (palm leaf manuscripts) from Sidenreng describing a myth of its founding by seven brothers from Sangalla', later joined by an eighth, their eldest brother. So far as I have been able to ascertain, people in Sangalla' are not aware of this story, not that this necessarily detracts from its significance. Druce comments: 'Whether or not one accepts the historicity of the tradition of the brothers from Sangalla', it certainly suggests that Sidenreng had important ties with Sangalla', perhaps through trade and marriage, and that the origin of this relationship predates the acceptance of Islam' (personal communication).

intermarried over long periods with the ruling families of lowland kingdoms, forming ties that are still acknowledged by both highlanders and lowlanders alike. These areas include most notably the Tallu Lembangna, a federation of the 'Three Domains' of Ma'kale, Sangalla' and Mengkendek (the only part of Toraja which by the colonial period had achieved any degree of political integration), as well as Kesu'.

In this process of mutual influence, the Toraja aristocracy appears to have made use of certain ideas which in the lowlands had already been put to use to legitimate the development of more centralised kingdoms from around the thirteenth century. One such shared idea was the notion that nobles had 'white' blood (compare Pelras 1996:169); another was the adoption of founding myths about supernatural ancestors. In the Toraja case, these are couples, of whom the man is said to have descended from the sky, while the woman rose out of a river pool; they founded important origin-houses and were adopted by local people as rulers. These beings (about whom more will be said below) are called *to manurung* ('ones who descended') by the Bugis, *tu manurung* by the Makassar, and *to manurun* in Toraja. The political significance (both past and present) of these myths among the Bugis has been discussed by Noorduyn (1965), Mattulada (1978) and Zainal Abidin (1984). A *to manurung* story serves as the starting point for almost all indigenous accounts of Cina, Bone, Soppeng, Gowa, and the other traditional polities of South Sulawesi, but the original instance is provided in Luwu' by the La Galigo epic cycle, which describes how the divine Batara Guru descended from heaven to establish the first dynasty in Luwu', and married a woman who rose from the underworld (*to tompo*'), Wé Nyili' Timo' ('Eastern Wink'), also known as Tompoé ri Busa Empong, 'She who Rose from the Foam of the Waves'.<sup>17</sup> The pairing of upper- and underworld beings, male and female, sky and water, is thus clearly an original feature of the myths, which the Toraja have also retained. It is in fact a widespread Austronesian motif; it occurs for instance in a number of Malay chronicles, where it serves a similar legitimating function.<sup>18</sup> It has been suggested that Toraja borrowed these ideas from their neighbours, but given their authentically Austronesian status, we can equally well regard the Toraja variant as a genuinely indigenous, rather than

<sup>17</sup> Andaya 1984b:23. According to La Galigo's genealogy of the deities, she was also Batara Guru's first cousin (Zainal Abidin 1974:162). At the close of the epic cycle, the descendants of the gods all return to the upper and lower worlds, leaving only one couple and their child on earth, and the gates between the earth and the upper and lower worlds are closed. The origins of rulership in Luwu' are thus only indirectly linked to the heroes of La Galigo, but the centrality of the motif is clear.

<sup>18</sup> Ras 1968. These chronicles also include another motif familiar in Toraja myths of origin, the appearance of a woman from inside a bamboo. Since bamboo grows out of the ground, Ras (1968:94-7) interprets this as another kind of association with the earth or nether world.



Map 5. South Sulawesi, showing places mentioned in Chapter I

imported, theme. In a contrary movement, Toraja depict themselves in myth and legend as being the original ancestors of lowland royalty, and make a Toraja protagonist the source of ethnic differences such as the Muslim prohibition on pork observed by the Bugis. These stories (which are not untypical of regions on the margins of more powerful polities) will be examined in more detail later.

In spite of their distance from centres of power, the Sa'dan highlanders were never entirely isolated, and their links with lowland South Sulawesi undoubtedly have a long history. Bronze finds from coastal areas of South Sulawesi, dating to circa 300-100 BC, point to the fact that the island itself was already at that period part of a trade network which extended through the archipelago and beyond into mainland Southeast Asia (Pelras 1996:47). Three bronze Buddhist statues of the 7th-8th centuries AD, found at Takalar (also on the south coast), suggest the presence of Tamil or perhaps Malay traders from Srivijaya in South Sumatra, who may have come to the region in search of gold, iron, or forest products (Bougas 1998:88). Much new evidence of long-distance trade in the first millennium AD has been found in recent excavations in Luwu'.<sup>19</sup> From the ninth or tenth century AD, Chinese ceramics were reaching South Sulawesi, probably via the Philippines, becoming especially plentiful from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries (Hadimuljono and Macknight 1983; Bulbeck 1996-97; Bulbeck and Caldwell 2002). At least from the fifteenth century, other luxury items such as Indian silks found their way along the trading routes and far inland, where they became the precious heirlooms of aristocratic houses. Gold panned from the rivers of central Sulawesi, forest products such as resins and sandalwood, and iron from the plentiful deposits of iron ore and nickelous iron (*pamor*) to be found north of Toraja, in Seko and near present-day Malili at the head of the Gulf of Bone, were among the products most sought after in exchange.<sup>20</sup> Javanese smiths in particular especially valued Sulawesi iron because of its admixture of heavy metals, which enabled them to develop the skilful techniques by which they produced the most superb laminated and pattern-welded blades.<sup>21</sup> The forgers of Seko and Luwu' were also familiar with these techniques, and their swords

<sup>19</sup> Bulbeck and Caldwell 2002. This includes iron and a glass bead dated to the early centuries AD at Sabbang Loang, and a first millennium AD site (Katue, near Cerekang) with local iron smelting and imported glass beads and gold, as well as the presence of Majapahit Javanese settlers at the fourteenth-century centre of Luwu', Pattimang Tua, at the head of the Gulf of Bone, and abundant imports of ceramics at numerous sites, beginning in the twelfth century.

<sup>20</sup> Supplies of sandalwood became exhausted by the early seventeenth century (Pelras 1977:238).

<sup>21</sup> Bronson 1992:73; Bulbeck and Caldwell 2002:33. Although Java is not without deposits of iron ore, the Javanese seem never to have produced any iron of their own, but have always imported it from other places (Bronson 1992:89).



were traded throughout the archipelago, being much sought after by the Malays (Zerner 1981:97). Toraja themselves were prepared to pay high prices in cloth, buffalo, or Portuguese or Dutch silver coins for the swords of Seko smiths, the *la'bo' to dolo* ('swords of the ancestors'), which are still treated as ancestral heirlooms (Zerner 1981:98). Toraja traders also travelled to the lowlands to exchange surplus rice for fish and salt. At a later date, coffee became a significant export from the highlands. Coffee may have been introduced to Sulawesi by Arab traders even before the Dutch began to encourage its cultivation, perhaps in the early seventeenth century, though the evidence is suggestive rather than conclusive.<sup>22</sup> Its cultivation became greatly expanded only in the nineteenth century, however. Bigalke (1981:67) has shown how the export of coffee from Toraja, control of which became the object of wars fought by rival lowland powers, became linked in the late nineteenth century with the development of a trade in Toraja slaves; when coffee prices fell, the trade in slaves from the highlands increased. These developments will be further described below.

If trade routes provided threads of connection with the lowlands, it remains true that highlanders and lowlanders lived in different political worlds. Most Toraja lived in small villages which were often at war with each other, and a predominant memory of older times is that people rarely dared to travel far afield, even within the highlands, for fear of headhunters. Clearly there were some important consequences for Sa'dan highlanders of living on the margins of more powerful and centralized polities. When I began my research, the history of South Sulawesi had barely begun to be written, but in the last few years, important new research has helped to fill many gaps in our knowledge, and it is now possible to paint a much clearer picture of the development of those Bugis and Makassar polities which from time to time impinged upon the Sa'dan highlands. These were the polities that had the power to interfere, to varying degrees, in the affairs of the highlanders: it was to them that at different periods, parts of the highlands were obliged to pay at least nominal tribute, and they who eventually came to view Toraja as a source of slaves. The Bugis kingdoms also provided the nearest available models from which Toraja leaders might have drawn inspiration in their efforts to consolidate political power – limited as these efforts appear to have been. What was the nature of these lowland kingdoms? How were they formed? And how may we account for the absence of political centralization in the highlands, when over several hundred years, their lowland neighbours had been steadily drawn into larger and larger political entities?

<sup>22</sup> Bigalke 1981:30-1. Certainly the Toraja word for coffee, *kawa* or *kaa*, appears to derive from the Arabic *qahwah*, and not (like Malay *kopi*) from the Dutch *koffie*.

*Marginality and resistance: political relations between highlands and lowlands*

Tracing the earliest rise of centralised kingdoms in lowland South Sulawesi is a task made more difficult by the sparsity of early records. Even to establish the date at which an Indic-based Bugis script was developed is a matter of some speculation: Caldwell, after cautious assessment of the available evidence, now proposes a date some time in the second half of the fourteenth century. Recent archaeological investigations have been fruitfully coupled with close analysis of texts such as the Bugis court chronicles, to build a fuller picture of developments (Caldwell 1988; Macknight 1993; Pelras 1996). There is also the famous Bugis epic of La Galigo, which had a previous, oral existence and describes a political geography very different from that of the time when it came to be written down (from the late seventeenth century).<sup>23</sup> The Bugis kingdoms of Luwu' and Cina both feature prominently in the La Galigo narrative; but the world conjured in this remarkable work of literature is at least partially fanciful, and most scholars are wary of treating its evidence too literally. The court chronicles were written in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Their accounts of the earliest rulers include large elements of myth and conspicuously lack the anecdotal detail which surrounds the figures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These latter persons can be cross-referenced between genealogies, which also helps to confirm their existence, whereas this is not possible for any of the fourteenth century individuals. After AD 1400, many more individuals are recorded, and the historicity of rulers becomes much easier to establish because of the evidence the chronicles provide. Bugis and Makassar texts are dominated by genealogies, which provide records of first marriages as well as descent; vassal lists are also important clues to the growth of kingdoms through the incorporation of subjugated domains. These domains, in turn, had their own lists of vassal settlements, suggesting a structure of nesting units within units, hierarchically linked in three ascending tiers of settlement, domain and kingdom. The smaller units kept their own leaders and *adat* councils and appear to have regarded the ruler as principally an arbitrator in case of disputes. The many vertical bonds between leaders and clients, which connect people in lowland societies, must have provided one of the means by which larger entities could be formed. A point of par-

<sup>23</sup> On La Galigo, see Zainal Abidin (1974), Kern (1989) and Nurhayati Rahman, Anil Hukma and Idwar Anwar (2003). This is almost certainly the longest and most elaborate epic cycle ever created (Macknight 2003:351 note 4). Political devolution in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto has produced a new surge of interest in La Galigo, as cultural heritage not only of South Sulawesi but of the world. The latter volume (the product of an international seminar held in 2002) proudly attests to this. International interest was also aroused by the world premiere in Singapore, in March 2004, of the theatrical production 'I La Galigo', produced by renowned American choreographer Robert Wilson in collaboration with Bugis scholars and artists.

ticular interest is that, unlike in Java, Bali or the Malay states, there is almost no evidence of Indianization in South Sulawesi.<sup>24</sup> The kingdoms that formed in South Sulawesi must therefore be seen as a genuinely indigenous development, drawing on Austronesian rather than Indic social and political concepts. Another distinctive feature, which Bugis principalities shared with many early Malay kingdoms, is that they initially developed in the absence of large urban centres (Macknight 1975:127-9), though there is evidence for dense concentrations of population by the sixteenth century, not only in Makassar and the surrounding fortified palace centres of the Makassar overseers (Bulbeck 1998), but also in Luwu' (Bulbeck and Caldwell 2002:76), and quite possibly in other centres such as Bone. According to Reid's estimates, Makassar in the seventeenth century could boast a population as high as 160,000 (Reid 1980:238).

At what point we can realistically speak of a 'state' in South Sulawesi is partly a matter of definition. In writing of these kingdoms, I have favoured words such as 'polity' and 'principality', rather than 'state', to describe them, while I have opted for the term 'domain' as possibly the most accurate label for even the most centralized political entity in Toraja. Caldwell (1995) and Bougas (1998) both suggest that the early Bugis kingdoms were more like 'complex chiefdoms', organized on the basis of a ranked kinship system. There is weak evidence for any centralised administrative structure or supra-kinship level of organization in these early principalities. Vassal domains appear to have retained a large degree of autonomy in daily affairs, and the ruler's demands on the people were intermittent rather than continuous. Relations of vassalage, or bilateral agreements with a central power, were sometimes cast in terms of adoption, or kinship relations such as elder sibling-younger sibling, and were often reinforced by political marriages. Descent was traced bilaterally; though male rulers predominate, women were not excluded from office, and queens feature quite prominently in Bugis history. In such instances, the high rank of women rulers clearly overrode considerations of gender. Caldwell shows that the tracing of descent through women was of great importance in establishing eligibility for high office, in spite of a strong patrilineal bias in the actual appointments of rulers. The importance attached to military prowess in these perpetually warring kingdoms, all the same, would have tended to favour males (Caldwell 1995:408).

One thing seems clear: once people had taken the first steps toward cen-

<sup>24</sup> Although Errington (1989) assumes that South Sulawesi states were 'Indic', this view has incurred strong criticism (see in particular Caldwell 1991, 1995:403). Evidence for Indianization in other parts of Southeast Asia includes the use of Sanskrit or Pali vocabulary and inscriptions, the adoption of an Indic model of kingship and social order, and the influence of a Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, often reflected in the construction of monumental architecture, as well as in the performing arts (see for example Lansing 1983; Gesick 1983).

tralization, they became much more vulnerable to further integration. Anyone mounting an attack against a domain which already had a single recognized ruler had only to capture the obedience of that person for the whole area to fall to the invader. Once some ambitious chiefs had expanded the areas under their control, either through force or the threat of force, other areas came under pressure to unite if only in order to protect themselves from the same fate. At any rate, political consolidation was a long-drawn-out process, extending over several hundred years in which warfare appears as a regular feature. Not until the sixteenth century, with the rise of the twin Makassar kingdoms of Gowa and Tallo', do we find strong historical evidence in the chronicles for the codification of law, the rise of a bureaucracy, and systems of military draft and taxation. These supra-kinship levels of organization, integrating subject domains increasingly directly with a central power, provide incontrovertible evidence of state formation.

As for evidence of the earliest principalities, Bulbeck's survey of Chinese ceramic sherds at West Soppeng suggests the existence of a prosperous port and power centre there from as early as the twelfth century. Quantities of imported ceramics increased markedly from 1400 to 1600, and Caldwell has argued that, in the same period, rulers' efforts to direct and intensify wet rice agriculture may have been sufficient to allow the trade of surplus rice for the valued imports (Macknight 1993:42; Caldwell 1995:414). At Bantaeng, on the south coast of the peninsula, a kingdom formed within each of three river valleys during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The centres of these kingdoms, initially located in defensible upriver sites, later shifted to coastal sites where wet rice lands in the coastal plains could be more easily exploited. These kingdoms were located in the middle of a trade network linking the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit with Luwu' to the north, and the spice islands of Maluku to the east. By the fifteenth century, the kingdoms of the three valleys became integrated, as one of them grew powerful enough to dominate the others (Bougas 1998). Bougas proposes that this process was partly the result of a feedback effect from the intensification of wet rice agriculture. Where this was most successful, the resulting population growth could have eventually been translated into the ability to raise larger and more powerful armies. By the end of the sixteenth century, Bantaeng in turn had been eclipsed by the growing power of Gowa, which attacked and incorporated it.

Other early polities include Sidenreng, Cina, and Luwu'. The strategic situation of Luwu' near the head of the Gulf of Bone gave it control over access to the gold and iron ores of the interior, enabling it to rise to prominence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Dammar, a forest resin, was another

valuable export.<sup>25</sup> Luwu' was much more directly dependent on trade than the other kingdoms; there was little development of agriculture, and sago for long remained the staple food, at least in the area around the fourteenth- to sixteenth-century capital of Malangke. Iron weaponry obviously played a crucial part in the many wars of expansion by which smaller communities became subdued and consolidated into larger units, and the connections between swords, power and legitimation is strongly suggested by the sacred status of certain famous named heirloom swords belonging to elite families both in the lowlands and in the Toraja highlands (Zerner 1981:102). According to Pelras (1996:175), Luwu' remains 'the mythic point of origin of the Bugis nobility and culture', although by the early sixteenth century its hegemony was eclipsed as newer states such as Sidenreng, Bone, Wajo' and Gowa strove to expand their power.

An unusual and interesting feature of court chronicles is that the stories of the *to manurung*, or 'descended ones', include detailed accounts of the contracts that were entered into between the new rulers and the *matoa* ('elders' and traditional chiefs), as representatives of the people. The *matoa*, while swearing allegiance, simultaneously made clear statements limiting the powers of the ruler, declaring the people's obedience only so long as the ruler's demands were not in conflict with the *adat* or customary laws, obliging the ruler to act in consultation with the *adat* council, and threatening him or her with supernatural sanctions should the welfare of the people be neglected (Zainal Abidin 1984). A remarkable emphasis on the personal freedoms of the subjects, including their right to travel and to enter and leave the kingdom at will, is to be found most notably in the chronicle of Wajo' (Reid 1998), where another unusual feature was the rotation of the office of ruler among a group of aristocratic families who formed a council. In this kingdom, the office was consequently not necessarily held for life and was never inherited, but was won only through appointment by a consensus of council members (Zainal Abidin 1985). All the same, the elaboration of hierarchy, and the powers allowed to the rulers in Bugis states, were still far greater than any Toraja chief could claim. One must beware, too, of building a picture based too heavily on written sources alone, for the contracts described in the chronicles must be interpreted as expressing an ideal state of affairs. The rest of the historical record regarding the formation of kingdoms points to the interaction of far more familiar, less idealised features: 'greed, ambition and violence', to put it in Caldwell's terms (1995:405). Surviving European accounts indicate that in practice, some Bugis and Makassar rulers certainly did behave despotically; one or two are

<sup>25</sup> It continued to be so into the nineteenth century, when it was used in the manufacture of European paints and varnishes. In 1900, export of dammar from Central Sulawesi was worth almost f 2 million per year (Schrauwers 1997:373).

recorded in local chronicles as having been deposed for this reason.

A similar caution should be exercised in assessing the importance of symbolic objects. Andaya follows Chabot (1996) and earlier Dutch writers in hypothesising that a crucial feature in the process of state-formation was the importance which local communities attached to the possession of sacred regalia, the *arajang* (B.). These heirlooms had been a significant feature of older small communities and were intimately associated with particular places and with the ancestors. A special category of *arajang* was the *gaukeng* (B.) or *gaukang* (M.) – an object such as an oddly-shaped stone, an old banner, a plough or a sword, which was often believed to have magical properties and was regarded as the palladium of the community (Chabot 1996:120; Andaya 1984a:118). Worship of this ‘ornament’, according to Chabot, was a cohesive force for Makassarese communities of all sizes (though membership over time was very fluid) and was in effect a kind of ancestor-worship. He adds that, while some regalia belonged to ordinary people in small villages, others had much larger followings, while ‘the ornaments of the most powerful provinces, such as Bone, Luwu, and Goa, are worshipped all over South Celebes’ (Chabot 1996:121). Macknight (1993:41) on the other hand has proposed that this model overstates the importance of sacred objects. They may have provided a legitimating ideology, but they were hardly prime movers in the formation of states.<sup>26</sup> Instead, he proposes that for the earliest period of state formation, prior to the fourteenth century, control of trade was a key factor (Macknight 1983). Like many other maritime states of the archipelago, the first small kingdoms were focused on river mouths offering rulers an anchorage for ships and the possibility of generating surplus from acting as middlemen in the exchange of forest products from the hinterland for luxury manufactures brought by sea from distant places. Later, a key period of expansion occurred from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, when accounts such as the Chronicle of Bone give us a picture of rulers investing their efforts in the opening of new sawahs and the intensification of wet rice agriculture. From this point, warfare combined with the expansion of wet rice agriculture were the two most powerfully interacting factors. Still, the large quantities of imported ceramics from this period indicate that trade did not cease to be of importance. The limiting factor here was the relatively low population in relation to cultivable land area that has historically been typical of Southeast Asian societies, and which meant that the ambitions of expansionist rulers were perennially hampered by a shortage of agricultural

<sup>26</sup> Caldwell (personal communication), having examined at first hand some of these items, is similarly of the opinion that *gaukeng* objects have been used strategically by ambitious non-nobles or minor aristocrats as a means to increase their prestige; *arajang*, he states, are similar objects held by high-ranking nobles.



labour. For this reason, the main object of warfare was not to capture land, but people; excessive casualties were avoided, and large numbers of war captives would if possible be led off as slaves to be used as agricultural labour.<sup>27</sup> The combination of warfare and agricultural intensification thus tends to predispose a state to expansion. Typically, each kingdom initially extended its control within a particular lowland plain where land was suitable for agriculture, its expansion then being checked by geographical barriers. The Chronicle of Wajo' describes the ruler's campaigns as seasonal, taking place after the harvest each year, with each newly subjected community being issued orders to cultivate the land. Bone itself, according to its chronicle, begins as a very minor settlement. Its key period of expansion occurred under its third ruler, Kerrampélua' (who reigned circa 1420-circa 1490). He undertook a long series of aggressions against immediate, and then more distant, neighbours, until he had incorporated a large part of the coastal plain, and imposed his dominance over outlying communities (Macknight 1983:106-7).

The formation of political alliances through marriage between the high-ranking nobles of different areas also plays a significant part in the process of integration. In the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, there is abundant evidence of marriages being used as a consolidating strategy within kingdoms, as a means of binding vassal lords to the ruler (Caldwell 1995:397). Although marriages between kingdoms were less numerous, eventually many of them did become linked. Given the supreme importance of descent for the determining of rank, such marriage strategies are easily understandable; as elsewhere, those who wish to maintain their claims to the highest status will have to find marriage partners either very close to them (by marrying cousins) or very far away (among the ruling families of more distant areas). By the fourteenth century, Caldwell suggests, the highest-ranking families of the South Sulawesi kingdoms had already become so closely related that some of their members could claim the rights to rule in more than one kingdom, and they were 'well on their way to becoming a single, closely related and politically mobile class' (Caldwell 1995:418).

Faint echoes of all these features can be found in Toraja, where genealogical claims and supernaturally powerful heirlooms were also put to use as tools of legitimacy by politically dominant families. The intermarriage of some of these families with ruling noble families in the lowlands means that they obviously had knowledge of more powerful polities. The absence of state formation in Toraja, in spite of this knowledge, raises some interesting questions. In asking them, we must avoid being drawn into seeing political centralization as a form of progress, or its absence as a failing. This is a ten-

<sup>27</sup> This point has been explored by Reid (1980, 1988:122-4).



gency to which writers on state formation may easily succumb, but given that life for ordinary people is often worse within centralized political systems, we might rather rephrase the question to ask, 'How did the Toraja succeed in avoiding such a development?' If the logic of state formation in the rest of South Sulawesi (as in so many other parts of the archipelago) rested upon the ability to generate surplus wealth by establishing a port at a river mouth and participating in long-distance trade networks, we must first of all observe that Toraja has no river mouths. Without access to the ocean, perhaps the possibilities for the concentration of wealth were not sufficient. If highland leaders could not thus situate themselves as mediating nodes in the networks by which indigenous products were exchanged for costly, exotic items, the presence of ancient Indian silk *patola* cloths in the highlands – some only recently dated by new techniques to as long ago as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Maxwell 2003:114, 128-32) – would indicate at least that this area has for centuries been recognised as the end-point of such a network. Once arrived at their destination, these rare items were transformed into the magical heirlooms and authority symbols of politically powerful *tongkonan*.

Clearly geographical conditions here were much less favourable to political unification in other ways, for the rugged topography of the highlands still makes communication slow and difficult today, and the costs of enforcing submission to a central authority would have been correspondingly higher. Most of the population was concentrated in the central valley running north-south between the present-day towns of Ma'kale and Rantepao, and in fact it is in this area, especially in the southern part, that the nobility were most powerful. Whether or not the aristocracy found things to admire in Bugis arrangements, other sections of society may well have disagreed with them. This is certainly suggested by the stories commonly related that Saluputti was at least partially settled by people fleeing the oppressive influence of the southern Puang, and that the nobles there called themselves Ma'dika ('Free') to indicate that they refused any allegiance to the latter. We must, therefore, consider the possibility that from the rest of the population there was a turning away from the state, and a conscious resistance to moves toward centralization.<sup>28</sup> Such resistance has been convincingly demonstrated for groups living on the margins of Malay polities, such as the Temiar of the Malay peninsula (Benjamin 1996, 2002) and the Gerai of West Kalimantan (Helliwell

<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, Donzelli (2003:40) found that the inhabitants of Sillanan in southern Mengkendek, even though it is within the Tallu Lembangna, deny having ever been ruled by the Puang, and claim instead to be part of the Ma'dika area or *padang dima'dikai*, offering as further proof the fact that, just like the people of Saluputti, they use only the single, egalitarian term *iko* ('you') as the pronominal form of address, without the respectful terms deemed essential when addressing those of high rank in the Tallu Lembangna.

1992). Castles (1975) has asked similar questions about the lack of state-forming tendencies among the pre-colonial Batak of Sumatra, and concludes that 'Batak society did not need any state', and that they were 'able to solve their problems without the need of a central authority'.<sup>29</sup> Toraja too seem to have maintained a strong preference for autonomy, and rather than assimilating to lowland models, developed a distinctive identity based partly on their political and cultural opposition to the people of the lowlands.

Within the Sa'dan highlands, people lived in small villages (*tondok*) or scattered hamlets generally situated on hillocks above the rice fields. In troubled times, many villages were located on high and defensible hilltops, some of them fortified with earth or stone walls. (Later the Dutch administration encouraged people to relocate to more accessible sites near roads.) As in many parts of Southeast Asia, the population was divided into hereditary ranks of nobles, commoners and slaves. Villages or groups of villages were dominated by local nobles, who lived in finely carved houses with a characteristic extended and curved roof ridge. Quarrels and feuds between these chiefs frequently gave rise to raids or a ritualised form of warfare (*sira'*) involving pitched battles with limited casualties. Both of these sometimes occasioned the taking of heads.<sup>30</sup> In pre-colonial times people would most usually have identified themselves as members of a *tondok*, rather than any larger entity. Larger groupings, the *bua'* or *penanian*, were formed on a ritual basis. They consisted of several neighbouring communities, who would join together under the leadership of a dominant noble house in order to host the larger and more expensive rites of the Toraja ritual cycle. These might be celebrated only at intervals of several years, however. A *lembang* (literally 'boat', which I have chosen to translate as 'domain') was the name given to a federation of *bua'* controlled by ruling nobles, but this was about the limit of concentration of power, which had advanced furthest in the southern areas. Valuable descriptions of socio-political organization in different regions of Toraja, including

<sup>29</sup> Castles 1975:75. Castles notes that geographically, there was nothing to prevent the consolidation of the Batak valleys and plateaus with their extensive rice fields. Land, however, remained firmly in the communal control of the clans. The Batak did have a dynasty of priest-kings, the Singamangaraja, but these rulers held largely ritual functions in a limited group of clans and their demands upon the populace appear to have been only occasional. In the late nineteenth century, the secular chiefs successfully thwarted a move to allow Singamangaraja XII more political power. Economically, the Batak lands offered little that outsiders wanted; moreover, they took pleasure in cultivating a fierce reputation which discouraged outsiders from notions of conquest.

<sup>30</sup> It is difficult now, on the basis of largely anecdotal evidence, to assess the relative importance of headhunting, which may have been changing even before Dutch penetration into the highlands. It does not appear to have been either as common or as symbolically elaborated as in a number of other societies, either in Sulawesi itself (Downs 1955; George 1996; Schrauwers 1997) or in other parts of Southeast Asia (Hoskins 1996).

the more hierarchical southern *lembang*, can be found in Nooy-Palm (1979). Only the federation of the 'Three Domains' (Tallu Lembangna) of Ma'kale, Sangalla' and Mengkendek showed any resemblance to a centralized polity in the political universe of the Toraja before Dutch times. Here, emulation of Bugis models of hierarchy led to sharper social distinctions, the nobles giving themselves the title of Puang ('lord'). Nooy-Palm's account indicates just how much variation there was throughout the Toraja region, which appears as a patchwork of hundreds of autonomous villages interspersed with dozens of tiny federations of groups of villages. A significant unifying feature is the attachment of offices to particular noble *tongkonan* or origin-houses. It is notable that in almost all cases, such named offices were clearly ritual functions. In Kesu', for instance, the village of Angin-Angin is divided into two parts, each with seven ritual titles. The titles are held by particular named *tongkonan*, and designate the roles to be played in specific rituals by the resident of that origin-house (Nooy-Palm 1979:98).

Of all the regions, Sangalla' is the one which appears to have gone furthest toward the development of a genuinely political and administrative division of labour (Nooy-Palm 1979:79-91). Here again, each office or title is attached to a particular origin house or *tongkonan*, with some heritable tasks allotted even to the origin houses of commoners and of slaves. The leading *tongkonan* of Sangalla' is Kaero, a female descendant of which, Patola Baine, is said to have been the first Puang or ruler of Sangalla' (my informant, Pak Pasang Kanan, also used the Indonesian term *raja* and, like Nooy-Palm's informants, drew comparisons between the titled functionaries of different houses and the ministers of the modern nation-state, though this may well be misleading). Kaero is surrounded by four other leading houses called the Tongkonan A'pa' ('Four Origin-houses'): Buntu Tongko, in charge of defence, Suaya, in charge of economic matters, Dulang, in charge of dispute settlement and justice, and Solo', in charge of matters relating to ritual. It was the leaders of these four houses who had the right to appoint a new Puang after the death of the old one. The Puang is poetically described as 'sleeping' like a huge and lovingly-tended buffalo bull, while the leaders of the Four Origin-houses, the To A'pa', actually acted as his executives. This expected inactivity of a central ruling figure, surrounded by his executives, is reminiscent of the immobility expected of the lords of some other pre-colonial domains, as for instance among the Atoni of Timor (Cunningham 1964:54; Waterson 1990:191-6). Four more houses were responsible for the defence of Kaero; they were called the 'Four Corner-Posts of the Land of Sangalla' (Limbu A'pa'na Padang ri Sangalla'). The locations of all these important houses form a protective ring around Kaero. The numbers appear significant, since they produce the combination of four (or four plus four) around a central point. This 4/5 pattern was famously analysed with reference to the layout of Javanese villages in a

pioneering article by Van Ossenbruggen (1977), who proposed that it had a Hindu origin. The scheme, representing the cardinal points with a fifth point in the centre, is reflected in political organization, as well as design motifs, in several parts of the archipelago; it is very likely that the Hindu cosmology, where it did have an influence, was mapped on to an already existing configuration with which it happened to accord very closely.

Around Kaero itself were arranged a number of lesser *penanian* (ritual communities) – generally said to be twenty-four, although as Nooy-Palm points out, this is an ‘ideal’ number which need not be taken too literally. Nooy-Palm describes them as dependent regions (*lili*’), a word presumably cognate with Bugis *palili*’, ‘vassal’, though not necessarily having the same connotations.<sup>31</sup> Each of these had its central *tongkonan* which had a special ceremonial title accorded to it, describing in some way (not always very explicit) its duties toward Kaero. Other, lesser dependencies, of slave status, also had named *tongkonan* with special functions attached; they suggest the allotment of tasks to do with rice cultivation, fetching firewood and water, and cooking, sewing clothes, or acting as midwives to the Kaero *tongkonan* (Nooy-Palm 1979:86). Some of the house titles are elaborate and poetic, rather than plainly functional, and it is not clear how often any of them, from the highest to the lowest, were necessarily called upon to perform their tasks. Pak Pasang Kanan described how, as a symbolic mark of respect for Kaero, one of its rice fields had to be worked first at the beginning of the agricultural season. The field is called Sangkanuku Mellambi’, which means ‘One Fingernail Early in the Morning’. It was so called because all the people had to come and dig with their bare hands in this field; but there were so many of them that the work would be finished almost immediately. When the harvest from this field was cut, the sheaves were not carried to the rice barns in the normal manner. Instead, the people would form a chain reaching all the way from the field up to the house, and pass the sheaves from hand to hand without anyone having to move. This again is said to have demonstrated how numerous and unified were the people of Sangalla’. In fact it was usual in other *bua*’ (or ritual communities) all over Toraja, until recent times, to have one sacred rice field, attached to a leading *tongkonan* of the *bua*’, that had to be ploughed and harvested first. The leader of that house held the office of Indo’ Padang (‘Leader [literally, ‘Mother’] of the Land’), and his offerings in this rice field were necessary to start and coordinate the agricultural cycle. The elaboration of this idea in Sangalla’ appears as an attempt to give additional, political significance to this ritual practice, while applying it to a much larger territorial unit.

What we see in Sangalla’ might be described as the incipient formation of

<sup>31</sup> The primary meaning of (T.) *lili*’ is ‘boundary, edge’.

a centralised polity on a small scale. Its organization is founded entirely upon the already existing, house-based kinship system, without the evolution of an impersonal day-to-day administration organized on a supra-kinship level, or of any larger population centres. In fact nowhere in the Toraja highlands was there anything resembling a town, until the Dutch created the two present administrative centres of Ma'kale and Rantepao. (The decidedly unimpressive appearance of the former is said to be reflected in the name given to it, which literally means 'naked'.) Like the Puang of Sangalla', the Puang of Ma'kale and Mengkendek had also had a certain amount of success in subduing and integrating surrounding communities, and the three regions had an alliance between them. Outside of the 'Three Domains', there is much less evidence of centralization. The aristocracies of each region competed among themselves, without any individual ever being able to gain sufficient power to unite a larger area politically. It is notable that, even in the story of the resistance to an invasion from Bone (see below), which is enshrined in memory as the time of greatest political unity in the highlands, there is no question of the emergence of a single leader, but only of (temporary) mutual cooperation between the leaders of dozens of different villages. On the ill-defined borders of Toraja areas, raids from or against neighbouring groups appear to have been as frequent as they were between Toraja villages themselves. Sometimes these were used as an excuse for interference by rulers of lowland states, while at other times, no such excuse seems to have been required. According to Bigalke (1981:25), the western regions of the highlands (presumably areas such as Simbuang, Mappa' and Buakayu in the present-day *kecamatan* of Bonggakaradeng) were so devastated by Bugis attacks at the turn of the seventeenth century that their agricultural lands were laid waste and their populations never recovered. The northern areas of Sa'dan and Balusu lay on the borders of Luwu', which historically made grandiose claims to control of the highlands. In practice, though, the tributary relationship of these areas to the rulers of Luwu' appears to have been rather nominal, while their nobility had become related through marriage with Luwu' royalty. These relations will be examined more closely in the next chapter.

Nooy-Palm (1986:304) has suggested that the regular dissipation of wealth in funeral sacrifices might have been an economic factor acting as a brake on any designs by the nobility to concentrate greater power in their own hands. Schrauwers (1997) provides an interesting comparative picture from Central Sulawesi of highland societies like the To Pamona who, like the Toraja, existed on the fringes of more powerful and demanding polities like Luwu'

and Mori'. Schrauwens is partly concerned to explore whether the To Pamona constitute a 'house society' in Lévi-Strauss's terms.<sup>32</sup> He suggests that here, even more than in the Sa'dan highlands, a feasting economy tended to have a levelling effect, producing a political system which 'can be characterised less as a "politics of Houses" than as a "Big Man" system' (Lévi-Strauss 1997:370). Bridewealth payments (not a factor for the Sa'dan Toraja) were yet another way in which the houses of the To Pamona nobility regularly dispersed their wealth, such that Schrauwens concludes that they were unable to maintain their control over valuables long enough to consolidate their claims to absolute rank and make their houses into enduring entities. What he chooses to call their 'proto-Houses' therefore contrast with the image of the 'House' as a kinship grouping (*kapolo*) in Luwu', as presented by Errington (1989). In Errington's image, the state of Luwu' was envisaged as a series of hierarchically nested Houses within Houses; the royal House, with its claims to divine descent and pure 'white blood', symbolically encompassed those of all its followers. How well Toraja fits the concept of a 'house society' is a question which I shall explore in more detail in future chapters; here, it is sufficient to note that in terms of social differentiation it may be seen to lie somewhere in the middle of this continuum. If it had a more rigidified ranking system than that of the To Pamona, yet its nobility had been unable to carry through any project to exploit the possibilities of the house as the basis of Luwu's style of segmentary state. We can see, all the same, that within their own communities, the nobility did exploit the potentials of architecture as a mark of distinction, and an assertion of their own power. Kis-Jovak et al. (1988) have meticulously documented how the dimensions of the traditional origin house (*tongkonan*) have grown over the past 350 years. The roof in particular has been extended further, and developed more exaggerated curves, becoming quite disproportionate to the cramped area of living space which it contains, to the point where in recent times it has pushed the very limit of what is structurally feasible.

Nooy-Palm (1986:304) also records evidence from older informants that spending on funerals in Toraja had started to increase during the 1870s, when new profits from the cultivation of coffee began to be channelled into the prestige economy. She suggests that the rich had a problem finding anything to spend their money on, apart from the few luxury items (such as Indian textiles, batiks, Chinese porcelain, and gold and silver coins) which had traditionally been made available by trade with the Bugis; and so they repeatedly

<sup>32</sup> Schrauwens chooses to reserve the capitalized 'House' to distinguish enduring kinship groupings of the aristocracy, as in 'the House of Windsor'. See Waterson (1995a) for a comparative discussion of the 'house society' concept and its potential application to both hierarchical and egalitarian social systems of Southeast Asia.

exhausted their capital in ritual expenditure instead. This interesting point overlooks the desire for new weapons which in just this period was about to create new possibilities for warrior aristocrats to achieve a greater concentration of power. In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, a few ambitious chiefs were engaged in increasingly ruthless and violent campaigns to seize lands from their weaker neighbours, and their purchase of guns from Bugis traders was giving rise to a newly destructive style of warfare. This process might have culminated eventually in the formation of larger and more centralized chiefdoms. But instead it was to be halted in the early years of the twentieth century by the intervention of the Dutch.





## CHAPTER II

# The view from the mountains

So far I have presented a largely external view of Toraja history, using a chronology that would be recognisable to professional historians. Against this background I shall now discuss some of the accounts of the past that Toraja people themselves told me. In some tales, a Toraja protagonist becomes the original ancestor of ruling dynasties in the lowlands, or the source of their conversion to a world religion; in others, conversely, Toraja noble families claim mythical figures of Bugis origin as prestigious founding ancestors. These stories form the means by which Toraja have positioned themselves in relation to other peoples of South Sulawesi. In different ways, they affirm the close historical relationships that have existed between highland and lowland people, while presenting a variety of claims on matters of precedence.

### *The story of Laki Padada*

Some Toraja myths, told in relation to the founding of particular houses, serve at the same time to situate Toraja in relation to the Bugis and Makassar. Several provide grounds for claiming precedence over what were objectively the much more powerful lowland kingdoms.<sup>1</sup> The royal families of these kingdoms, who, as I have mentioned, have links through marriage with the Toraja nobility, themselves acknowledge their links to a Toraja ancestor, Laki Padada. The Laki Padada story is a prominent one in the corpus of Toraja myth, and interestingly he is also mentioned in the Chronicle of Gowa, as well as in genealogies of Selayar (an island to the south of the peninsula), although according to Reid (1983b:129) he does not feature in any Bugis literature. I myself witnessed an acknowledgement of descent from Laki Padada

<sup>1</sup> On precedence and its contestation in Austronesian societies, see Fox (1995) and Reuter (1992). The Sumatran accounts presented by Reuter show obvious parallels with Toraja tales and include several examples in which a younger or weaker adversary, by means of cleverness, trickery, or the possession of spiritual powers, establishes a claim to precedence over a senior or more powerful adversary.

in the attendance, in 1983, of the elderly Datu of Luwu' and members of his family at a ceremony held to celebrate the rebuilding of a famous *tongkonan*, Nonongan, in Sanggalangi' district. The founder of this *tongkonan* is a woman, Manaek, and Laki Padada features prominently in its genealogy, along with several other mythical figures. Many origin houses in other parts of Toraja can trace a tie to this *tongkonan*, and more than a hundred separate groups of descendants attended the ceremony. Each brought with them a huge pig for sacrifice, trussed into a tall decorated litter (*lettoan*) as is customary at Toraja house ceremonies. The Datu sent a letter in advance, acknowledging that he counted himself among the descendants of Manaek (*bati'na Manaek*), and despite being Muslim, his party showed deference to Toraja custom in bringing a conspicuously large pig. Links with Gowa were represented at this ceremony by the presence of Puang Tandilangi' of Sangalla', who married a woman of the Gowa royal family from which he is himself descended through marriages in previous generations. Also attending were Torajans intermarried with the royal family of Bone.

Laki Padada is represented in several genealogies as a grandson of Tamboro Langi', one of Toraja's most famous *to manurun*. His father Puang Sanda Boro married a woman whom he discovered inside a bamboo; she was called To Bu'tu ri Pattung ('One who Appeared from a Bamboo') or Puang Ao' Gading ('Lady of the Bamboo'). She gave birth to two children, a son, Laki Padada, and a daughter, Puang Mate Mangura or Puang Mate Malolo (both names mean 'Lady who Died Young'). Distraught at his sister's death, Laki Padada vowed to travel the world in search of the secret of eternal life. His journeys eventually brought him to the Makassarese kingdom of Gowa.<sup>2</sup> Here after many adventures he married the ruler's daughter. Of their three children, one, Pattala Bantan, returned to Toraja and married Petimba Bulaan ('Golden Dipper'), variously depicted as the daughter or granddaughter of Manaek, founder of *tongkonan* Nonongan. Pattala Bantan went to Sangalla' and ruled over the Tallu Lembangna, the 'Three Domains' of Ma'kale, Sangalla', and Mengkendek, taking on the title 'Matasak ri Toraja' (*matasak*: literally 'ripe'; here said to have the sense of 'pure' or 'original'). A daughter, Pattala Bunga, became the ruler of Gowa, with the title 'Somba ri Gowa'; the third child, Pattala Merang, also a daughter, became the ruler of Luwu', with the title 'Payung ri Luwu'' (*payung*: 'umbrella', an item of regalia). Later descendants of Laki Padada are said to have married into the royal family of Bone, adopting the title Manggau' ri Bone. Many versions of the story also describe the heirlooms each received from Laki Padada as their share, including

<sup>2</sup> Published versions of the Laki Padada myth can be found in Nooy-Palm (1979:148-53) and Koubi (1982:346-58). In Nooy-Palm's version and some others, the children of Laki Padada were three sons. The version given here follows that recounted to me by Bua' Sarungallo in 1978.

ancient textiles and swords. The sword named Sudan, or Sudanga, remained in Gowa; another, Bunga Waru, is preserved by the ruler of Luwu', while Pattala Bantan returned to Toraja with two swords, Maniang and Dosso, as well as a precious banner, the Bate Manurun. Tongkonan Kaero (founded by children of Pattala Bantan) holds the sword Maniang, which was drawn from its sheath and displayed to the crowds after the Datu of Luwu' had given a speech at the ceremony.<sup>3</sup>

Reid (1983b:130) writes that it is impossible to be sure whether the Laki Padada myth was borrowed by Toraja from Gowa (he appears not to entertain the reverse possibility), perhaps during the early seventeenth century when Makassar in its period of greatness had some influence in the highlands, or whether it might provide some more real evidence of historical contact between the two areas. Nothing more than speculation is possible on this count, though he suggests that, if so, Laki Padada with his famous swords may represent the spread of sword-smithing technology from Toraja to Gowa – an interpretation that is bolstered by other traditions among the Bugis which acknowledge Toraja as the source of metal-working techniques. In this respect at least, highlanders had the edge over the lowland kingdoms, since this technology was obviously very highly valued, and it is noticeable that many other stories also feature remarkable swords.

### *Heroes, tricksters, and relations with lowland kingdoms*

It is difficult to establish just how far Luwu' dominated the highlands in times past. So far as I could establish, regions closest to the borders of Luwu' paid some customary tribute without, it seems, expecting any interference in their affairs; there were no officials from Luwu' posted in Toraja. Pak Ulia Salu Rapa' of Nanggala described how only those areas which had marriage links with Luwu' royalty would bring their seed rice to be blessed by the Datu at the start of the agricultural cycle, in a ritual called *medatu* (compare Nooy-Palm 1979:91). Bua' Sarungallo described how the Toraja annual tribute consisted of one buffalo per district, which continued to be paid until Dutch times, but others claimed only those regions closest to Luwu' paid tribute, and not always in buffaloes. In any case, Sarungallo maintained, Torajans looked

<sup>3</sup> According to the story as told to me by Bua' Sarungallo, Laki Padada in his search for eternal life reached an island where the inhabitants promised to grant his wish if he could stay awake all night. But he slept, and after calling his name three times, they cut off the tip of his sword as he was sleeping; thus he failed in his quest for immortality. Maniang is this sword with no tip; its public display is clearly a form of proof both of the legend and of the relations of descent which were being reaffirmed by participants in the ritual.

on it merely as an acknowledgement of their blood relations (*rara buku*) and respect for the fact that Luwu' had a king, which Toraja did not. Luwu' for its part also desired good relations with Toraja in order to trade for rice and forest products.<sup>4</sup> The buffaloes would all be led together to the Datu's palace in Palopo, and surrendered to palace servants; but the representative from Kesu' was allowed to sit on his buffalo, which would be led to a special enclosure. Coming from Kesu', Bua' Sarungallo had a number of other stories to tell, most of them humorous, which established Kesu's claim to a privileged relation with Luwu', while simultaneously asserting precedence over the rival districts of Sangalla', or of Ma'kale; or which described how Kesu' had outwitted Luwu' at the same time as its local rivals. Needless to say, experts from the latter areas have their own claims to precedence. An instance can be found in a narrative published by Puang Paliwan Tandilangi' (1975:102), the point of which is to establish both a marriage relation between Luwu' and Sangalla', and the precedence of *tongkonan* Kaero in Sangalla' over Rano (formerly a dominant *tongkonan* in Ma'kale). Pelras provides more evidence for a historically close relation between Luwu' and Toraja: the Datu of Luwu' must have some Toraja blood in order to be an acceptable candidate for office, and traditionally wears a Toraja loincloth beneath his other garments at his investiture. The Puang (or Lord) of Sangalla' is always invited to such ceremonies and has the unique privilege of ordering the Datu around, while all the other nobles present must treat him (or her) with the greatest deference.<sup>5</sup>

Several popular tales recount how a Toraja 'trickster' manages to outwit the Datu of Luwu'.<sup>6</sup> The tendency of these stories is to downplay the extent of Toraja subservience to Luwu', or even to claim a degree of precedence over Luwu'. One recurring theme concerns a hero, known in variants I collected in the Kesu' area as Tali Siba'ba, whose mother is a wild pig. He weds the female Datu of Luwu' and secretly installs his mother in the attic of the palace, forbidding the local populace to eat pork out of deference to her; this is claimed to account for why the people of Luwu' (who have been Muslim since the early seventeenth century) do not eat pork. In one version, the hero ends by changing his name to Karaenge Dua ('Twice Noble'), having become a noble of Luwu' as well as Toraja. An almost identical tale concerns the sons of

<sup>4</sup> Sago has traditionally provided an alternative staple in Luwu', while rice agriculture remained for long underdeveloped.

<sup>5</sup> Pelras, personal communication.

<sup>6</sup> See Volkman (1985:22) for an example. A variety of 'trickster' tales feature a hero called Dana' or Dalana'i; he is often depicted as playing outrageous tricks on fellow-villagers and even his own parents. There is a kind of continuity between these tales, the putatively historical accounts in which one area outwits more powerful rivals, and the stories that men sometimes enjoy telling about themselves, in day-to-day conversation, of how by their wits they outfaced a competitor or punctured the arrogance of a more powerful or wealthy individual.

Bonggakaradeng, a blacksmith who has given his name to the most westerly present-day *kecamatan* (district) of Tana Toraja; but in this case the story concerns relations with the Bugis area of Sawitto (present-day Pinrang), which borders on West Toraja and with which the Toraja regions of Bonggakaradeng and Simbuang have historically had close connections.<sup>7</sup> Bonggakaradeng came from a village called Batu Tandung, near the Masuppu' River. He was another person who found his wife inside a bamboo; her name was Datu Baringan, and she had a sister who was a python. Once while out in the forest on a hunting trip, Bonggakaradeng stopped to rest beneath an *uru* tree at a place called Pokka Uru on Buttu Karua (a mountain in Simbuang).<sup>8</sup> He urinated on a fallen tree, unaware that in doing so, he had impregnated a spirit pig inside the tree. The pig gave birth to twin boys, Buttu Karua and Buttu Layuk. When they were about six years old, the mother sent them to look for their father, and they came to where Bonggakaradeng was working in his forge. They offered to help him in the forge, but he refused, not seeing how they could be of any use to him. But while he was eating his lunch in the house, they finished all his work for him, and to a standard exceeding his own. According to another version, they made a sword of gold (*la'bo' penai bulawan*) called Tonapa. This sword became a famous heirloom whose sheath is still kept in Sawitto, while the blade is in Simbuang.<sup>9</sup> Eventually they persuaded the astonished Bonggakaradeng that he was indeed their father, and lived with him for a time, but, offended by his persistence in eating pork, they set off again by boat down the Masuppu River, taking their mother with them, until they reached Sawitto, where the pig-mother eventually turned into stone.<sup>10</sup> They made magic there, causing the sky to go dark except around their own house, until the local people begged for an explanation. The brothers told them that they would bring back the sunlight if the people would agree henceforth always to show them various marks of respect, and

<sup>7</sup> The account given here is condensed from much longer versions of the Bonggakareng story which I collected in 1978 from Ambe' Sora of *tongkonan* Rea, and Indo' Lembang, the *to manakka* or female priest of Tondok Tanga', both in Simbuang. Another variant, given by Mappa', the elderly headman of Balepe', concerned a hero called Pokka Linoan, and demonstrated the precedence of the district known in Dutch times as Bau, over the adjoining Bugis-inhabited area of Enrekang. In this tale, one of the sons of Pokka Linoan marries a beautiful princess of Enrekang, who gives birth to Sawerigading and his twin sister (see below).

<sup>8</sup> *Uru* is a kind of large hardwood tree, favoured for house timbers.

<sup>9</sup> The sword and sheath were divided at the making of the great oath (*basse kasalle*) after Arung Palakka's failed invasion of Toraja in the seventeenth century. The blade is said to be kept at *tongkonan* Paken in Simbuang. If Bugis ever again invade Toraja, the sword can be taken out and given offerings, and when pointed directly at Sawitto and with the correct spells recited over it, will stand straight up and thus 'awaken the oath' (*ma'tundan basse*).

<sup>10</sup> In the Tali Siba'ba story, it was her trough that turned to stone and is said to be still in Luwu'.

to abstain from eating pork or the meat of any animal that died without being slaughtered. Thus the people of Sawitto became Muslim, while the two brothers married the daughters of a great aristocratic family, and had several children who became important ancestors in their turn. This is one of several tales told in justification of a saying in Simbuang: *nene' Simbuang, appo Sawitto*, or 'Simbuang is the grandfather and Sawitto is the grandchild'. Clearly this is an attempt to assert precedence over Sawitto, interesting because, just as in the case of Toraja-Luwu' relations, objectively Sawitto was a more powerful kingdom. According to Bigalke (1981:25), from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century Simbuang was drawn into a tributary relationship to this small state; the Dutch, however, terminated this relationship by incorporating Simbuang into the administrative subdivision of Ma'kale, as a means of punishing Sawitto for its heavy resistance to Dutch forces.

From Saluputti comes an almost identical story, told to me by Bine' of Tombang (Menduruk), an elderly aristocratic lady, about the ancestor Kila' Ta'pa ri Ba'tang ('Lightning Striking a Tree'). He is said to have descended on top of Mount Messila in a lightning storm. In Menduruk there is a village called Bone, and this version of the story was used to explain how the Bugis Bone got its name. As in the previous version, Kila' had a child by a pig-mother on Buttu Karua. The son was called Tali Tallu. Taking his pig-mother and her trough, as well as a large quantity of earth from Bone village, he travelled first to Palopo and thence to the Bugis Bone, which at that time was called Same'. Here he deposited the earth, which became Palakka (an area in the heartland of the Bone kingdom), and built himself a house on it, the steps of which are said to have turned to stone and to be still visible there today. The original Toraja Bone then became known as Bone Matua ('Old Bone'), while the Bugis region was known as Bone Malolo ('Young Bone'). Tali Tallu married the daughter of the Datu of Same', and as in the previous story, turned the sky dark for seven days and nights and made the local people give up eating pork. This story's claims are even more audacious than those of the previous one, given that Bone was at one time the most powerful of all the Bugis kingdoms.

In Sa'dan and Balusu, areas of northeast Toraja bordering on Luwu', a different story is told about an unusual hero from Sa'dan named Bulu Nanga ('Hairy Penis'). Bulu Nanga once travelled with a party of his followers and slaves to purchase buffaloes and salt in Palopo. The attendants of the Datu of Luwu' saw him bathing in the river and, catching sight of his remarkable appendage, made a report to the Datu. Bulu Nanga married the Datu's daughter, and his sword, called La Karurung, is said to be still kept in the palace at Palopo. Although these stories were no doubt told largely for local benefit, reference to myth can still be useful on occasion in interactions with lowlanders; an acquaintance recounted how on a visit to the provincial capi-



tal of Ujung Pandang, an elderly Toraja priest (*to minaa*), on meeting a Bugis government official, impressed the latter by his genealogical inquiries, by means of which he quickly established that the official must be the descendant of a mythical Toraja ancestor!<sup>11</sup>

While these tales establish Bugis descent from Toraja heroes, some Toraja noble houses conversely claim descent from Bugis heroes. An example is Sawerigading, father of La Galigo, whose many adventures are recorded in the Bugis epic cycle of I La Galigo and known throughout Sulawesi. Such legitimating claims are made chiefly by the aristocracies of the districts adjoining Luwu', who have historically had, and still have, more contact with the former kingdom through intermarriage. I encountered examples both from Sa'dan and Balusu in the northeast, and from the southern federation of Ma'kale, Mengkendek and Sangalla'. Pak Banti (Papa' Mawiring), who is a descendant of *tongkonan* Galugu Dua in Sa'dan district, provided me with a written genealogy of 16 generations, the founding figure of which is Andi Tendriabeng (B.: Wé Tenriabeng), Sawerigading's sister, shown as having married one Ramman di Langi' of *tongkonan* Punti in Sesean.<sup>12</sup> This genealogy meticulously records the names of many other *tongkonan* founded by the descendants of the original couple, exemplifying the importance in Toraja memory of houses as much as individuals. Five generations later, two brothers, both called Galugu (hence the present name of the settlement, Galugu Dua, meaning 'two Galugus'), are said to have been among the 'Ancestors of the Same Dream' (Nene' Pada Tindo) who 'held back the mountain of Bone' (*untulak buntuna Bone*), or resisted Arung Palakka's invasion of the mid-seventeenth century. Further south, I collected versions of the Sawerigading story from *to minaa sando* Tato' Dena' of Mandetek in Ma'kale, and from an elderly blind storyteller, Indo' Somba, of Kandora in Mengkendek, who was one of several informants providing detailed accounts to Salombe' (1975). Indo' Somba's version, like that published by Salombe' (1975), retains Sawerigading's origins as the grandson of Batara Guru (the mythical first ruler of Luwu', descended from heaven). Tato' Dena's, on the other hand, transposed the whole story to Toraja, explaining that Sawerigading and his

<sup>11</sup> Certain orientations may be maintained partly through details of everyday practice. According to Bua' Sarungallo, it is, or was, a habit of the aristocracy of Kesu' not to eat bananas that grow on the side of the trunk facing toward Luwu'; they milk their buffaloes with their backs to Luwu', and won't drink palm wine if the tube it drips through points toward Luwu'. Similarly, I was told in Simbuang that the aristocracy there refuse to eat bananas that grow pointing toward Sangalla'. Both these cases represent the acting out of a separation from, or denial of claims to precedence by, a potentially more powerful adversary.

<sup>12</sup> Other mythical figures in this genealogy include Bua Lolo', the daughter of Lambe' Susu (see Koubi 1978), and Suloara', the legendary first priest or *to minaa* from Sesean.

twin sister had appeared from no-one knew where at Tengan (Kandora).<sup>13</sup> Kandora seems to have established for itself a particularly strong association with Sawerigading, for a special 'house' in the form of a rice barn here at Potok Tengan contains stones, treasured as powerful heirlooms, which are said to be the petrified remains of La Pindakati of Cina, Sawerigading's first wife.<sup>14</sup> The stones were brought here by La Pindakati's daughter Jamanlomo or Jamallomo, who married Puang Samang of Gasing (a mountain in Ma'kale district). In Salombe's account, it is stressed that Jamallomo, being a descendant of Batara Guru, could only wed a man who was also a descendant of a *to manurung* or one descended from the heavens. Puang Samang, being a descendant of the Toraja *to manurun* Tamboro Langi' (claimed in this region to have descended on Mount Kandora), proved an acceptable suitor. Jamallomo returned with him to Toraja, where they founded *tongkonan* Dulang at Potok Tengan (Salombe' 1975:276-7). A notable feature of the account given by Salombe' is the naming of particular places connected to the travels and deeds of the protagonists, names which survive to the present day. A place with a large mango tree is still called Pao ('mango'), for example, while a spot where buffaloes were bathed is still called Pa'burasan ('place of foam') (Salombe' 1975:275). A local landscape is in this way given meaning in a manner familiar to us from many other societies.<sup>15</sup>

The stories told here form part of a pool of mythical narratives to which peoples throughout Sulawesi have contributed. The fact that the Sawerigading story, for instance, occurs in such an amazing number of variants all over Sulawesi, being deployed in different forms to suit local claims and purposes, is itself evidence of historical processes linking neighbouring peoples on this vast island. The tales of Toraja heroes and their supernatural abilities operate

<sup>13</sup> Nourse (1998:135) records a similar process of 'cooptation and simultaneous denial of Bugis heritage' in the Sawerigading stories of Central Sulawesi.

<sup>14</sup> In Salombe's version, Pindakati came from Biduk, on the slopes of Mount Latimojong; it was his second wife, Lisudai (B.: Wé Cudai) who was from Cina. This accords with Bugis versions. (It is possible that the variation is due simply to the twenty years or more that have elapsed between Salombe's interviews and mine with the same informant.) Lack of familiarity with Bugis history and geography results in a more curious transposition: Indo' Somba was insistent that 'Cina' referred to the People's Republic of China, rather than the ancient Bugis kingdom. A similar amnesia tends to obtain in Central Sulawesi (Nourse 1998:136).

<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, although Indo' Somba knew such a wealth of detail about the history and myths attached to the houses of Kandora, she mentioned only in passing the name of Manaek, the Datu Baine or 'Female Lord' who founded *tongkonan* Nonongan and who is such a prominent ancestor in the Kesu' region. She mentioned a saying to the effect that the people of Kandora also traced descent from Manaek, and that this must not be forgotten or they would be struck by lightning; but she thought Manaek was a man, and her husband, Ondo Ira, was a woman; she knew little else about them. I take this as evidence of how localised even the knowledge of local experts is about matters of genealogy and myth (see Nooy-Palm 1979:153-4).

both to establish claims of precedence at home, and to depict longstanding links with more powerful neighbouring states in ways that are flattering to the Toraja sense of agency and autonomy. They provide genealogical links between the Toraja aristocracy, with their claims to descent from the sky, and the ruling nobility of Bugis and Makassarese kingdoms. But there is another story which seems to be even more deeply embedded in Toraja collective memory, a tale of treachery, violence and collective resistance. Though its thrust is more oppositional, this story has had a special salience as a potential source of Toraja identity. It is the story of the Ancestors of the Same Dream, to which I now turn.



### CHAPTER III

## The Ancestors of the Same Dream

The stories related in the previous chapter serve to establish positive connections between highlands and lowlands, in the form of relationships forged through marriage, and their resulting claims to descent and precedence. However impertinent the idiom of some of these stories, they suggest a deep history of interchange with lowland societies, and there is certainly evidence that some of their claims were recognised, for instance, by the rulers of Luwu'. But there are other tales whose thrust is quite different, which situate Toraja in relation to their more powerful neighbours in a much more oppositional way. In Toraja memory, the crucial 'founding moment' seems to have been a struggle against the invading army of a king of Bone, identified in some, but not all, versions as Arung Palakka. Perhaps the most important ethnohistorical narrative in Toraja oral memory describes how, in response to this threat, the headmen of Toraja settlements formed an alliance and swore an oath to stand together, the *basse lepongan bulan* ('oath/alliance of the [region] as round as the moon'). These leaders are called the Nene' Pada Tindo ('Ancestors of the Same Dream') – the 'same dream' here having the sense of a shared destiny – or *to pada tindo*, *to misa' pangimpi* ('those of the same dream, those of the single destiny'). Their short-lived federation is often cited by Toraja as the original source of a 'Toraja' identity, but there is no evidence that it gave rise to any long-term political unity, in spite of living on in oral memory.

What event was it that has so left its mark on Toraja social memory to this day? Existing records enable us to confirm that in 1683 the highlands were indeed subject to an incursion by the armies of Arung Palakka, ruler of Bone. Published accounts, both Toraja or otherwise, have speculated or assumed that it was this event that gave rise to the story of the alliance of the Nene' Pada Tindo.<sup>1</sup> My acquaintances differed, however, in their opinions as to whether

<sup>1</sup> Tangdilintin (1978:44) gives 1675 as the date of an invasion by the armies of Arung Palakka, and suggests that this was the king with whom Pakila' Allo, protagonist of the oral narrative, formed an alliance. However, he makes no reference to any sources of evidence. Nooy-Palm (1979:60) briefly mentions Toraja resistance to Arung Palakka's invasion, but unfortunately she does not mention her sources either. Bigalke states his belief that the events described in oral memory are based on actual historical circumstances; but not all Toraja today seem convinced

their story actually had anything to do with Arung Palakka. The tale has received only passing mention in published sources to date, and I myself came only belatedly to understand the extent of its salience for the Toraja view of themselves. This narrative has played a particular role both in the maintenance of status divisions within Toraja society, and as a foundational narrative serving, however precariously, to underpin notions of a unified 'Toraja' territory and identity. More than this, it has become a kind of template for future action and has been repeatedly reactivated whenever the need for defence arises. In this chapter, I first explain what is known of Arung Palakka's historical invasion, then relate the story of the 'Ancestors of the Same Dream'. In the next chapter, I shall consider how the narrative has been deployed in recent times, and its continuing salience for the Toraja today.

*'Holding back the mountain of Bone': the seventeenth century*

After the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511, a significant part of the spice trade became diverted to the port of Makassar, enabling the Makassarese kingdom of Gowa to grow more powerful as a rival trading state. By the seventeenth century, up until the Dutch conquest of 1667, Gowa was extending its influence through other parts of Sulawesi, including northern Sulawesi and the Sa'dan highlands (Bigalke 1981:31). It also became a powerful force in other islands of Eastern Indonesia, as it attempted through repeated expeditions to secure bases by which to control the spice routes. The ruler of Luwu' had been the first to accept Islam in February of 1605, following the proselytising efforts of three Minangkabau clerics. He was followed only eight months later by the rulers of Gowa and its twin state of Tallo', who then used their conversion as an excuse to enhance their claims to leadership in the peninsula. In the next few years they went to war and by 1611 – in the teeth of fierce opposition – had enforced the conversion of all the other Bugis states including Sidenreng, Soppeng, Wajo' and finally Bone (Pelras 1996:135-7). The resistance they encountered may have had to do with a well-founded suspicion on the part of local community leaders about the potentials of Islam to be used as a tool by which rulers might enhance their powers at the expense of the people (Andaya 1984b:37). Bone in turn spread the new religion to its subordinate states in Enrekang and Duri to the north.<sup>2</sup> The Toraja highlands were thus the only part of South Sulawesi that remained unreceptive to Islam, and where people continued to maintain their own indigenous religion.<sup>3</sup>

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that the king of Bone who features in the story was necessarily Arung Palakka.

<sup>2</sup> This area at the time formed a federation known as Massenrempulu'.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, Islamisation only gradually suppressed some elements of pagan practice in the

Gowa in its period of glory had twice defeated Bone and driven into exile a group of Bugis refugees under the leadership of Arung Palakka. Their control of the spice trade however was an obstacle to the monopoly which the Dutch were determined to establish. When the Dutch wanted to attack Gowa in 1666, the people of Bone, resentful of the humiliations they had suffered, entered into alliance with them and played a decisive part in Gowa's ensuing defeat. Arung Palakka was later declared ruler of Bone in 1672, and set about consolidating his power throughout South Sulawesi. The Toraja highlands remained the last region to acknowledge his supremacy. Due to the Dutch involvement with Arung Palakka, quite detailed records of his doings have survived in Dutch colonial archives to provide corroboration of Bugis and other indigenous sources, and Andaya (1981:258-60) draws on these to describe several occasions on which punitive expeditions were sent to subdue the Toraja. 'Toraja' in these accounts, it should be noted, is used in a fairly broad way to include areas in Duri and Enrekang, which at that time were culturally still part of the Toraja world, but which lie outside the borders of present-day Tana Toraja and whose populations now are Muslim. Apparently Arung Palakka had received complaints from the residents of Sawitto, Batu Lappa and Enrekang about raids by the Toraja of Leta (an area now part of Enrekang), and this provided the excuse for him to raise an allied force of troops from all over South Sulawesi – proof in itself of the extent of his power. The people of Leta were duly overwhelmed and many of them brought back as slaves. The success of this expedition encouraged Arung Palakka to extend his campaign further into the highlands. His troops numbered around 50,000; in August 1683, he further requested, and was granted, the assistance of a small contingent of Dutch soldiers. It seems that Luwu' had also asked for Arung Palakka's help against the Toraja, from whom it could no longer command the respect it had formerly. An additional incentive was that Arung Palakka was hoping to marry his nephew and successor, La Patau', to the daughter of the Datu of Luwu', with the promise that their offspring would become the next ruler of Luwu'. The Datu, however, had made Arung Palakka's participation in a war against the Toraja a condition for his consent. Dutch reports of the ensuing events from August to October 1683 reveal that the Toraja understood rather well how to mount an effective guerrilla resistance against the invading force. They drew the troops deeper and deeper into the mountains while making surprise attacks on their camps. Losses from poisoned darts and man traps, as well as some pitched battles,

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rest of South Sulawesi, where some pre-Islamic customs have survived into the contemporary era. One form of an indigenous pre-Islamic religion still claimed up to 50,000 followers in the 1980s (Maeda 1984), and an estimated 35,000 in 2000 (Ramstedt 2004). Its followers are called the To Wani To Lotang, and are concentrated in the neighbourhood of Amparita, in the present-day *kabupaten* of Sidrap.



were heavy. Arung Palakka himself took bold risks and was himself twice nearly hit by poisoned darts. Eventually on 10 October the Toraja chiefs sued for peace and promised to pay 1,000 *gantang* (3,125 kg) of rice and 1,000 water buffaloes. 600 Toraja captives were taken away as slaves. In the following years up to 1694, at least four more punitive expeditions were sent into the highlands, though the areas explicitly mentioned are once again southern ones in Enrekang and Duri. Each time the Toraja were subdued and captives taken as slaves, but none of these campaigns united the Toraja in as memorable a fashion as in 1683.

According to Andaya's account, the areas which submitted to the might of Bone in that year were chiefly those of the Tallu Lembangna, and from the available details it is difficult to ascertain just how far north Arung Palakka's troops were able to penetrate. However, if this was the event that has left such indelible impressions in Toraja oral memory, it is remembered in the highlands as a Toraja victory. In fact it is recalled as the only time when the many small and autonomous highland communities banded together against an external threat. The alliance it seems was short-lived, but for that brief time, perhaps, people had sensed a common identity which gave rise to a poetic phrase still used to describe Toraja territory: Tondok Lepongna Bulan, Tana Matarik Allo, or 'Country as Round as the Moon, Land Circular like the Sun' – imagery intended to convey a sense of completeness.<sup>4</sup> The warrior ancestors who united in order to 'hold back the mountain of Bone' (*untulak buntuna Bone*) were called the Nene' Pada Tindo, the 'Ancestors of the Same Dream'. They are still remembered by name in oral accounts all over Toraja, though the vehicle by which they have been remembered is a story which bears little resemblance, if any, to the one in the history books. According to Toraja versions of events, after their defeat of the Bone troops, a great oath (*basse kasalle*) was sworn between Bone and Toraja that if either side should ever again disturb the peace between them, disaster would befall them. The oath can be ritually 'woken up' in time of need. As we shall see, it was indeed reactivated in the troubled days of the 1950s, when Bugis forces were twice driven out of Toraja. Even in the new millennium, within the shifting landscape of provincial power relations in the post-Suharto era of Reformasi and regional devolution, the story of the oath has continued to retain its salience as a potential symbolic resource.

How far was Toraja really subjugated to Bone after these events? In spite of indemnities paid, and slaves carried off, Bone's presence in the highlands was certainly not continuous. Van Rijn (1902:349) writes that after the invasion, Toraja paid tribute to Arung Palakka in the form of a few bottles of gold

<sup>4</sup> The Toraja author Tandilangi' (1975:96), on the other hand, attributes the origin of this phrase to the ancestor Tamboro Langi'.

dust. He could also raise troops there when required: a contingent of Toraja warriors was present as part of the massed allied forces raised throughout South Sulawesi by Arung Palakka to assist the Dutch East Indies Company in a war against Sumbawa in 1695, and took part in the oath-taking ceremony over which he presided in September of that year (Andaya 1981:291-3). The Bugis had their own strongly developed tradition of making treaties, and their version of the treaty drawn up with Toraja has survived in a palm leaf manuscript (*lontara'*) cited by Andaya (1981:112). Interstate relationships, as Andaya explains, were generally cast in terms of clearly defined kin relationships, which metaphorically embodied different degrees of hierarchy. The two parties in an alliance of full equality were described as brothers who were 'equally great', but more often, inequalities of power and status were expressed in terms of a relationship between 'elder sibling' and 'younger sibling', or, more emphatically, between 'mother' and 'child'. At the very bottom of the hierarchy of possible relationships was that between 'master' (*puang*) and 'slave' (*ata*). After Arung Palakka's expedition, Toraja were considered to be 'slaves' of Bone. A vassal state in this unfavourable position, while supposedly totally at the mercy of the master, however, retained a surprising degree of autonomy, for the treaty reads:

Keep the land which is your land, the rocks which are your rocks, the rivers which are your rivers, the grass which is your grass, the water which is your water, the water buffaloes which are your water buffaloes, the *ipo*<sup>5</sup> which is your *ipo*, the weapons which are your weapons, the *adat* which is your *adat*, and the *bicara* [legal process] which is your *bicara*.

Andaya concludes, 'Even a "slave" state in South Sulawesi treaty traditions retains its identity and its self-esteem'. Whether or not a copy of this treaty was ever kept in the highlands, it seems that no such memory of their newly subjugated status has been retained orally. On the contrary, what was kept alive in Toraja was a story of triumph, and the rout of invading forces. Existing evidence suggests that slave raids into the highlands continued only very intermittently during the remainder of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, and even through the first half of the nineteenth century, so that after this a long period of effective peace was enjoyed without serious intervention from lowland powers (Bigalke 1981:61-2).

<sup>5</sup> *Ipo* is a forest tree whose highly toxic resin was used for blowdart- and arrow-poison. Nooy-Palm (1979:227) identifies it as either *Strychnos nux vomica* (also called *ipo* by Borneo peoples), or possibly *Antiaris toxicaria* (l.: *upas*). See also the lengthy entry on *upas* in Yule and Burnell (1968: 952-9), which equates *upas/ipo* (the literal meaning of both words is simply 'poison') with the latter species, with numerous references to its use in South Sulawesi.



Pak Paulus Pasang Kanan, 2000

*The Ancestors of the Same Dream in oral memory*

Oral memories of an invasion from Bone, though similar in form, show considerable local variation in content. They are cast in the form of a dramatic narrative, closely linked to local landscapes, which tells how a misunderstanding arose between certain Toraja protagonists and the king of Bone. Like many of the narratives thus far recounted, this story, too, begins with a sword. Significantly, the initial event is a misunderstanding over what is perceived to be an unfair exchange between highlanders and lowlanders. This is the story (slightly abbreviated) as it was told to me by Pak Paulus Pasang Kanan of Sangalla' in June 1996:<sup>6</sup>

It is said that in the past, there was a man called Porrade', who forged a kris in Sa'dan, called Gayang Mata I Pindan ('Kris with an 'Eye' of Porcelain').<sup>7</sup> Now Pong Barani of Marinding went to sell this kris in Bone. But when he showed the Kris with an Eye of Porcelain at night, it shone because it had been rubbed with phosphorescent fungus (*ki'di'*). The Arung Bone (the Lord of Bone) asked, 'Where is the kris you have brought?', and Pong Barani answered, 'This kris is what I get my fish and eels with' (meaning, that it was his livelihood, and that he intended to sell it, not give it away). The Lord of Bone kept the kris. And Pong Barani continued to stay in Bone. Now when he had been a long time in Bone, the Lord of Bone asked him why he had not gone home yet? And he replied, 'I have not yet received from the Lord the price of my kris.'<sup>8</sup> The Lord of Bone was angry, and said, 'Stab Pong Barani, because he has deceived me: when I asked him he said, 'This is what I get my fish and eels with', and now he wants to be paid for it.' At that, Pong Barani left Bone and returned home, and went to see Porrade' at Sa'dan. He told him what had happened, and they fell to thinking, how they could recover the price of the kris, so as not to incur a loss. And they had the idea that they would buy rice and go down to Bone, and sell it very cheap, cheaper than the rice in Bone. And that way, the people down there would all come and buy their rice, and they would make enough money to recover the cost of the kris. So they carried out this plan.

When it was mid-day and they began to sell the rice, they made the price very cheap. People were very surprised, and Pong Barani was summoned before the Lord of Bone. He asked, 'What is the reason your rice is so very cheap? Is there so much rice where you come from?' And Pong Barani replied, 'There's so much rice in Toraja, that every time we go out for a walk, we're knee-deep in it.' [...] The Lord of Bone agreed to send some people up there, to bring back some of this rice. When Pong Barani was ready to go home, some men of Bone were ordered to accompany him, 'seven helmets' (*pitu palo-palo songko*), which means, as many men were ordered to stand up, as the number of grains of maize it would take to fill seven Bugis helmets made of woven bamboo. Now, when they arrived back in

<sup>6</sup> This was by far the most detailed version I collected, and seems to be integrally linked to place names in Sangalla'. Tato' Dena' gave me another version, which differs only in minor details.

<sup>7</sup> The 'eye' refers to a circular ornament set into the hilt or sheath.

<sup>8</sup> According to Tato' Dena''s version, the kris was worth 24 buffaloes.

Toraja, some were sold into slavery and others were killed. People in Bone awaited their return, but nobody came back, and then they received news that many had been murdered or sold into slavery. Then an army was raised in Bone, once again numbering 'seven helmets', and they set out to make war on Toraja. At Randan Batu (near Sangalla'), the home of Pakila' Allo, they did battle, and Pakila' Allo was captured alive. He could not be killed, because he had a magic stone (*balu'*) which made him invulnerable to iron. He was taken back to Bone, where the people tried to kill him. They drove a stake of guava wood up his anus and threw him into the sea. And he floated in the sea. When he had been in the sea a long time and still did not die, they took him out of the sea and removed the stake, and took him to the house of the Lord of Bone. The Lord of Bone adopted him and treated him like his own son. And because of the fondness that was shown him by the Lord of Bone, Pakila' Allo ended up becoming very friendly with the Lord of Bone, and hating his own people in Toraja.<sup>9</sup> Once the Lord of Bone saw that he had Pakila' Allo's loyalty, he ordered him to return to Toraja.

When he came back to Randan Batu, Pakila' Allo married a woman from Bokko and went to live at Lebaní' (another village near Sangalla'). At that time, he built a dam at Bolo', which to this day is called 'Pakila' Allo's dam'. And his plan was to rear, in the pond he had made, a baby crocodile which he had brought back with him from Bone. He intended to feed this crocodile, not on other animals but on people's first-born children. People were shocked, here in the 'three districts' (*tallu penanian*) of Balik Bokko, Mangape – Tambunan, and Randan Batu, and in the whole of Toraja, and they were afraid their first-born would be taken and fed to the crocodile. And at the same time, Pakila' Allo became a tyrant and began to exploit people and violate the adat (*ma'panggalo-galo*) in the three districts. If anyone was holding a ceremony, they were not allowed to proceed without Pakila' Allo being present [this would mean he would have to be given a lot of meat from the sacrifices].<sup>10</sup> And so, all his fellow-villagers and his relatives began to hate him. It happened once at Randan Batu, in the village where Pong Kalua' was head, that a funeral was in progress, but Pakila' Allo was not present, and so the buffaloes could not be slaughtered, though it was already afternoon. Pong Kalua' was angry, and he ordered the buffaloes to be slaughtered anyway, and he took the meat [normally laid out on leaves prior to public division and distribution] and put stones in its place. When Pakila' Allo finally arrived, he ordered the meat division to begin, but when he saw that stones were there instead, he was furious and hit people, and then he left the ceremony and went back to his village at Lebaní'.<sup>11</sup> As evening drew on, people began to be afraid that Pakila' Allo would wreak a terrible vengeance on them. So they gathered together a few warriors (*to barani*) and when night fell, they surrounded Pakila' Allo's house, and went up into the house and attacked him with knives. But because he fought back boldly, and could not be hurt by

<sup>9</sup> According to Tato' Dena's version, he was given a beautiful woman as his wife. Bu'tu Bulaan, the daughter born from this union, was therefore half Bugis in this version.

<sup>10</sup> According to Tato' Dena', he also altered the position of boundary stakes in the rice fields in order to seize land belonging to his relatives.

<sup>11</sup> This is a serious breach of the *adat*, which prohibits any violent or disruptive behaviour at rituals.



iron, they only managed to wound him in the head. He quickly got down into the undercroft of his house, and clinging to the neck of his buffalo which was stalled there, he let it out and made his escape on it down to Bokko, at Pa'bolongan. He went up into the house there, and in the morning, he ordered people to build a tall platform (*gorang*). And from there he called out: 'Tomorrow or the next day I shall burn down all the villages of the three districts'. The people of the three districts were shocked, and began to plan how they might murder Pakila' Allo. Then they sent people far afield to find Karusiak of Madandan and ask him to obtain dart-poison (*ipo*), for they planned to use it to kill Pakila' Allo. So they travelled to Madandan and requested Karusiak to go to Baruppu' to get some poison. And he returned and brought it to Randan Batu. Pong Kalua' gave it to Pakila' Allo's sister, so that she should go and kill him with it, and stop him from causing a great disaster. Because this sister of his was also much upset by what Pakila' Allo was doing, and feared to see him becoming more and more cruel. And everybody in the three districts hated Pakila' Allo. She took the poison with her and went up to Randan Batu, and when she got close she began to weep; she went south across the bridge at Pa'bolongan, weeping all the way, and entered the house. Her brother was startled and asked her why she was crying. She said, 'I heard you'd been attacked, and I have been so afraid that you would die of your wounds. So I have come to dress them with medicine.' Pakila' Allo exclaimed, 'How should I die from this little wound? They barely scratched my head!' But his sister said she could not rest easy until she had put some medicine on his wound. Pakila' Allo ordered someone to wash his wound, and when it began to bleed again a little bit, his sister took the poison and rubbed it into the wound. When she was done, she bade him goodbye and started out back to her house in Randan Batu. She turned and left, and as she reached home, she heard people wailing, because the poison had taken effect and Pakila' Allo was dead.

Pakila' Allo's funeral was held at the house of his in-laws at Bokko, the house called Tangmundan.<sup>12</sup> And after the rites were completed, he was placed in the family tomb (*liang*) of Pong Bira at Bokko. After Pakila' Allo had been interred, his daughter went to Tambunan and spoke words that indirectly shamed his relatives. They had to ask an elder what she had meant, and he explained that they had permitted Pakila' Allo to be placed in a tomb where he had no right to be, because he was not descended from the house of Pong Bira. They became aware that they had been shamed. Then Pakila' Allo's wife went to Tondon and bought a carved wooden coffin (*erong*), for which she paid with a buffalo which had horns the length of three hand-spans. Then Pakila' Allo's remains were removed from the tomb of Pong Bira and placed in the coffin, and brought to Tambunan. And he was reinterred in the tomb called Bamba Ura'. And that is the tomb in which he remains to this day.

<sup>12</sup> Normally, he should have been taken back to his own family's *tongkonan*. That his relatives should have refused to organize his funeral, and allowed him to be buried in another family's tomb, is an indication of how they had disowned him, since this would normally be a cause of acute shame to his family (see Waterson 1995a). The storyteller paused here to supply additional genealogical detail, explaining that Pong Bira had married Pakila' Allo's daughter Bu'tu Bulaan, and it was his daughter from a previous marriage who cast aspersions on Pakila' Allo's family.

After this, his daughter went and carried her complaint to the Lord of Bone, who had once taken Pakila' Allo as his own son. When he heard her story, the Lord of Bone promised her he would come and avenge Pakila' Allo. Pakila' Allo's daughter stayed a long time in Bone; her name was Bu'tu Bulaan ('Golden Dawn'). And when she finally reappeared in Toraja, the people there, especially those of the three districts, knew that the people of Bone would be coming to make war in retaliation against them. Once more their leaders held a meeting; Tumbang Datu of Bokko, Patana' of Tambunan, Mangape and Pong Kalua' of Randan Batu, met to consider what they could do against the forces of Bone who would come to avenge Pakila' Allo. And they knew that alone, they would never be able to hold out against them. So they called the leaders of other villages in the region of the Sarira mountains.<sup>13</sup> They called Siapa Gunturan of Bebo' and Ne' Songgo i Limbu of Limbu, and Ne' Sanda Kada from Sarira, and Pong Kaleleng from Angin-Angin, and a number of others. And they began again to discuss what they should do. In the end they decided that if they were to be strong enough to hold back the mountain of Bone, and to oppose the forces of Bone that would come to avenge Pakila' Allo, they would have to call all the people of Toraja, and every wise leader from the whole of the Region Round like the Moon, Country Circular as the Sun. So they sent out word to every part of Toraja, and called them all from the east and the west, the south and the north. Then they held a great meeting in the country around Sarira, and a night market was set up. They sacrificed a pig with no tail (*bai pokki'*), and [when examined as a form of augury] its gall-bladder turned to stone [which was interpreted as a good omen]. These are the leaders who attended:

- 1 Pong Kalua' of Randan Batu
- 2 Tumbang Datu of Bokko
- 3 Patana' of Tambunan
- 4 Pong Songgo i Limbu of Limbu
- 5 Karusiak of Madandan
- 6 Landoak and Batara Langi' of Boto'
- 7 Amba Bunga' of Ma'kale
- 8 Pong Boro of Maruang
- 9 Patobok of Tokesan
- 10 Kondo Patalo of Lampio
- 11 Pagenggung of Batu Alu
- 12 Ne' Lollo of Leatung
- 13 Tomorere of Gantaran
- 14 Palondongan of Simbuang
- 15 To Gandang of Sarapung
- 16 Pagunturan of Bebo'
- 17 Ne' Tikuali' of Ba'tan
- 18 Tobangkudutua of Malenong
- 19 Pakkia' Bassi of Angin-Angin
- 20 Patabang Bunga' of Tadongkon
- 21 Salle Karurung of Paniki

<sup>13</sup> A ridge of mountains running north from Ma'kale, said to be the remains of the ladder that once joined earth and heaven, the *eran di langi'*.



- 22 Kattun of Buntao'
- 23 Palinggi' of La'bo'
- 24 Sa'bu Lompo of Bonoran
- 25 Ne' Birande of Tonga
- 26 Patasik of Pao
- 27 Ne' Malo' of Tondon
- 28 Poppata' of Nanggala
- 29 Batoroi Langi' of Langi'
- 30 Ne' Patana' of Kanuruan
- 31 Ne' Banne Langi' of Kadundung
- 32 Tibak Langi' of Saloso
- 33 Ne' Kalelean of Sarira
- 34 Banggai of Salu
- 35 Songgo i Limbu of Limbu (duplicates no. 4)
- 36 Songgi Patalo of Lemo
- 37 Arring of Mandetek
- 38 Lunte of Mareali
- 39 Rere of Lion
- 40 Baan Langi' of Lapandan
- 41 Saa' Rongle of Tondok Iring
- 42 Marimbun of Bungin
- 43 Panggeso of Tiromanda
- 44 Sando Passiu' of Pasang
- 45 To Landa' of Santun
- 46 Bangke Barani of Manggau
- 47 Parondonan of Ariang
- 48 Sundallak of Burake
- 49 Panggalo of Lemo
- 50 Bara' Padang of Gandang Batu
- 51 Pong Arruan of Sillanan
- 52 Pong Dian of Tinoring
- 53 Pong Barani of Marinding
- 54 Tobo' of Tampo
- 55 Pong Turo of Pangrorean
- 56 Puang Balu of Tangti
- 57 Kulu-Kulu Langi' of Tengen
- 58 Darra' Matua of Palipu'
- 59 Sanranga' of Lemo
- 60 Tanduk Pirri' of Alla'
- 61 Pokkodo of Tagari
- 62 Kundu Bulaan of Mendila Sa'dan
- 63 Pangarungan of Tallung Lipu
- 64 Tengkoasik of Barana'
- 65 Ne' Rose' of Bori'
- 66 Lotong Tara of Deri
- 67 Allo Paa of Ba'lele
- 68 Pakabatunna of Riu

- 69 Tangkesalu of Buntu Tondok
- 70 To Langi' of Pangala' Tondok
- 71 Medila Kila' of Rongkong
- 72 Ne' Darro of Makki
- 73 Ne' Mese' of Baruppu'
- 74 Sarungu' of Pangala'
- 75 Banggai Napo of Napo
- 76 Usuk Sangbamban of To' Tallang
- 77 Amba Bendo' of Awan
- 78 Ledong of Bittuang
- 79 Patikkan of Bambalu
- 80 Gandang Langi' of Mamasa
- 81 Ne' Darre' of Manipi'
- 82 Pong Rammang of Piongan
- 83 Tandi ri Lambun of Tapparan
- 84 Batotoi Langi' of Malimbong
- 85 Takumpang of Uulusalu
- 86 Tangdirerung of Uulusalu
- 87 Pong Manapa' of Se'seng
- 88 Tokkondo' of Buakayu
- 89 Mangi' of Rano
- 90 Mangapai of Mappa'
- 91 Pappang of Palesan
- 92 Batara Bau of Bau
- 93 Pong Bakula' of Redak
- 94 Tangdierong of Baroko
- 95 Bonggai Rano of Balepe'
- 96 To Layuk of Simbuang
- 97 Batittingan of Talion
- 98 Toissangan of Tanete Rano
- 99 Sa'pang of Buakayu
- 100 Sodang of Ratte, Buakayu
- 101 Lapatau of Tombang, Mappa'
- 102 Torisomba of Garampa', Mappa'
- 103 Sege' of Enrekang
- 104 Mangopai of Simbuang
- 105 Ponni Padang of Makkodo, Simbuang
- 106 Balluku' of Batu Tandung, Mamasa
- 107 Masanga of Pana', Mamasa
- 108 Karrang Lulaan of Mala'bo', Mamasa
- 109 Kumila' of Lapandan

And many others too came together on Mount Sarira, when the night market was set up. This is where, so they say, cockatoos were sold as white chickens, and crows were sold as black chickens, because it was dark and people didn't realise. And in this night market, or great meeting, up on Sarira, a unanimous decision was reached to hold back the mountain of Bone, to unite all the villages of Toraja

against the enemy from Bone. And they decided, that each village would set up a great torch (*dama' banga*) made of a *nibung*-palm trunk topped with dammar resin, as a warning signal, so that when the torch was lit in the south, down in Duri, it would be a sign that the enemy was in sight. And when the torch was lit in Duri, then another would be lit up on Sarira, and everyone who saw it would light their own torches on all the mountain tops of Toraja, as a sign that every Toraja should be ready to fight in defense of their land. It was also decided on Sarira, that if they were victorious against the army of Bone, they would hold a ceremony of thanksgiving (*surasan tallang*) and make offerings to Puang Matua (a creator deity) on Sarira. It was further decided, if victory was theirs, that afterwards anyone who was holding a funeral ceremony, whether of five nights, seven nights, or of the highest level (*dirapa'i*), would have all the names of those who had attended this meeting declaimed from the meat-dividing platform (*bala'kayan*), and each village that had sent a representative to Sarira would receive a share of meat. Then all of the leaders went back to their own villages to prepare their warriors to defend themselves against the mountain of Bone.

When the army of Bone came up into Duri, to Malua', it is said that their forces were divided into three: two 'helmets' (*palo-palo songko'*) went to the east, two to the west, and three came up through the middle of Toraja country.<sup>14</sup> When the army was seen in Duri, the drums were beaten as a sign: wherever the drum was heard, people were to go there, because that was where the enemy was. The big torches were lit, to let people know that the enemy had entered Toraja. And all the warriors were ready in the whole of the Country Round as the Moon. The enemy advanced directly north toward Rantepao, and headed toward Sa'dan. Before long, they were driven from Sa'dan and surrounded, and a fierce battle was fought. Soon, the Bone troops were driven out, and many were dead. The dead outnumbered the living, so that they retreated back to their own country. Once the army of Bone had gone back to Bone, the Toraja leaders fulfilled their promise and came together again on Mount Sarira, at the place called Tallang Sura', and they made offerings there, before returning to their own villages. From that time onwards, Toraja and Bone no longer got on; you could say they had become enemies (*sisal-lang*), because they had quarrelled and fought to no good purpose. However, some of the headmen in Duri and Enrekang, the leader of Aman in Duri and Kabere' in Enrekang, sent messengers to Bone and to Toraja to see if they couldn't find a way to make peace between them. A big meeting was held, and so it came about that peace was restored between Bone and Toraja and there was a renewal of friendly relations. This meeting was held at Malua', in Duri, between the leaders of Bone and the leaders of Toraja. And they agreed that what was past, was past, and that it was necessary to restore peace. So an oath was sworn, that neither should henceforth harm the other. The oath, so they say, was sworn in Duri, and a sacred sandalwood tree (*sendana bonga*) was planted, and a *lamba'* tree [a kind of *Ficus*], there

<sup>14</sup> In a poetic image, Tato' Dena' described them as being so numerous that they spread out like a shoal of prawns or tiny fish: *ma'urang simomba'*, *ma'bumbu' sidoloan*. He said their leaders were Ra'ri Amanda' and Arung Pute, and that after these leaders had been killed, their heads had been kept at *tongkonan* Bungin in Ma' kale. They were destroyed, however, when this house was burned by Islamic guerrillas in 1958.

in the south at Lamba' Doko, and a buffalo was sacrificed, of the kind called *tekken langi'*, which has one horn pointing up and the other pointing down, and a bunch of *alang-alang* grass was burned to ash. The *to minaa* (priest) spoke when the oath was made, and said: 'The people of Toraja and of Bone shall now be in agreement, and if either shall do harm to the other, whether Toraja or Bone, they shall be gored by the horns of this buffalo and tossed to the middle of the sky, and trampled by its hooves until the ground swallows them. They shall be totally destroyed like this burnt grass, they shall have no children or grandchildren.'

So this is the conclusion of the story of the Ancestors of the Same Dream. And if there is anyone in Toraja who has a high-level funeral, even up till today, this story will still be told from the meat-dividing platform (*bala'kayan*), and shares of meat will be given out to the descendants of all the chiefs of the villages of that time, when the night market was set up. So this is the story of the Ancestors of the Same Dream, so far as I know it. Supposing there are parts I don't know, or that I have got wrong, you can ask others to tell you. Because in Toraja there are many versions, many stories. Some differ, and some are the same, because this story has been passed on by word of mouth, preserved like river stones touching each other, carefully kept like pebbles overlapping, so that it shall be like a shining torch to our descendants who are like precious bamboo-shoots (*dianna' batu silambi', disedan karangan siratuan, lamendadi sulo marorongangan lako taruk bulaanna*).<sup>15</sup> Because our ancestors had no way to pass things on in writing, but always kept things in memory. And I also heard it from my grandfather, who passed it on to all of his descendants, including myself. So that's the end.

Pak Pasang Kanan's concluding words establish that the story has an important place in Toraja oral traditions. I collected several variants of the same tale, though none were as detailed as this one. Granted that he comes from the area in which the events are said to have taken place, it is still remarkable how tightly held in place the story is by its web of place names and genealogical detail. Other variants may be vaguer and briefer. But in this extraordinary story of cruelty and counter-cruelty, of treachery and betrayal, certain features always recur. One is the focus upon the character of Pakila' Allo, a Toraja who, having been adopted by the Bugis, changes his loyalties and betrays his own people. Another is the idea of a night market, at which crows are sold instead of black cocks, cockatoos or egrets instead of white cocks, *kaloko'* (a black and red bird) instead of black and red cocks, and a poisonous leaf (*lelating*) woven into mats which cause the user unexpected irritation. In the above version, not much is made of this motif, and its significance is unclear. But it recurs so regularly in all the versions I have heard that one must see it as one of those narrative elements that, while it sounds more like a folk tale motif than a matter of history, has helped to carry the story over time (compare Fentress and Wickham 1992:59). According to several versions, the Bone

<sup>15</sup> These are conventionalized poetic turns of phrase for the oral transmission of valued information.

troops sent to occupy the highlands stayed there for a year, or even longer, oppressing the people and taking their daughters in forced marriages, before the uprising was planned. This market is then described as a means by which the Toraja outwitted the Bugis (an inversion perhaps of the latter's historically dominant commercial role in the highlands). Others say the market provided a distraction which prevented the Bugis from noticing the secret meetings of the Ancestors of the Same Dream as they planned their revolt. One person described the market as having been founded by Pakila' Allo himself as a way of enriching himself by attracting people to gamble all night. But a more intriguing explanation (provided by Tato' Dena') was that the market, organized by the Ancestors of the Same Dream, was intended as a warning to the deities, that unless they aided a Toraja victory, their offerings in future would be deliberately muddled up.

The third recurrent feature is the description of the Bone troops as a multitude, described as *pitu palo-palo songko'* ('seven helmets'). As they assembled for their assault on Toraja, each soldier placed a grain of maize into a large helmet, and they were so many that they filled seven helmets. Of the seven, only three (or, in some versions, one) of these *palo-palo songko'* lived to return home after the Toraja uprising. Pak Pasang Kanan's version is unique in describing how in fact, there were three separate occasions when such a large army of 'seven helmets' was sent – perhaps an echo of historically repeated raids and incursions, or perhaps merely an elaboration proving the power of the number three in the structure of folk tales (Propp 1968). A version from Sa'dan recalls further elements of trickery put to use against the Bone troops, when some Toraja approached the Bone camp and offered to guard the horses tethered outside. Then when night fell, they wrapped sugar-palm fibre around the horses and set fire to them, turning them loose in the camp and shutting the gate behind them, so that they charged about and trampled everyone, and many Bugis soldiers were killed as they tried to flee the ensuing confusion. At another place, the Toraja laid smooth leaf-spathes of the sugar-palm around their own encampment, so that when the Bone troops came to attack them, their horses slipped and fell, while the riders were picked off one by one. These techniques of warfare recall some of the real accounts given in the Dutch reports of Arung Palakka's Toraja campaign, and may well reflect memories of the guerrilla tactics which the highlanders utilized against superior forces.

The telling of the story always includes a long list of local village leaders (other variants may also boast over a hundred names), with their places of origin, who attended the meeting and swore the oath to defend their homeland. Tato' Dena' said that each brought a handful of earth to a spot which is still called Tambunan Litak ('Mound of Earth') in Mandetek near Ma'kale, thus establishing his area as central to the story. My impression is that, while

a small core of names (for instance, 'Karusiak of Madandan') recur across many versions, the rest may vary widely in different areas, with a concentration of local names being recalled in each place. According to Tato' Dena', the three most important leaders were Amba Bunga' of Bombongan (Ma'kale), who took charge of the southern Three Domains (Ma'kale, Sangalla', and Mengkendek), Karusiak of Madandan, and Pong Songgo i Limbu, who coordinated the northern and central areas. In Pak Pasang Kanan's version, most of the place names are still readily identifiable today, but it is noticeable that, whereas many individual small villages are named from around his own area of Sangalla', those of more distant places are less specific, being names of whole districts such as Ulusalu, Mappa', Buakayu, Simbuang, and even distant Mamasa, a region bordering Tana Toraja to the west. By contrast, I was shown one written version in the westernmost district of Simbuang, which included a similarly long list containing many place names specific to that area. Certain mountains are also recalled as the places where torches were lit to send the signal for the uprising against the Bone troops – Tato' Dena', for instance, named a series of peaks from different parts of the highlands: Sesean (the highest peak in Toraja), Buntu Karua, Napo, Sopai, Sado'ko', Sarira, Kandora, Gasing and Sinaji. By contrast a version collected in Malimbong rearranged the story to give priority to more westerly mountain peaks, saying that the meeting of the ancestors had been held on Ullin, and the first torch lit on Sado'ko'. Thirdly, the site of the swearing of a 'great oath' (*basse kasalle*) of peace between Bone and Toraja at the end of this war also differs. Some variants from the more central districts say that the oath was sworn at Bamba Puang in present-day Enrekang (south of the present border of Tana Toraja), where there is a mountain peak associated with local origin myths. According to Tato' Dena', it was at a place called Pana'-Pana' in Duri. But on a visit to Simbuang in 1978, I was shown three small standing stones in front of the ancient *tongkonan* of Simbuang Tua which local residents say mark the spot.<sup>16</sup> The people of Bone swore that henceforth they would enter Toraja only in peace. The oath curses either party who might disturb the peaceful relations between them, and can be ritually 'woken up' (*ditundan basse*) to bring disaster on the offenders if the promise is broken.

An element omitted from Pak Pasang Kanan's version, but widely told by others, is that one village only failed to send anyone to join the Toraja alli-

<sup>16</sup> There is always the possibility that two or more oaths were sworn. Since Simbuang borders on the Bugis region of Sawitto, the part played by the Sawitto people in this war features more prominently in their memories. A recently published volume by a Toraja author, which includes a version of the Pakila' Allo story, also records the swearing of still another oath, the *basse sendana bongga* or 'oath of the spotted sandalwood tree', said to have been sworn between Bone and Toraja circa 1710, in the reign of La Patau', Arung Palakka's successor (Tulak 1998:70). No account is given of what occasioned the swearing of this additional oath.

ance. This is a place called Karunanga in Sa'dan. As a punishment for their failure, it is said that from that day on, anybody wanting to take a head in order to complete an aristocratic chief's funeral ceremony had license to prey upon Karunanga. How true this is, is hard to ascertain; in the western part of Toraja I found the name meant little to people, while others suggest that headhunters may have interpreted 'Karunanga' rather liberally to apply to any convenient victim. Pak Banti, who comes from Sa'dan, explained to me at some length that there are really two villages at Karunanga: one, called Karunanga Tua, is the home of the local nobility while a neighbouring one, Kole, is where their slaves lived, including the *to mebalun* (or wrapper of corpses, a task inherited in certain families who have such low status that they are treated as being outside the status system altogether).<sup>17</sup> The messenger from the Ancestors of the Same Dream mistakenly went to the slave village, where the people did not respond to the call because they feared it was not their place to do so. But the people of Karunanga today apparently claim the headman of the time, Pissi-Pissi of Pea, as a genuine member of the alliance. Furthermore, according to Pak Banti, it was only the people of Sa'dan who found it convenient to take heads from the inhabitants of Karunanga, which they had done even before the war against Bone, while in other areas, such as Kesu', it was customary to use one of their own slaves as a sacrifice when required. He concluded by saying that none of his own ancestors had ever had a head taken for their funerals because they were too humane. He suggested that this practice must always have been rare, which, from the fragmentary anecdotal evidence available, would seem to be true.<sup>18</sup>

Sometimes the list of names and places is recalled without the complete story of events. I recorded one short account of the 'Ancestors of the Same Dream' from an elderly *to minaa*, Saleda of Kinali in Talion, in January 1978. He had begun our interview by telling a creation myth, going on to recount a genealogy which began with a marriage between two ancestors renowned in the western part of Toraja, Gonggang Sado'ko' and Lai' Ullin.<sup>19</sup> The genealogy comprises a list of descendants who subsequently spread out and travelled to different places in order to found new houses. Saleda then proceeded to explain about the Ancestors of the Same Dream as another important category of ancestors, and the roles they had played in establishing Toraja ritual communities. Rather than a historical account, the names of these ancestors,

<sup>17</sup> See Nooy-Palm (1979:280); Volkman (1985:86).

<sup>18</sup> Another commentator, Y.B. Tandirerung of Ulusalu, maintained that the slave, like the rest of the funeral sacrifices for a noble lord, ought to come from the deceased's own property, and that to take a head from somewhere else would leave you open to the suggestion that you were 'too poor' to kill a slave of your own.

<sup>19</sup> They are not always considered to have married each other, however. As will be seen in Chapter V, genealogies in this area tended to show wide variation.



who 'held back the mountain of Bone' (*untulak buntuna Bone*) in the past, are embedded in a litany which presents them as idealised founding figures, combining political and ritual leadership. It locates them in a sort of Golden Age, reiterating a vision of a time of abundance, when everything flourished and multiplied in response to the celebration of rituals. The account contains no details of the events of the Bone invasion, but rather creates a web of ancestors and the houses and ritual communities which they founded. Part of the text is given below:

Now, this story starts here in our village [region]: [it concerns] Gonggang Sado'ko', the Ancestors of the Same Dream, the Ancestors whom we revere as Lords. Gonggang Sado'ko' held back the mountain of Bone, in the olden days, he stopped their advance into our lands. Then the harvest of the earth flourished and human beings multiplied.

These were the Ancestors of the Same Dream: Pabidang lived at Buakayu; he, the ancestor who dwelt in Buakayu, he too joined in holding back the mountain of Bone, in the days gone by. He had responsibility for the [fertility of the] plains and hillsides; the offspring of buffaloes flourished, and human beings were born.

Masuang of Tangsa held back the mountain of Bone, he took care of the plains and hillsides in the days gone by, and everything flourished and was well. He it was.

Amba Bunga' of Ma'kale, Pong Songgo of Limbu, also held back the mountain of Bone in the past. Then the harvest of the earth flourished, people multiplied, everything grew in abundance. These were the Ancestors of the Same Dream, the Ancestors whom we revere as Lords.

Karasiak of Madandan likewise held back the mountain of Bone in the days gone by. He too. And the harvest of the earth was abundant at that time, and human beings multiplied.

Tandi of Lambun held back the mountain of Bone, he who passed down the rules of ritual (*sukaran aluk*) to the ancestors Sawalinggi and Rangkaianan. The rituals were upheld, and many feasts were celebrated. The *merok* feast was celebrated, the *bua'* ceremony was completed.

Pong Manapa' of Bittuang held back the mountain of Bone in the days of the Ancestors revered as Lords. Then the upward-pointing horns [that is, buffaloes] multiplied in the dense forests, and cuscus passing by, and forest monkeys.<sup>20</sup>

Pauwang of Malimbong, too, held back the mountain of Bone in the past. The harvests were abundant, nothing at all was wanting [...]. Those were our Ancestors of the Same Dream, in times past...

The ancestors are presented here as exemplary, not only in their resistance to

<sup>20</sup> 'Cuscus' and 'monkeys' here refer metaphorically to buffaloes.

Bone's intrusion but as founders of villages and upholders of ritual.<sup>21</sup> In his recitation, Saleda greatly abbreviated the list of names, but stressed those who were closely associated with his own region. The network of place names is implicitly linked with the houses founded by noble ancestors in those locations. Just as in the recitation of genealogies, the founding of houses and their locations is woven in with the list of names, and forms an integral part of the information conveyed. The structure of the recitation, with its repetition of set phrases, clearly provides the sort of framework from which a skilled oral poet can generate an account, which will be roughly similar though liable to variations on each particular telling. Such variations may not be perceived as relevant, if indeed they can be perceived at all by the performer and his audience.<sup>22</sup>

Fentress and Wickham (1992:59) have shown how epic stories may be passed on orally for centuries until they become fixed as a set of images which, while highly unreliable historically, may seem very lifelike and real to the audience. 'Social memory', they conclude, 'is not stable as information; it is stable, rather, at the level of shared meanings and remembered images.' It is probably impossible to determine the links between the narratives of the Ancestors of the Same Dream, and actual historical events in Sulawesi. Yet we are still left with the question of how, and why, the tale has been so tenaciously preserved, with all of its remarkable details, especially the huge list of names with their associated houses. It is in the conclusion of Pak Pasang Kanan's narrative that we find the key to the social significance of the Pakila' Allo story. His account is confirmed by those given to me by Tato' Dena' and others, for they all end by explaining that all those who trace descent from the Ancestors of the Same Dream were given the right to have the story declaimed from the top of the meat-dividing platform at their highest-ranking funerals, with shares of meat to be distributed to the descendants of each named ancestor. It is this, then, that has not only provided a regular occasion for retelling the story, but has given it a continued relevance in terms of present social relations. The Ancestors of the Same Dream have become a special category of ancestors, contributing to the historical pride and status of the houses with which each one is connected. Once I had collected enough versions of the story, it became clear that there was sometimes dispute over who was the correct ancestor for a particular area, and one informant frankly suggested that families whose fortunes are on the rise may well attempt to have the name of their own ancestor inserted. It is very probable that the

<sup>21</sup> Tato' Dena' explained that after the defeat of Bone, the Ancestors of the Same Dream celebrated many rituals in order to restore harmony to the earth.

<sup>22</sup> See Fentress and Wickham (1988:43-4) for a detailed discussion of the process of oral composition as practised by Greek, Anglo-Saxon and Serbo-Croat bards.

list has been subject to this sort of updating over time, as well as to marked regional variations. The significance of the story must therefore be seen to rest at least partly in its repeated activation as a means of inscribing precedence and status within Toraja society itself. At the same time, it dramatizes the creation of an ephemeral sense of unity in the face of an external threat, and for this reason provides an enduring template for action in times of stress.

## CHAPTER IV

# A time of chaos

*The 1890s: the 'Time of the Sidenreng people'*

One final detail is frequently mentioned in accounts of the resistance against Bone. This is the idea that, after their defeat, the Bugis sought for one last way to bring destruction on the Toraja, and found it in the introduction of gambling, particularly with dice (*ma'dadu*). By this means, it is said, they induced the Toraja to sell themselves into slavery. Pak Pasang Kanan added as a coda to his story, that after being driven out of Toraja, the men of Bone held a meeting to discuss how they might be avenged, but they were unable to decide what to do; it was a woman who then proposed a plan. She instructed them to kill a buffalo with downward-pointing horns (*tedong sokko*), and use one of its bones to make dice. In this way Toraja would be brought low, like the buffalo-horns. From the skin of the buffalo, a set of playing cards was made. Hearing that a big ceremony was to be held at Sa'dan in the north of Toraja, the people of Bone went there via Palopo, bringing the dice; the cards were introduced to Mengkendek in the south, via Duri. The people of Sa'dan started gambling with the dice, as a result of which those unable to pay their debts were sold into slavery. This is recalled in the saying: *Sanik asu dao Sa'dan/Pura deata na dosa* ('Dice up in Sa'dan/Many nobles have been sold').<sup>1</sup> Another variant refers to one of the commanders of the Bone troops, Arung Pute (literally, 'White Lord', a name, or title, that seems to be widely remembered). He was captured by the Toraja but released and allowed to return home. He told people that the Toraja were too strong to be defeated; the only way to get the better of them would be to take one of his bones, after his death, and make dice out of it. The dice were introduced into the Toraja lands via Palopo, and, as Toraja became fascinated by the new game, many who couldn't pay their debts were sold into slavery.

Dice and cards, then, are remembered as introductions from the lowlands,

<sup>1</sup> *Sanik asu* means literally, 'a dog-tick'; the dice are round and white like a large tick. *Deata*, in this context, is used metaphorically as a term of respect for the nobility or wealthy people, while *dosa* has the sense, not of 'sin' as in Indonesian, but of 'incurring a penalty'.



Set of old Bugis playing cards (taken from Grubauer 1923)

even though it is highly unlikely that gambling was unknown in Toraja before this time. (In spite of all remarks to the contrary, cockfights have had a traditional ritual role in Toraja, and at least some knowledgeable informants were of the opinion that gambling on the outcome had always been an intrinsic part of this noble entertainment.) The conviction that gambling was the means by which the Bugis took their revenge on Toraja does, however, have a connection with the real developments of the late nineteenth century, when Bugis traders encouraged Toraja nobles in their mania for gambling, and defaulting debtors were indeed seized and sold. This historical awareness has been transformed into a set of concrete images and events which, by being worked into the Pakila' Allo story, provide a linking thread that joins the legendary resistance to Bone with more recent history. The story has thus facilitated the interweaving of the two periods in oral memory. The other element of the story which is still very much alive is the oath that was sworn between Toraja and Bone; whenever the oath is 'woken up', it guarantees defeat for trouble-makers who threaten the peace between them.

After the confrontation with Arung Palakka, and the long period of peace that followed it, there came eventually a second major Bugis incursion which embedded itself in Toraja memory. This was the war over the coffee trade routes which was fought in the 1890s. It is sometimes recalled as 'the coffee war' (I.: *perang kopi*), though in some people's memories, coffee as the motivating factor seems to have been forgotten. In the Saluputti region, which was one of the areas most severely affected, this period is often referred to as 'the time of the Sidenreng people' (*wattunna to Sidenreng*). In other places, the term seemed to have little resonance. Although we are dealing here with a far more recent historical memory, about which some Dutch records also exist, and about which Bigalke was able to gather considerable oral data in Toraja, the stories that I collected were nonetheless confusing to me, because in several instances the events of this period seemed to have become confused with the story of Pakila' Allo and the Ancestors of the Same Dream, so that the term 'Bone war' was applied indiscriminately to a sort of fusion of the two. This merging perhaps reflects simply the fact that the stories woven around the original historical events, whatever they were, have a similar meaning to people: they have all played some part in a process by which Toraja, like people everywhere, have tended to define themselves to some degree in opposition to their neighbours.

As coffee became an increasingly valuable crop in the latter half of the nineteenth century, its cultivation in the Sa'dan highlands became greatly expanded. By at least the 1860s, a number of Bugis petty traders had found their way into the highlands and settled at the local market places, often marrying local Toraja women. One of the places they settled was around the market at Rembon in Saluputti, where there are still a considerable number



of families of Bugis descent. The traders collected coffee and sold cloth, and sometimes also bought slaves. To judge from contemporary accounts, these were often young children, who were thought less likely to run away (Van Rijn 1902:345-6). In the 1870s, there was a boom in world coffee prices, but by the end of this decade, widespread plantings in Brazil matured and this new source flooded the market, causing a dramatic collapse in prices in 1880. A cycle of boom and bust followed over the next twenty years, largely dependent on whether harvests from Brazil were good or bad (Pendergrast 1999:63-9). As coffee prices fluctuated strongly during the 1880s and 1890s, the traders tended to increase their purchase of slaves when prices for coffee were low (Bigalke 1981:67). From about 1850 another significant import from the lowlands were English firearms brought from Singapore. In the early 1870s, the Dutch Governor banned the import and export of arms through Makassar, after which the trade through Pare-Pare significantly increased. At this time, Sidenreng was the South Sulawesi state that was expanding most rapidly, and extending its influence over neighbouring regions such as Enrekang and Duri. Sidenreng and its client states soon became heavily armed, and continued to purchase large quantities of weapons which they traded to the highlands. The possibility of exchanging coffee for guns began to effect a dramatic alteration in the balance of power between ruling Toraja nobles and their commoners, transforming the largely ritualised warfare of the past into something far more deadly. Over the next two decades, improved models of breechloading and repeating rifles quickly found a market in South Sulawesi. The scene was now set for perhaps the most troubled and chaotic period in Toraja history.

By 1875, most of the coffee grown in the highlands was being exported to the kingdoms of Luwu' and Bone, via the port of Palopo to the east of the Toraja lands. Another portion of the coffee trade passed to the port of Bungin on the west coast, north of Pare-Pare, which was controlled by the kingdom of Sidenreng. Thus, to the outside world, Toraja coffee first became known as 'Bungin' coffee. As Bigalke has graphically described, controlling the trade networks and keeping them open became a matter of fierce competition between Luwu' and Sidenreng, a project which required increasingly high levels of violence and coercion in the Sa'dan highlands, with horrible consequences for the Toraja themselves. In Luwu', a wealthy *peranakan* trader, Said Ali, became a dominant commercial figure from about 1870. Born of an Arab father and a high-ranking Bugis mother, Said Ali had married into the royal families of both Bone and Luwu'. The position he established for himself as the Datu's chief financier also allowed him to exercise considerable political influence. Said Ali, together with his partner and sons, spent much time in the highlands overseeing the collection of coffee, for which they were dependent on the close cooperation of Toraja headmen. They also relied on the headmen to supply



their retainers as porters to carry the coffee down to Palopo. Where necessary, compliance was achieved by force. Van Rijn (1902:348) records that hundreds of Toraja had been seized as slaves and sent to Palopo, and when one village chief failed to provide a hundred porters, Said Ali's son had him flogged and his face smeared with pig excrement. In Van Rijn's opinion, the headman's response to this abuse typified a certain aspect of Toraja character, which he describes as 'gentle and docile' until pushed beyond endurance. He promptly produced 200 men and offered to accompany the party himself; after travelling some distance, the Toraja fell upon their Bugis overlords and ambushed them, killing most of them.

One of the headmen with whom Said Ali developed a close relationship was Pong Maramba from Rantepao, an ambitious young nobleman who had made himself increasingly powerful as he aggressively expanded his hold over smaller and weaker villages in the populous Tikala and Kesu' areas, and seized their rice fields. His relationship with Said Ali enabled Pong Maramba to purchase modern firearms, which he bought in exchange for coffee. He had also enriched himself through strategic marriages (one of which, his descendants told me, was to a wealthy but childless noblewoman whose lands he thereby hoped to take over), and through alliances formed through the fostering of children, a device which many people used at this time in the hope of gaining the protection of powerful chiefs. Pong Maramba's descendant, Pak Layuk Sarungallo of Kesu', told how one group of villages in Nonongan, fearful that they might be seized by a noble of that area, had ceded four rice fields to Pong Maramba in exchange for promises of protection.

From about 1885, Said Ali's arrangement with Pong Maramba, and hence Luwu's claims to a monopoly of the coffee trade, were increasingly challenged by Sidenreng. The Sidenreng court began to equip trade agents of its own, with the aim of diverting the flow of coffee from Palopo to its own port at Pare-Pare. By this date, Luwu's claims to political dominance in the highlands were already far eroded and Toraja chiefs in the southern areas had begun to reorient themselves toward Sidenreng. They had also formed close ties through intermarriage with the ruling families of the Islamized states of Duri and Enrekang, which lay between them and Sidenreng. Cooperation with the agents of Sidenreng offered certain benefits to southern nobles, particularly since the trade also gave them access to firearms by means of which they might further their own ambitions. The leaders of the Tallu Lembangna, particularly Puang Tarongkon of Ma'kale, seem to have taken the initiative in inviting the court of Sidenreng to send troops into the highlands with the aim of disrupting Said Ali's control of the coffee trade (Bigalke 1981:51). They made their base at the market of Rantetaio in Saluputti, well positioned as a collection point for coffee heading south, and soon to become notorious as a slave market as well. Their commander Andi Guru formed a further alliance

with a northern chief, Pong Tiku of Pangala', perhaps the most aggressively expansionist of all the Toraja chiefs at this time, whose ambitions put him in direct competition with Pong Maramba. Pong Tiku was later to mount the most significant Toraja opposition to Dutch takeover in the highlands, and has achieved posthumous glorification as a national hero, but at this moment he was more locally engaged in a ruthless expansion of his power through a mixture of warfare, and multiple marriages to the daughters of political allies in different parts of the highlands. He had already absorbed Baruppu', to the north of his base in Pangala', and Awan, to the southwest, and was in the process of continuing his expansion to the west, when his attack on Bittuang was interrupted by the Dutch arrival.

As these chiefs and others built up their fighting forces and exploited closer and closer ties with Bugis rulers and mercenaries, other, weaker villages became increasingly vulnerable to attack and were preyed upon for slaves, resulting in drastic depopulation of some areas in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Kurra, Dende', Piongan and Madandan were four such areas in the hills northwest of Ma'kale which suffered particularly severely, losing as much as ninety per cent of their adult male population in slave raids (Bigalke 1981:76). Pak Kila', whose family comes from Sesean, recalled how his grandfather had once met a Bugis slave-trader on the road, pulling along a captive, who it transpired was a victim of Pong Tiku's assault on Baruppu'. On a whim, he had offered to buy this man in exchange for a buffalo of his which was grazing at the side of the road. The man's name was Pong Rokko'. He had been one of those sold by Pong Tiku in exchange for guns; his Bugis purchaser had a debt to settle in Tikala, and was content to use the buffalo instead of the slave to pay it. Pong Rokko' was taken home by his new owner, who fed him and tied him to the front pillar of the house, where many people came to look at him. After a time, they heard the slave chanting the ritual poetry known only to the *to minaa*, or priests of the indigenous religion. When they inquired, he explained that he was the Indo' Aluk, or leading *to minaa*, of Baruppu'. This ritual functionary once held a position of pre-eminence in village communities. Pong Rokko' was invited to make an offering the next day, his performance of which proved his claim that he was really a priest. He was freed and invited to return home to Baruppu', but after a few nights he came back again. He and his wife eventually built a house on Sesean, after which they came and went between Baruppu' and their new home. Priests of the Aluk to Dolo are always of aristocratic rank; clearly, as this anecdote reveals, it was not only commoners who were at risk in the intensifying wars of expansion. In his new approach to warfare, Pong Tiku was breaking older, unwritten rules of restraint, for, by others' accounts, in the past the losers in village wars had been allowed to remain on their lands, at most giving up their slaves to the victors, and had paid tribute in buffalo or in relatively

minor forms such as the periodic presentation of fish from ricefield ponds.

Another factor which contributed to the depredations of the slave trade was a growing mania for gambling. Toraja markets ran (and still run) on a six-day cycle, and market day was the occasion for some men to spend a whole day of feverish gaming, financed by Bugis moneylenders – at the end of which those who defaulted on their debts might find themselves – and sometimes their whole families – carried off as slaves. Bigalke documents a number of occasions when fights broke out between Toraja and Bugis over gambling disputes, sometimes erupting into full-scale communal battles. The overall picture of the 1880s and 1890s is one of increasingly ruthless violence and social disruption in Toraja communities. At the same time, as opportunistic chiefs sought closer and closer alliances with Bugis courts, traders and mercenaries, they experienced increasing exposure to Bugis culture. In the temptation it provided to ambitious headmen, Bigalke (1981:45) notes, ‘this trade was the original glue cementing the highland and lowland elites’. By the 1890s, nearly all the major chiefs, and their children, could speak the Bugis language and were literate in it; some, like the Puang of Sangalla’, sent sons to the court of Sidenreng for instruction in etiquette, literacy and the arts of war, and one or two had even begun to toy with the idea of converting to Islam – a prospect with which Pong Maramba, in particular, was later to tease Christian missionaries, much to their dismay (Bigalke 1981:173). The exploitation and violent disruptions suffered by ordinary Toraja in this period, then, would not have been possible without the collusion of some Toraja headmen with powerful outsiders.

By 1895 Sidenreng had successfully taken over control of the coffee trade, and one attempt by Luwu’ to displace them had failed. The Datu of Luwu’ then turned to Bone for help. The ruler of Bone, La Pawowoi, responded in July 1897 by sending his son, Baso Abdul Hamid Arung Lita, known to his troops as Patta Punggawaé, with a force of 4,500 well-armed and mounted troops. The title means literally ‘the Lord Commander’, rendered in Toraja oral memories as ‘Patta Punggawa’. The expeditionary force set out from Bone in 100 boats to Palopo, from whence they advanced on horseback into the highlands. The troops are still remembered in Toraja for their distinctive ‘red caps’ (*songko’ borrong*), by which name they have been known ever since. Their commander is widely recalled as Ulu Dodi’, a nickname which means ‘Shaven Head’; though whether this individual is the same person as the Patta Punggawa, or merely one of his deputies, I have not been able to confirm. At any rate, it is not surprising if this feature of his appearance lodged itself in the popular memory, since it would have provided a radical contrast with Toraja men’s hair styles of the time. As in the great majority of pre-colonial Southeast Asian cultures, Toraja of both sexes wore their hair long, the men binding theirs up in a slightly different style to that of the women, and secur-

ing it with a thin fillet of bamboo (*beke'*) bound about the forehead.<sup>2</sup> Over the next seven months, the Red Caps moved speedily through the highlands, attacking and driving away the Sidenreng bands, forcing Pong Tiku to retreat to his northern fortresses, and destroying the market at Rantetaio. They then returned to Palopo. Remarkably, a record of the expedition has survived in the contents of a diary kept between 15 June 1897 and 20 March 1900 by Haji Daéng Salé, who served the Patta Punggawa as adjutant and quartermaster (Tol 1986). The diary reveals the strict discipline under which the Patta Punggawa kept his troops, and for which he was answerable to his father. It also sheds light on the political manoeuvring between Bone's ruler and the Datu of Luwu'; in return for his assistance, La Pawowoi extracted from the Datu and his council of advisors a signed document, acknowledging and reviving Bone's traditional right to overlordship of the Toraja highlands. The Sidenrengers, meanwhile, temporarily retreated south to Duri and Enrekang, but Said Ali had made himself hated in Toraja, and in the aftermath of the expedition was unable to regain control of the situation (Van Rijn 1902:349). Just a few months later, in January 1898, a second expedition was sent, this time remaining in the highlands for nine months. But the Patta Punggawa's efforts to restore the flow of trade to Palopo were ultimately unsuccessful. The southern Toraja chiefs refused to cooperate, and Pong Tiku of Pangala' was busy cementing an alliance with Ua' Situru' of Sidenreng (Tol 1986:159). Andi Guru, another Sidenreng leader, subsequently set up a new market further south, at Mebali (Mengkendek), and most of the trade in both coffee and slaves continued to pass to Pare-Pare.

### *The nineteenth century in local memory*

I was able to collect much more detailed and more obviously historical local memories about the events of the late nineteenth century. Some of these provide glimpses into the nature of inter-village warfare (*sirari*), as it was conducted before the import of guns, and as it became exacerbated by the presence of the Sidenreng bands. In the pattern of memories, two prominent features can be observed. One has to do with the seizing of rice lands by the victors, the names of particular rice fields still being remembered to the present day. The second (which was to be a feature also of events in the 1950s), was the burning of origin-houses. Since I lived in the Saluputti region

<sup>2</sup> Reid (1988:79-84) discusses both the underplaying of sexual difference in traditional Southeast Asian hairstyles, and the common identification of shaving or cutting the hair with conversion to Islam, though he notes that '[l]ong hair was still the norm for Javanese, Bugis, and most Makassarese until the nineteenth century' (Reid 1988:82).

during most of my fieldwork, my most detailed accounts of this period come from this district, which was among those most severely affected by the presence of Sidenreng mercenaries. In other areas, there were no such memories of houses being burned, and the Sidenreng presence seems to have been much less numerous. But everywhere, people can tell of small-scale hostilities between villages, which were clearly a characteristic feature of local politics in pre-colonial times. Memories of some of these went back four or five generations, to the early or mid-nineteenth century.

The most trivial reasons were sometimes sufficient to provoke hostilities. These took the form of raids, or sometimes of pitched battles (*sira'*) which were terminated as soon as one side incurred a fatal injury. Some men who gained a reputation for bravery as warriors (*to barani*) might be rewarded for their services with land. How far this provided an avenue for advancement is hard to assess: most people maintained that the *to barani* were all of noble rank, though others said that the bodyguards of aristocrats could also achieve recognition as *to barani*. Most wars were started by one aristocratic family against another. One of the most grievous ways in which a family might be insulted was, if they were holding a funeral, to steal the body and take its head before the rites could be completed; this was not only a violent humiliation to the family, but a serious breach of the *aluk* prohibition against the disruption of funeral ceremonies. Or a murder might be committed, which would have to be avenged by the victim's family by the death of anyone from the murderer's neighbourhood, though usually women were spared. Earth would be heaped up on the spot where the victim had fallen, and the site was known as *padang dibosi* ('defiled land') until he had been avenged. The relatives wore fillets of black *induk* (sugar palm) fibre around their heads as a sign of mourning and intended vengeance. Occasionally these enmities developed into prolonged feuds.

While living in Malimbong I got to know Pak Tolele, who at that time was the village head of Sawangan. A wiry, grey-haired man with a lively twinkle in his eye, Tolele had a wealth of experience and an intimate knowledge of local history. He tapped several sugar palms for *tuak* (palm wine) on a hill slope near his house, and from time to time I would join him and his neighbours to sit under the trees and drink in the late afternoon. He was a gifted raconteur, and on these occasions could sometimes be persuaded to tell stories about the past. Once, he told me, a pitched battle had taken place between Toding of Malimbong and Londo' of Lombok in the neighbouring *lembang* of Talion, after the former had refused to lend Londo' some tobacco one day. Toding lost, and had to surrender most of his lands to Londo'. Some time in the mid-nineteenth century, a noble of Kole in Malimbong, named Limbong Sitandi, died, and a huge funeral was being held for him. While it was still in progress, a group from Madandan led by one Ne' Pamirring came





Toraja man from Baubuntu, photographed by Albert Grubauer on his expedition through South and Central Sulawesi in 1911. The photograph illustrates the style of dress and long hair which was still typical for men at that time (taken from Grubauer 1923).

to try and steal the body. The family had built a fence around the house to protect the body, but the raiders had already broken in and stolen the *tulak bala*, the black buffalo which was being stalled underneath the house to be used as the final funeral sacrifice. They were put to rout, however, by the great warrior, Pauwang di Malimbong, who lived in the *tongkonan* at Pasang and came leaping over the fence to the aid of Limbong Sitandi's family. As they fled, one man fell headlong, and another, falling on top of him, was impaled on his spear.

Another war which took place around this time was between the people of Lombok and the people of Tasia in Talion. The nobles of these two places were related to each other but were rivals. Those of Lombok, led by Saranga', were always trying to cheat and threaten the commoners into giving up their lands, but the Tasia people resisted. Their leader was Sorreng; this was Tolele's own great-great-grandfather, so we can calculate that these events must have taken place some time in the early nineteenth century. When hostilities were declared, Saranga' invited Polo Lima of Sangalla' to help him (the name means 'Cutter off of Hands') while Sorreng's allies were Pauwang and Bottong (the latter meaning 'Fence') of Malimbong. Polo Lima came to Lombok with his followers and demanded the sacrifice of several pigs so that they might eat before the battle. Then he asked, 'Which village is it that wants to fight?' Tasia was pointed out to him, and he declared scornfully that it was no bigger than his top-knot (*pa'tondon* – a tuft of hair traditionally left on top of a noble child's head when the rest was shaved). Then he wanted to fight at once, without waiting to eat the meat that had been prepared. Bottong, Pauwang and Sorreng, meanwhile, were waiting for him at Tasia. When he approached Tasia with his followers, Polo Lima noticed somebody sitting on a rock and playing a leaf trumpet (*ma'pelle*), as though nothing in the world were the matter. Polo Lima said to him, 'Where are the leaders of this village? Don't you know that I am Polo Lima? That means that I can cut off the hands of all your warriors here!' But Pauwang (for it was he) continued to play his leaf trumpet. Then Bottong retorted, 'Don't you know that I'm the 'Fence' of this village?', and they saw that all the people of Tasia were lying in wait for them, armed with poison darts (*tiaran*) and blowpipes. There were two kinds of poison used for these weapons, derived from *ipo* resin.<sup>3</sup> One was called *tekke tallu* ('three steps'), and the other *tekke lima* ('five steps'), this being how far one would get after being hit by one of these darts. Seeing that to occupy the village would be impossible, the people of Lombok ran away, and the people of Tasia ran after them and killed them. After this there was a rupture in relations between the families of Lombok and Tasia, which lasted for four generations. Eventually relations were mended, however, by a mar-

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter III, note 5.



riage which took place between Palino' of Tasia and Lai' Urang of Lombok. This was not an arranged match but the result of a chance affection between them. Tolele concluded that this must have been willed by Puang Matua, the Old Lord of the Heavens, for as he put it, *kadanna to dolo, den aluk sola pemali namorai ma'pasimelo* – 'there is a saying of the ancestors, the *aluk* and *pemali* (the prescriptions and prohibitions of the Toraja religion) like to make peace.' In other words, wars make the ancestors and deities angry. Once children had been born of this union, the feud was forgotten.

An interesting point about Pauwang is that Tolele's account identifies him as clearly a real person, who features also in the genealogy of the noble house of Pasang in Malimbong. This confirms that he was born in the generation of Tolele's great-grandfather. However, in some of the accounts I collected from other areas (including *to minaa* Saleda's, recounted in Chapter III), Pauwang has been mythologised by being named as one of the Ancestors of the Same Dream, which would place him much further back in history. That, says Tolele, is because people in areas distant from each other do not know the proper details of each other's histories. Certainly this was not the only instance in which a particular house or ancestor seemed to acquire more mythical characteristics at a distance than they had locally. Pak Pasan Kanan's account named yet another individual, Batoto i Langi', as one of the Ancestors of the Same Dream. But Batoto i Langi' is a *to manurun*, who is claimed as the legendary founder of *tongkonan* Parinding, another noble house of this district. This, in Tolele's view, is also mistaken. By his account, the true Ancestor of the Same Dream from this part of Toraja was his own ancestor, Tolele of Menduruk. He suggested that some of the variation in the lists of the Ancestors' names was due to the desire of descendants of different houses to promote their own ancestors when the fortunes of their house were on the rise; if the original house, by contrast, fell into obscurity, its ancestor might be displaced in rival versions. One may, of course, detect a note of self-interest in his own account, yet his comments provide a shrewd insight into the sources of variation in the story. They alert us yet again to the political motivations behind the remembering of the past. At the same time, this example shows how easily a real figure can slip from history into mythology. Pak Kondo, another acquaintance who lived close to Rembon and enjoyed discussing local history, mentioned as one of the local chiefs of the 1890s Karasiak (or Karusiak) of Madandan – a name which occurs in almost all versions of the Pakila' Allo story as one of the Ancestors of the Same Dream. Was he, too, a figure from the not-so-distant past who has been thrust backward into the realms of mythology? Or had he, conversely, been pulled from the world of myth back into living memory? Hoping for an answer, in 2002 I paid a visit to Madandan and asked a local elder, Ne' Paramma', to talk about Karasiak. He related his own version of the story of Pakila' Allo and the Toraja resistance

against Bone, giving prominence to Karasiak's part in the drama. The conclusion of his account was used, like so many Toraja stories, to make a point about precedence: it stressed that Karasiak, when offered a handsome reward for his role in the battle, refused to accept any land or other reward, save that from henceforth, the people of Madandan should no longer be required to pay any special homage to the lords of the Tallu Lembangna, but should be regarded as equal to them in status. Ne' Paramma', who claims direct descent from Karasiak, then recounted his genealogy, tracing exactly thirteen generations between himself and his famous ancestor. He was adamant that this, no more and no less, was the correct genealogical distance between the Ancestors of the Same Dream and the present. This would place Karasiak quite plausibly in the era of Arung Palakka, definitely not at the close of the nineteenth century. His supposed appearance at this later date in Pak Kondo's account, then, provides another example of the fluidity of oral memories. The fabric of social memory across Tana Toraja is woven from many details originating from different local districts; although some features, such as the names of prominent individuals, become part of this common fabric and lodge themselves in memory over long periods, in areas further from their point of origin they are always at risk of distortions such as displacement in time, exaggeration, or loss of detail.

Once the Sidenreng bands had entered the highlands, the possibility of getting firearms from them raised the stakes in intervillage wars, and many people held the view that the Bugis themselves had encouraged the aristocracy to fight each other since they profited not only from the gun trade, but also from the purchase of the resulting war captives as slaves, who could be taken off and resold in the lowlands. A well-known instance is the battle fought between two brothers, Rante Allo and Andi Lolo, the sons of Puang Tarongkon of Ma'kale, which some say was also incited by Bugis advisors. They are said to have fought each other on purpose, causing surrounding villagers to flee their homes, after which the brothers walked in and divided their lands between them. On another occasion, they joined forces and attacked Rante Lemo and Burake, seizing more land, 'taking it by gunsmoke' (*naala rambu balili*), as it was described. In Saluputti, a similarly rapacious noble was Linggi Allo of Tapparan, and I was frequently told how he had made war against Tangdan of Pangleon, also in Tapparan. Linggi Allo was on good terms with one of the Sidenreng commanders, Ua', a noble from Teteaji, to whom he had given one of his daughters in marriage. He had thus gained access to a good supply of firearms. One day a black buffalo of his got loose in Pangleon, causing damage to the rice fields (some say he let his buffaloes out on purpose), and it was later found cut and wounded. Linggi Allo accused Tangdan of being responsible, starting a war which went on for years. Tangdan eventually lost, and ceded a large number of rice fields

to Linggi Allo. Decades later the lost rice fields were still remembered, but all attempts to recover them failed. Although in this part of Toraja there was no such consolidation of power as was being achieved in areas like Rantepao, Ma'kale and Pangala' (notably by Pong Tiku and Pong Maramba), land seizures such as these caused simmering resentments which erupted in renewed bitterness in the 1950s, when for a brief time hopes were held of land redistribution – hopes which eventually came to little.<sup>4</sup> Other areas seem to have been less affected. In Sangalla' and Sa'dan, when I inquired about land seizures in the 1890s, people denied that they had been as extensive as in other areas. They cited as proof the fact that there had been few attempts to reclaim lost lands in the 1950s, or relatively little activity by members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in the 1960s.

Y.B. (Butungan) Tandirerung, a descendant of *tongkonan* Pattan in Ulusalu, confirmed the picture of small-scale local feud and village warfare. At that time, he commented, there was no particular *lembang* in Saluputti that was more powerful than the others, but they often found excuses to fight against each other. Ulusalu itself was still a relatively isolated area, where hostilities between villages often made travel difficult and encouraged a pattern of marriages within one's immediate home area. When villages fought pitched battles against each other (*sira'*), each side would try to kill or wound someone, but according to him the main aim was to secure a head; this Tandirerung compared to the way the winner takes the thigh (*bakke*) of the losing cock in a cockfight. As soon as blood had been shed (poetically referred to as *to'do dama'*, or 'resin drips'), the presiding *to minaa* would stop the fighting, but without a head as a sign of victory the war was not over. It might last ten minutes or several days, until a head was secured. No prolonged feuds resulted from such encounters, since there was an agreement made in advance that the matter would be settled once a head had been taken. Instances of disagreements which had provoked *sira'* in the past included a time when Sangga, an aristocrat of Ulusalu, had given offense at a ceremony in Sa'tandung (Malimbong) by leaving too early; this resulted in a war which Sa'tandung lost, becoming incorporated into Ulusalu. On another occasion, one of Tandirerung's ancestors, four generations previously, had been to hunt wild duck in someone else's rice field in Sa'tandung, causing damage to the crop. When the owner complained, this Tandirerung became angry, and in the ensuing war again appropriated large areas of rice land in Sa'tandung.

Internal feuds seem to have continued simultaneously with attacks from Andi Guru's troops. The Bugis attached themselves as advisors and bodyguards to a number of the local leaders. The names of some of them are still remembered: Patta Maioro', La Malaco', Mapparimang, Puang Ta'bu', and

<sup>4</sup> Bigalke (1981) discusses the land actions of the 1950s in more detail.

Malloso'. The latter formed a relation with Pong Tiku of Pangala', but settled in Saluputti after peace was imposed by the Dutch. His descendants here can still claim meat from funeral ceremonies in Pangala'. Besides these soldiers, the market at Rembon attracted a number of Bugis traders who settled here in the late nineteenth century and married Toraja women. The local Muslim community still attends the mosque that was built beside the market, and several local families can trace Bugis ancestors, including the Biringkanae family, one of whose members was the Kepala Desa (*desa* Head) of Malimbong when I lived there in 1978-1979. In an effort to protect themselves, some people sought the patronage of local headmen or warriors, often through a tactical 'adoption' which followed *adat* practice in being marked by the giving of rice land as a sign of the agreement. Such land is called *tekken*; the recipient is under the obligation to sacrifice a buffalo at the adopting person's funeral if they wish to confirm their right to the land. Aside from the outright seizure of lands taken in inter-village battles, there were chiefs who opportunistically enriched themselves in this period through gifts of *tekken*. Besides Linggi Allo, Sambira of Tandingan was another prominent noble *pa'barani* or warrior chief who made many close contacts with the Sidenreng mercenaries. He is remembered as a cruel and wilful man, who sold so many people into slavery that others came and enslaved themselves (*mengkaunan*) to him voluntarily in the hope of gaining his protection. People thus surrendered all their lands to him in the hope of remaining at home, yet he might still sell those who displeased him. These chiefs gained added power through their control of local markets (*pasa'*). In those days, there were many small markets in different locations, since nobody dared travel too far from home to attend one. Linggiallo controlled a market at Sepang in his district of Tapparan, while Sambira dominated the market at Rembon. They collected duties on all goods entering the market. Such levies were not paid in cash, but in kind, traders having to surrender some portion of the goods they had brought to sell. By contrast with these figures, another local leader, Ne' Pilo of Surakan, is widely recalled as having tried his best to keep on good terms with the Sidenreng commanders in his district, while opposing Sambira and Linggiallo. At the same time he intervened to save many people from slavery, without surrendering to the temptation to take their lands in exchange. Sometimes he would send out search parties to find and rescue people who had been seized from their fields or houses. Near his village of Maroson, close to the summit of Ullin, he had a fort, Koyang, protected by earthen walls. Proof of his honesty and good nature, it was pointed out to me, is that his descendants today are not major landowners.

Attu' of Buri' in Banga is also remembered as a local headman who sold so many people to the Sidenreng slavers that in the end local villagers got fed up with him, joined forces to capture him, and sold him instead. Attu' had

come to neighbouring Surakan, on the slopes of Mount Ullin, to urge the people there to gamble, but was prompted by his own heavy gambling losses to capture and sell others as a means of paying his debts. One popular gambling game involved throwing a dice with some black and some white surfaces from a cup. The players bet on whether it would land with a black side (called *ontong*) or a white side (called *hilang*) up. Attu's activities gave rise to a saying in Surakan which puns on the words *ontong* and *hilang*: '*Ontong to Buri, hilang to Surakan*' can also mean 'The people of Buri play dice, and those of Surakan are lost'. As trivial a detail as this may seem, and one entirely local in its referents (Surakan and Buri are small settlements, not well known outside of their immediate vicinity), the phrase might hardly seem worth quoting. Yet there is a significant trace of real historical experience embedded in it. It recalls to us that other obscure saying from far away in Sesean concerning gambling at dice and enslavement, which I cited at the start of this chapter, and illustrates something worth noting about the vehicles of popular memory. Perhaps all over the highlands, similar turns of phrase may have emerged as a form of commentary on the social disruptions people were experiencing. It is unlikely that these two, which I happened upon, are the only examples. No doubt the pun is partly what has helped the saying to lodge itself in social memory, so that it resurfaced to be passed on to me two generations later. There is no knowing whether it still means anything to younger people, or what are its chances of living on in local memory, but it might remind us of how many English nursery rhymes originally meant something to adults, and have in fact survived sometimes for centuries even after their original meanings are largely forgotten.<sup>5</sup>

The losses from Sidenreng attacks were considerable. According to Marten Tapi of Talion, all the noble houses of Talion were burned by the Sidenreng bands, except for the one at Leppan, and the villagers fled up the slopes of Mount Sado'ko'. Y.B. Tandirerung likewise recounted how all of the *tongkonan* in Ulusalu had been burned in the 1880s, and many people sold into slavery. Pattan, the *tongkonan layuk* or politically dominant house of this area, was burned, and its descendants were particularly upset by the theft of gold objects from the family tomb. Butungan's mother's youngest brother, Sura', had died as a youth, a loss that caused his family particular grief because he was of that age when he was more than a baby but less than an adult, and had not yet had time to marry and taste the pleasures of life.<sup>6</sup> His funeral had been celebrated

<sup>5</sup> It is quite well known for instance that 'A ring, a ring of roses' refers to the symptoms of bubonic plague which struck London several times during the seventeenth century, notably in 1665. Has this memory endured so long because of the traumatic nature of the subject matter?

<sup>6</sup> Sometimes special rites and decorations are incorporated into the funeral in such a case, including a kind of puppet show (which I have never witnessed) performed in a cloth structure hung with decorated betel-bags, called *lattang pangan*, with puppets of people kickfighting

magnificently, and he was buried with a golden funeral effigy (*tau-tau*) on horseback, a golden spinning-top and a golden cock. All of this was stolen by the Sidenreng bands. Some houses (Pokkaran, Kadodo, Tanete, Lolin, Rinding Batu, and Matakara) had lost so many members in this violent period that they had been eclipsed and were never rebuilt, while others such as Pakkung and Buttu were torched again by Islamic guerrillas in the 1950s (though the latter failed to burn, supposedly because of its supernatural powers).

Isak Tandirerung, a former District Head of Ulusalu (1930-1951), offered the most detailed account of the events of the late 1880s and 1890s, at which time his grandfather Tandirerung had been *parengnge'* (chief) of Ulusalu. His mother, Datu Bulawan, was also married for a time to Pong Tiku of Pangala', though she had no children by him and had left Pangala' to return to Ulusalu before the Dutch arrived in Toraja. According to Isak's account, the supreme leader of the Sidenreng troops was called Patta Manoro', and his commander Andi Guru spent much time in and around Rembon, where all the local nobility more or less cooperated with him except for Tandirerung, who refused ever to come and pay his respects. When the Bone troops, the so-called 'Red Caps' commanded by Ulu Dodi', swept through Toraja in 1897, Tandirerung and his son Mandoa joined forces with them to help drive out Andi Guru and the Sidenreng bands. After some time, though, Andi Guru returned and spread a rumour that he intended to lay waste the whole of Saluputti in revenge. Tandirerung sent word that it was he alone who must be held responsible, since the other nobles had previously sided with Andi Guru. He then withdrew to the only fort in Saluputti, Boronan, in readiness for an anticipated attack. It was now 1905, and at this moment Tandirerung received a visit from Saranga', head of the *lembang* of Talion, who came to alert him to the arrival of the Dutch, telling him not to bother about Andi Guru's rumoured attack. The Dutch soon advanced on Boronan in the hope of finding Pong Tiku. Tandirerung, however, was already old and died of illness in the fort before being able to offer any resistance. Tonapa, a leading noble of neighbouring Malimbong, received a message from Pong Tiku and went into hiding at Leppan, planning to join him in the fort at Alla' in Enrekang, where Pong Tiku's allies, Bombing and Ua' Saruran from Bonggakaradeng, were already awaiting a siege. After the Dutch assault on this fort, graphically described by Bigalke (1981:112), Pong Tiku retreated back to his forts in Pangala', Tonapa having still failed to make contact with him. He did not return to Malimbong till after Pong Tiku's capture in 1907.

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(*sisemba'*), buffaloes fighting, and people performing everyday tasks such as pounding and winnowing rice. All of this is intended for the amusement of the deceased. A kind of parallel exists in the special puppets which the Toba Batak used to make dance for a person who died childless (Schnitger 1939:Plates IX-XII).





Fort at Neneng (taken from Grubauer 1923)

The Dutch rapidly forced the Sidenreng bands from the highlands and imposed their own colonial administration. Bugis incursions would not cause problems in Toraja again until after the Second World War, in the power vacuum left by the collapse of that order.

#### *The commoditization of slavery*

Though slavery had always been known in Toraja society, whose myths place it far back in the times when humans still lived in the sky, the drawing of this region into a commercial slave trade was clearly a new departure. Following Watson's (1980) distinction between 'open' and 'closed' systems of slavery, Reid (1983a) has usefully discussed the characteristics of the rather varied forms of slavery and debt-bondage that existed in Southeast Asian societies. He draws a distinction between the more 'closed' types (where slave status was inherited, and where, although the opportunities for redemption may have been limited, so was the threat of resale), and those that were 'open', where slaves were constantly entering an economy either as war captives or through raiding and commercial slaving, but might eventually stand a higher chance of being freed or incorporated into the society (for instance through marriage, or manumission



on the death of the owner). Traditional Toraja slavery tended toward the 'closed' type, whereas the expansion of commercial slaving from the 1870s involved a more 'open' type. As we have seen, multiple forms and degrees of dependency existed here as in most of the hierarchical societies of Southeast Asia, making 'slavery' a more complex category than might at first appear, while ostensibly 'free' commoners were sometimes at almost equal risk of exploitation. As the writers in Reid (1983a) make clear, the possibilities for redemption, or the risks of resale, are in many cases difficult to assess from the available evidence. What is also clear is that, in spite of their differences, there was a continuity between indigenous forms of slavery, and the very extensive movement of slaves along commercial networks which stretched throughout the archipelago. In these networks, maritime peoples such as the Bugis and Makassar played a prominent role, and their major customers included Europeans and the Dutch East Indies Company (Fox 1983; Sutherland 1983). But Toraja recall that slaves only occasionally changed hands prior to the 1880s, and never in the marketplace, but through a private transaction: the price would be quietly exchanged between buyer and seller in advance, then the slave ordered to accompany his new master, or he might be taken to an agreed location where they would, as though by chance, meet the new owner and the slave would be told to follow him. The sale of people in markets was a new departure, marking their commodification in the closing decades of the century.

The commercial demand for slaves is said to have been generated by a perceived lack of agricultural labour in the lowlands. Assuming this argument is correct, it is something of a puzzle to explain why the trade in slaves from Toraja should have been such a late development. There is no evidence for systematic slave raiding in earlier periods, though this is not to say that it may not have happened sporadically; certainly, captives are recorded as having been taken in war, but they were sometimes exported rather than kept to labour on Bugis lands. Around 1660, Gervaise (1971:81-2) recorded seeing Toraja slaves brought as cargo by two ships from Makassar, for sale in Ayudhya. However, it appears that the attention of the Bugis and Makassar was at that time chiefly directed elsewhere. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Makassar was 'a major source and trans-shipment point for slaves' (Sutherland 1983:266), but the main catchment area at this period was the islands to the east, including Buton, Timor, Flores, Tanimbar, Solor and Alor; other sources included Brunei, Sulu and Mindanao. In the mid-seventeenth century bands of Makassar migrants, fleeing the predations of Arung Palakka, settled in Endeh (Flores), which they used as a base for slave raids against surrounding areas, notably Sumba (Needham 1983). Their marauding activities continued right up until 1906, when the Dutch finally took over Sumba, the same year that they occupied the Sa'dan highlands. To some extent Islam contributed to a definition of suitable prey for the raiders. Shari'a law forbids the enslavement of fellow-

Muslims (though debt-bondage remained a major loophole in the system); the effect of Islamic conversion in South Sulawesi, as in many parts of Southeast Asia, was to increase the vulnerability of pagan peoples such as the Toraja, living on the boundaries of Muslim communities.<sup>7</sup> Bigalke (1981:61-3), however, finds scattered references from reports made between 1855 and 1880, which indicate that a proportion of slaves being shipped to Kalimantan and Singapore in this period were themselves Bugis, with no mention being made of Toraja at all. Shipping fellow-Bugis off to distant destinations as slaves would only have exacerbated labour shortfalls. All this suggests that slaving was seen principally as a lucrative export business, rather than being used to supply local labour requirements. It also confirms the conclusion that Toraja were only drawn into the trade at a late date. We must look, therefore, at changing political conditions for an explanation of this relatively sudden Toraja involvement from around 1880.

Increasing Dutch interference in lowland politics put a check on the ambitions of local rulers. This meant that, from about 1860, the only state that was still expanding its territory was Sidenreng, which was absorbing areas on its northern border for which the Dutch showed little concern (Bigalke 1981:64). The prevention of local warfare would have constrained the former opportunities that existed for taking captives who could be sold as slaves. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Dutch East Indies Company had been deeply involved in the capture, trade and ownership of slaves in Indonesia, but as the nineteenth century advanced, attitudes began to shift and by 1860, significant legislation was passed to abolish slavery in areas under their domain, though again, debt-bondage remained unaffected. Indigenous slavery in Sulawesi was seen as problematic, however, because of a fear that attempts to enforce abolition might provoke violence. Nevertheless, the pressure for more effective measures to make abolition a reality continued to mount in the 1870s, and led to a renewed report on the situation by the Dutch Governor, Tromp, in 1878. Tromp apparently saw effective Dutch action on this issue as an essential prelude to the establishment of firmer colonial rule in South Sulawesi, and he pressed for the enactment of a scheme for abolition with compensation to be paid to slave owners. This was in fact carried out without provoking the feared uprising (Sutherland 1983:279). This development now forced the slave trade to become clandestine, and partly explains the suddenly increasing numbers of Toraja captives showing up at the smaller ports of Pare-Pare and Palopo, which were now being more tightly patrolled by armed Dutch steamboats. A

<sup>7</sup> Reid 1983a:169. One early seventeenth-century ruler of Bone, at least, took the Islamic prohibition very seriously, though his attempt to free the slaves in his kingdom started a war (Reid 1983a:169); Sutherland (1983:282), on the other hand, notes that lists of slaves shipped to Batavia from Makassar in the eighteenth century indicate that Muslim slavers were not so fussy.

mounting moral indignation against slavery continued to provide one excuse for Dutch intervention in local politics in the latter half of the century, and is markedly evident in later writings such as the report of Van Rijn (1902) on his trip through the Sa'dan highlands, or the account by the Swiss brothers Paul and Fritz Sarasin of their journeys in Sulawesi (1905).

The price of a slave was cheap. According to a Dutch report of 1874, at 20 to 50 guilders it was about equal to that for a *pikul* of coffee. By the turn of the century, the demand for agricultural labour in Sidenreng led to renewed demands for slaves in exchange for the rifles so sought after by the Toraja chiefs; one strong young man could be exchanged for one rifle (Bigalke 1981:66-7). A number of those I interviewed recalled similar rates of exchange, though some of them said that it was young women who were particularly sought after. However, there was some hope of eventual betterment in Sidenreng. Some Toraja slaves ended up owning their own rice lands and remaining there, even after the Dutch officially converted slavery to debt-servitude in 1909. The possibilities for assimilation into Bugis society seem to have been rather good, especially for those who converted to Islam; young women, in particular, were especially likely to stand a chance of incorporation through marriage. Accounts I was given in Toraja described how some slaves, once freed, returned to Toraja but found that, having been taken from their homes at an early age, they could no longer remember exactly where they were from; unable to trace their families, they returned to make a life in the lowlands. Others gave up the attempt to resettle in Toraja when they realized that shortage of rice land there meant their chances were better in the Bugis lands (Bigalke 1981:83). Puang Rante Allo, the leading nobleman of Tengan, Mengkendek, described to me how he had felt troubled about the fate of slaves seized and sold by his grandfather, Puang Randanan. He had once visited several of their descendants in Pinrang, but had found them all well off and quite content to be living there. The family I lived with in Malimbong was still in touch with relatives descended from a young woman, Sarebaine (her name, emblematically enough, means 'Poor Girl'), who had been seized and sold as a slave. Sarebaine was taken to Teteaji in Sidenreng, where, since she was very beautiful, she had married a rich nobleman, and became the owner of substantial rice lands. She was assimilated into Bugis society and remained living there, never returning to Toraja. Her elder brother, Lotong, succeeded in tracing her to Sidenreng, where he came to visit her and persuaded her to lend him a large sum of money, which he used to buy rice fields in Toraja. Some of it also provided him with the starting capital to set himself up as a cloth trader. As a consequence, he became the richest man in Malimbong; his house in Buttang at one time had as many as six rice barns in front of it, though by 1978 only one was left. Lotong had died childless, and all his property had by that time been divided up among the nephews and nieces who became his heirs.

From the 4,000 individuals who did take the opportunity to return home, the Dutch Assistant-Resident of the time projected that perhaps 12,000 Toraja had been taken in the period leading up to Dutch takeover (Bigalke 1981:68). This would have been equivalent to 10-15% of the total Toraja population at that time. This is a startling indication of the scale of the predation in which Toraja chiefs had collaborated. In the process, some of them had amassed huge acreages of rice lands seized from rivals or those too weak to resist. The coming of the Dutch, while it halted these destructive processes, also had the effect of confirming and consolidating patterns of ownership as they were at the moment of takeover. The seizures were not forgotten, though the victims would have to wait fifty years for any chance of redress, and even then, would find themselves largely disappointed. Opinions remain divided on how far chiefs like Pong Maramba and Pong Tiku might have succeeded eventually in consolidating new and much larger chiefdoms for themselves. Pong Tiku was still engaged in southerly expansion from Pangala' into Awan and Bittuang when the Dutch arrived, and had he completed that project, would likely have turned his attentions toward other areas, though some people pointed out, no doubt correctly, that sooner or later his ambitions would have run up against those of his rival, Pong Maramba, who had entered into an alliance with Sitto of Tondon (who also had control of Bori' and Parinding) and Pong Panimba of Kesu'. This is not to mention the chiefs of the southern domains, who would probably have allied against him to obstruct his further advancement. But all of this is speculation, for they were about to be prevented by a new turn of events.

## CHAPTER V

# The awakening of the oath Memory, identity and historical action

Pursuing the theme of oral memory and its role in constructions of identity, I am here going to leap ahead for a moment to consider a third set of events, which have become intertwined in memory with those described in the previous two chapters. Here I want to discuss the happenings of the 1950s. What follows concerns popular memories of Toraja resistance in these years to Andi Sose, a figure who still enjoys a certain economic and political prominence in South Sulawesi.

Toward the end of 1949, the Indonesian Independence so famously and hastily declared by Soekarno and Hatta in 1945 finally became a reality. But political tensions in South Sulawesi were not immediately resolved. The 1950s was to prove a troubled decade here, not least in Tana Toraja. The problem of how to absorb the guerrilla forces who had been fighting for Independence into the new national army was especially complicated in South Sulawesi. Many of them had very low levels of education, and were seen by the more senior Javanese commanders as trouble-makers, lacking in discipline and nationalist spirit and too inclined to pursue their own regional or personal interests. But they were intensely proud and were easily offended by the terms they were offered for incorporation. Muslim guerrilla bands (I.: *gerombolan*), some of them no better than freelance bandits, continued to roam the highlands for years, terrorising non-Muslims and coopting villagers into their forces, while in two separate incidents in 1953 and 1958, Toraja reacted to oppression by a battalion of troops stationed in Ma'kale and commanded by another former guerrilla fighter, Captain Andi Sose. An assessment of these events, and of the figure of Andi Sose himself, has been made easier by a recent thesis on the subject by a Toraja researcher, Diks Pasande (2002).

In curious ways, Toraja experience in these years and the vivid manner in which it has been remembered resonated strongly with earlier memories of the war against Bone fought by the Ancestors of the Same Dream, as well as with the events of the 1890s, the 'time of the Sidenreng people', described

in Chapter IV. These three events, sometimes described in shorthand as Perang Bone ('the Bone War'), Perang Kopi (the 'Coffee War'), and Peristiwa Andi Sose (the Andi Sose Incident(s)), are sometimes explicitly linked in oral memory. The parallels are so marked as to deserve close analysis: not only do they go a long way to explain why so many accounts which I collected seemed to merge and confuse the details and timings of these events, but they have undoubtedly played a key part in the ongoing formation of Toraja ethnic identity. In the atmosphere of tension that has revisited Sulawesi at the start of the new millennium, they have if anything taken on a renewed relevance. Nobody has observed more acutely than Portelli (1991) how the inaccuracies of social memory may reveal clues to the deeper significance of events, both in the psyche of individuals, and the collective imagery of the wider social groupings of which they form a part. We have already seen, too, how the distillation of events into the framework of popular narratives serves to lend them a memorable structure that can be easily carried across the generations, even if at the expense of historical accuracy. In particular, the misplacing of an event, he suggests, may be read as an indication that, for the tellers, what an outsider might see as distinct periods are seen rather as all part of one continuing story (Portelli 1991:25-6). This observation has particular relevance to the Toraja case. I have already discussed how far tales of the Ancestors of the Same Dream have become fused, in some people's accounts, with the historically verifiable happenings of the 1890s. Perhaps, then, it should come as no surprise that Andi Sose was perceived to be attempting to revive the unfinished saga of Bugis attempts to dominate Toraja. And to an intriguing extent, recent historical events of the 1950s really do seem to have conspired to replicate the stories of the past. Regrettably or otherwise, we may conclude that the Toraja history of defensive encounters with the Bugis has by now disproportionately come to figure in their image of themselves. Pasande (2002:90) refers to the events of 1953 and 1958 as 'a deep wound' in the Toraja psyche.

After Independence became a reality at the end of 1949, the military and political situation in South Sulawesi remained confused (B. Harvey 1974). Javanese troops from the Brawijaya (Anjing Laut Brigade) and Diponegoro (Battalion 422) Divisions of the Indonesian National Army (TNI, Tentara Nasional Indonesia) were sent to secure South Sulawesi for the Republic. But there was conflict over the terms on which lowland guerrilla leaders were to be incorporated into the TNI. Notable among them was the Bugis Kahar Muzakkar, who, denied his own Battalion in 1950, gathered around him a group calling itself the South Sulawesi Guerrilla Union (KGSS, Kesatuan Gerilya Sulawesi Selatan). One of his lieutenants was Andi Sose. In 1952 Kahar joined forces with the Darul Islam rebellion centred in West Java, and fought to create an Islamic state in South Sulawesi. Andi Sose at this

point split from Kahar, and accepted a commission as captain in the TNI, his troops being incorporated as Battalion 720. Within Andi Sose's forces was Company 2, made up of Torajans under the leadership of Frans Karang. Some of those returning home after being demobilized from the KNIL were also successfully absorbed into it. They were now posted to Ma'kale, where they were to cooperate with Diponegoro Battalion 422, which spent two years in the highlands from late 1951 or early 1952. But there was tension between Sose, with his aristocratic connections, and the markedly leftist Battalion 422, which was giving its support to claims for land redistribution in Toraja at this time.

Some details of Andi Sose's life and background remain ambiguous. Pasande (2002:60) notes that published accounts to date are inaccurate and full of speculation, and suggests this is because he is still living and has remained such an influential figure in South Sulawesi that would-be biographers have been too cautious to approach him. He was born to high-ranking parents in Sossok in the region of Duri. This region on Tana Toraja's southern border, now part of the present-day regency of Enrekang, had for long been culturally 'Toraja', and like the rest of Toraja had historically been a peripheral tributary of the kingdom of Luwu', before being sucked into the orbit of Sidenreng, as that state entered its period of rapid expansion toward the end of the nineteenth century. Conversion to Islam ensued, together with extensive intermarriage between Bugis and Duri people, producing a marked shift in the Duri population toward a 'Bugis' rather than 'Toraja' identity. In an interview with Pasande in March 2001, Andi Sose named his father and mother as Andi Liu and Andi Sabbe, both Bugis aristocrats (Pasande 2002:61). This is curious, since many of my Toraja acquaintances were emphatic that he is 'half Toraja', though as one of them added, 'he identifies more with his mother's side of the family'. Bigalke (1981:408) notes only that his family, like many other members of the Duri aristocracy, had links 'through marriage' with the Toraja nobility of the Tallu Lembangna. Pasande (2002:61 note 2) mentions in a footnote, though without comment, that another published account names Puang Buntu Batu (clearly a Toraja name) as his father. The account I elicited from Tato' Dena', which he told me he had learned from people in Mengkendek, was that Andi Sose is the grandchild of Puang Randanan of Mengkendek. Puang Randanan had four children, among them Puang Buntu Datu (doubtless the same individual as 'Buntu Batu', above), one of whose sons went to Sossok and married there, becoming known as Puang Sossok ('Lord of Sossok'). This was Andi Sose's father. Since Puang Sossok is a title, not a personal name, it is quite possible that this is the same individual as Andi Liu (Liu is a name that is also common in Toraja). He mentioned that when *tongkonan* Randanan was rebuilt in the 1980s, Andi Sose had attended the ensuing house ceremony, showing respect for the requirements of Toraja



custom by bringing a pig for sacrifice. Pasande's account does suggest that Andi Sose chooses at times to play down, if not deny, his Toraja ancestry; yet it is his paradoxical identification as both Bugis and Toraja that is especially salient in Toraja oral memories of him. We should note the relative recency of cultural differences between Duri and Toraja underlying Andi Sose's identification as 'Bugis'. At the same time, several other accounts I collected highlight his other identity as 'Toraja'. One of these mentions that his father's ancestor, Puang Su'pi', came from Nonongan.<sup>1</sup> Though he came to Toraja to do harm, the narrator added, his rifle would not fire when aimed in the direction of Nonongan. Another, which I had from a skilled story-teller, Indo' Salea of Talion, also stressed that he was 'half Toraja' and that his father was from Mengkendek. She quoted a poetic verse about Andi Sose, composed in a deliberately obscure and allusive style called *sappa'*:<sup>2</sup>

<i>Makkakan nalulun tekko</i>	We have been ploughed up
<i>Naopang salaka baru</i>	The plough has been pushed over us
<i>Ba'tu to minda to minda</i>	We don't know who it was
<i>Ba'tu to apa sanganna</i>	Or what his name is
<i>Parannukan rekke Awan</i>	We hope for help from Awan
<i>Sendekan rekke Baruppu'</i>	We look to Baruppu' for aid
<i>Banua tangendek pakayuanna</i>	A house which is half built
<i>Tang sitete pamiringna.</i>	Whose rafters do not fit.

As Indo' Salea explained it, the lawless behaviour of Andi Sose's troops in Toraja is likened to a violent 'ploughing up' of the populace. 'Awan' and 'Baruppu'' are deliberately obscure references to Sose himself, though these districts are far from Mengkendek, his true Toraja place of origin. The image of the half-built house, whose parts fail to fit, is a comment on the inappropriateness of his actions for one who is himself 'half Toraja', and from whom local people therefore had the right to expect help. He ought to have come there as a Toraja, and not to do harm. The term *pamiring* refers specifically to the rafters supporting the front extensions of the eaves of the Toraja *tongkonan*; it is therefore a uniquely Toraja image. The metaphor of the house in danger of collapse also vividly suggests the denial of ancestors, for if Andi Sose had traced his connections properly he would, like all Toraja, know the houses they came from and acknowledge those houses as his own. Far from being viewed as primordial and irrevocable, the ethnic differences between

<sup>1</sup> The Puang of the Tallu Lembangna, including Mengkendek, can all trace descent from Datu Manaek of Nonongan.

<sup>2</sup> *Sappa'* are full of double meanings, and are typically used as a way of levelling criticisms at others. Indo' Salea gave as an example their use at a funeral to make fun of the family of the deceased, if their behaviour is seen to warrant criticism. The use of funerals as an occasion for public censure has parallels in Bali (see Waterson 1995a).

'Bugis' and 'Toraja', which Andi Sose exacerbated, seem rather to arise from human error. Just as in Pak Pasang Kanan's story of Pakila' Allo, in which it is stated that Toraja and Bone first became enemies because they had quarreled with each other for no good reason, there was no reason for Sose not to acknowledge his Toraja identity and behave accordingly. Instead, each of them created a split within that which should not have been divided, resulting in difference and discord where supernaturally sanctioned harmony should have prevailed.

The perception of Andi Sose as 'half Toraja' is important, in my view, not only because in Toraja eyes it makes his offences more inexcusable, but because it produces a tempting parallel with Pakila' Allo – the odious figure who, as the reader will recall, was himself a Toraja but who, having formed close relations with the Bugis, turned against and betrayed his own people. In his account, Pasande (2002:89) stresses the identification of Andi Sose as Bugis, stating that he symbolised in the view of some Torajans the attempted hegemony of lowlanders over highlanders, and that he was perceived moreover as a reincarnation of Arung Palakka, the foe against whom Toraja had originally united to 'hold back the mountain of Bone' in the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not Andi Sose realized that Toraja within his own Battalion were also coming to think of him in this light, we can only guess. But I propose that the identification with the folk figure of Pakila' Allo, so central to the oral memories of the Ancestors of the Same Dream, is still more significant. Other features of the first 'Andi Sose incident' strangely echo the story of Pakila' Allo, as I shall show.

Andi Sose was quite familiar with the Toraja region, having attended the Schakelschool ('Link School' or middle school) in Ma'kale for two years as a boy. As the leader of a *pemuda* guerrilla group in the years of the struggle for Indendence, he counted some Toraja youths of aristocratic families among his followers. He seems to have had especially close relations with the ruling family of Sangalla'. Lai' Rinding, sister of the Puang of Sangalla', was eventually to aid his retreat from Toraja in a way that others viewed as treacherous. Pasande (2002:91) explains that Toraja generally welcomed the arrival of the Javanese troops, because they were desperate for protection from the guerrilla bands still active in the highlands; but it was much harder to accept the presence of Andi Sose's troops, because in the years 1950-1952, prior to their incorporation into the national army, they themselves had roamed parts of Toraja and Enrekang, regularly attacking Toraja travellers en route to Makassar,

<sup>3</sup> The resonances of one heroic story with another may feature differently in Bugis and Makassar social memory. Andaya (1977), an Arung Palakka enthusiast, suggests that for them, Kahar Muzakkar and Arung Palakka are paired in memory as legendary and admired folk heroes.

and periodically entering the towns to rape, pillage and murder. Now Toraja found that the people who had so recently terrorized them were being put in charge of their security. For their part, Frans Karangan and his followers in Company 2 saw the Javanese as a potential source of support against Andi Sose. Pasande paints an unattractive picture of Andi Sose and his long-time associate, Andi Selle, as opportunists, motivated by personal greed, who used their military positions to engage in a very profitable barter trade, attempting to control regional exports at the expense of central government, fix local prices, and tax goods on their way to lowland towns. Some former associates claim that Andi Sose left Kahar Muzakkar because the latter did not offer him sufficient opportunities to enrich himself. Although his ostensible mission in the Toraja highlands was to conduct mopping-up operations against unauthorized *gerombolan*, he clearly saw his induction into the TNI as an opportunity, rather than a hindrance, to pursuing this sort of business opportunity. He took full advantage of the leeway granted him by TNI commanders to run his own affairs, given the severe shortage of funding for the army at that time, and essentially set himself up as a warlord with his own private army. An Army Staff Report of 1961, by which time he had clearly come to be seen as a liability, described him as an ambitious opportunist and adventurer, ready to enrich himself in any way possible and always seeking an opportunity to profit from both sides, whether government or guerrillas (Pasande 2002:87). He was suspected of secretly continuing to trade with his friend Andi Selle, who had remained in league with Kahar Muzakkar. In May 1964, Andi Sose was put under military arrest in Jakarta to prevent this continued collaboration. Andi Selle eventually died in a shoot-out with the TNI in September of that year. Andi Sose was released from detention in 1965, without any charges ever being brought against him.

When his Battalion was posted to Ma'kale in 1952, Andi Sose began to use his relationship with southern nobles and the Muslim political activists of Ma'kale to exert his influence in the now more dynamic political life of the regency. He also had a close acquaintance with C. Rongre, the new Kepala Daerah or regency head of Tana Toraja. Rongre had lived in Enrekang, and formed a connection with Andi Sose during the anti-Dutch struggle. As the months went by, Sose became more and more heavy-handed, demonstrating an openly pro-Muslim, anti-Christian stance. While supposed to be suppressing Darul Islam guerrillas, many believed he was actually encouraging them. Although he had support from many of the traditional elite in the Tallu Lembangna, he harrassed other Christian leaders into leaving Toraja. Company 2 became increasingly angry and alienated as the ill-disciplined troops of Battalion 720 began to commit outrages against the local population, gambling, extorting, and forcing their attentions on local women. Rapes and 'forced marriages' were common. At the same time, tensions ran high as

left-wing organizations and the Diponegoro Battalion supported an increasing number of peasant actions against large landowners in 1952-1953. After a year of this, conditions had become very reminiscent of those endured under Pakila' Allo, whose excesses, according to the legend, had provoked the formation of the original alliance of the Ancestors of the Same Dream. Equally, one can read close parallels with the behaviour of Sidenreng mercenaries as described in some people's accounts of the 1890s. Added tension was caused by rumours that Andi Sose was planning to build a mosque on an island in the pool that marks Ma'kale's town centre.<sup>4</sup> A curious detail is the recurrence of the night market motif, which as we saw is a prominent and consistently recalled detail of the Pakila' Allo story. Pasande (2002:110) mentions that, in early 1953, Sose was planning celebrations to mark the first anniversary of his Battalion's induction into the TNI, and that these celebrations were to include the holding of a night market around the Ma'kale pool. The army and all the local schoolchildren were under orders to attend the grand opening of these festivities on the evening of 4 April 1953. Some Toraja feared that his real reason for holding this night market was to seek out attractive young girls for his own pleasure – another echo of the past.

But these plans were foiled by the unfolding of other events. By this time, Christian Toraja leaders, having requested in vain to Makassar for the removal of Battalion 720, were plotting an assault against Andi Sose. They drew Frans Karangan and his troops with them into the action, and managed to arrange for the secret return to Toraja of significant numbers of Toraja police and other officials from Masamba and Palopo. Prior to the attack, an impromptu ceremony was held at Bori', north of Rantepao, in which an indigenous priest or *to minaa* ritually 'awakened the great oath' (*ma'tundan basse kasalle*), the promise of eternal peace that had been sworn between Toraja and Bone at the end of the Bone War. According to this oath, whoever broke the peace was doomed to certain defeat, and its powers were now invoked against Andi Sose. At least one of the Christian leaders present could trace descent from an Ancestor of the Same Dream, and they drew upon this symbolism in preparation for their attack (Bigalke 1981:415). According to accounts I heard from various areas, priests ascended the high places all over Toraja to awaken the oath – in Sangalla', for instance, a rite was held on Mount Sarira – and Toraja are unanimous in their assertions that it was the power of this historic accord that doomed Andi Sose and his ambitions. The attack commenced at 6 a.m. on 4 April. Two initial assaults were repelled, but a few days later, with discreet material support from the Diponegoro Battalion, Karangan's forces

<sup>4</sup> Actually, it was to be a grand house for himself, Bigalke (1981:413) was told in an interview with Frans Karangan. Pasande (2002:110) states that he was constructing a grandstand or stage for the celebrations he was planning for 4 April.

took Ma'kale after a five-hour battle. Over a thousand villagers joined in the fighting and the remains of Andi Sose's Battalion were forced to flee Toraja.

Throughout the 1950s, Kahar's DI/TII (Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia) rebellion continued, taking its toll on Toraja villages whose men were sometimes coopted into the guerrilla forces. The father of the family I lived with in Malimbong had been one of these. Although already Christian at the time, he had been obliged to convert to Islam, and remained Muslim for the rest of his life – some said, because he had learned powerful magic from the guerrillas. He had been gone for almost ten years before he returned home. Villagers were often threatened with forced conversion, and particularly objected to having their pigs slaughtered. Some communities then in turn suffered reprisals from Toraja regular forces of the national army (TNI) for having supported the rebels. Both sides burned houses as part of these assaults. The *tongkonan layuk* ('great *tongkonan*') at Pasang, the neighbouring village to Buttang, was burned by TNI forces. They also burned numerous mosques, houses and barns in Mengkendek (Donzelli 2003:73). Coming after the difficult years of World War II and the Independence struggle, the strain must have been sorely felt by a population already fatigued by prolonged hardships.<sup>5</sup> Fritz Basiang recalled the burning of houses at Rante, Tondon, Ma'kale, and Nonongan, just to mention a few, and added: 'We said we were living in a burnt-up world'. It is not surprising that in several areas, there was a sudden, dramatic increase in the number of conversions to Christianity, as people reacted against Muslim attacks. Rapid growth of the Gereja Toraja (Toraja Church) was sustained during the 1950s and 1960s, as Protestants also began to organize politically. Many joined Parkindo (Partai Kristen Indonesia, the Indonesian Christian Party), which was seen to have been the source of the strongest resistance against Andi Sose. Party membership swelled enormously after the incident of 1953. This party won 15 out of 20 seats in the 1955 elections to the DPRD (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah), or local legislative assembly (Crystal 1974). Donzelli (2003:64, 71-4) however, offers an intriguing qualification of this picture. Living in Mengkendek during her fieldwork made her aware that the nobility of this area had always felt noticeably more cultural continuity with their lowland Muslim neighbours than is true for other parts of the highlands. She notes that some aristocrats of the Tallu Lembangna (including the father of the man in whose house she resided) when faced with demands for restitution of lands, which in some instances were accompanied by death threats, responded by converting to Islam and giving their support to Darul Islam. Their slaves were obliged to follow them. It appears that in the south, then, both Kahar and Andi Sose could muster a certain measure of support.

<sup>5</sup> Of comparative interest is Robinson's (1986) vivid account of life under the *gerombolan* in Malili (Central Sulawesi).

Trouble with Andi Sose recurred in April 1958, when his Battalion was again posted to Toraja, this time to replace Javanese troops relocated to North Sulawesi to deal with the Permesta rebellion which began in 1957. As inappropriate as this posting might seem, central command clearly felt that Permesta at this moment was the bigger threat, and they appear to have won Andi Sose's continued support by bribing him with the promise of a free hand in Toraja. This time there was immediate resistance, which continued over the following months. Toraja leaders made plans to evacuate Ma'kale and Rantepao in protest, as a way of isolating Andi Sose's troops and, they hoped, starving them of supplies. In May there was an armed demonstration by Toraja troops and members of Oenit *Pertahanan Desa* (OPD, Village Defense Units) in Rantepao, demanding Andi Sose's immediate withdrawal from Toraja. These forces advanced on Ma'kale, while a company of Andi Sose's troops, led by First Lieutenant Nada, made a counter-attack on Rantepao at the beginning of June. Having laid the town to waste, they pursued the Toraja forces, under company commander Pappang, toward Pangala'. Pappang and his troops fell back toward the location where Pong Tiku had made his last stand against the Dutch in 1905, and prepared to follow the example of the Toraja hero. Having lured Nada's forces deep into a narrow valley between two mountains, they had time to regroup at the Pangala' bridge and launch an ambush, cutting off their retreat. They were joined by the local populace, armed with spears and machetes, who charged down the mountainsides yelling traditional war cries (Pasande 2002:130). The ensuing battle lasted for ten hours, morale being boosted when the Bugis commander Nada (who had been rumoured to be invulnerable to bullets) was killed. In the first days of July, Toraja forces, who had by now received additional weapons and ammunition smuggled to them from Toraja in areas outside of their homeland, launched their attack on Rantepao. After several days of sporadic attacks on their positions, Andi Sose's troops were forced to retreat; catching up with them at La'bo', Toraja forces encircled them and a six-hour battle ensued which ended with the surrender of all surviving troops. Fritz Basiang remembered seeing the prisoners held in Rantepao, before they were accompanied out of the highlands: '[They were] sent to Palopo, and put on a ship back to Makassar. In such a situation, supposing Torajans had been shortsighted, they could have killed all of them! But because people thought clearly, they sent those troops back and put them "in storage". Because clearly it was they who had tried to make trouble in Toraja.'

In the ensuing days, the remaining troops of Andi Sose's Battalion were driven out of Ma'kale, taking with them some Toraja who had supported the Bugis leader and feared for their lives if they stayed. Pasande (2002:134) notes that these events left Toraja people with a powerfully renewed sense of unity; local political squabbles had been set aside as they stood together to defeat,



once again, what was perceived as an attempted takeover of the highlands by the Bugis. Once again, a formative event for Toraja identity had involved defense of the highlands against a perceived 'invasion'. The resonances with earlier historical events were partly fortuitous, partly deliberately conjured by the actors, who consciously drew courage from social memory and the awakening of the supernatural force of the oath sworn by the Ancestors of the Same Dream.

An interesting question raised by Pasande (2002:135) concerns the degree to which opposition to Andi Sose was cast in religious terms. Although public suspicion was rife as to his intentions, Pasande makes clear that Andi Sose himself had never explicitly tried to enforce Islamization in Tana Toraja. The Christian party, Parkindo, as the dominant political organization in Tana Toraja at the time, provided a rallying-point and its leaders made an important contribution to the resistance, but Christianity became the new symbol of opposition to Bugis intrusion only as a last resort. It should also be noted that quite a number of Toraja, especially within the Tallu Lembangna, had given their support to Andi Sose. The real issue, Pasande maintains, was Toraja feelings of insecurity about the threat of marginalisation within the new Republic of Indonesia, and their strong desires for local autonomy and governance. They wanted Tana Toraja to be recognized within South Sulawesi as a region in its own right, on a par with the other oft-mentioned main cultural groups of Makassar, Bugis, and Mandar. They were also deeply suspicious of Andi Sose's economic greed, and his desire to profit from Tana Toraja's natural resources. For its part, the Toraja Church (Gereja Toraja) neither openly opposed Andi Sose, nor made any criticism of Toraja resistance to him. But many church leaders were also members of Parkindo at this time, and from their role in the affair it would be easy to draw the conclusion that this was a religious issue; yet in reality it was at root a question of Toraja autonomy. At the same time, the aggressive behaviour of the Darul Islam bands throughout this same decade undoubtedly played a strong part in alienating people from Islam and encouraging Christian conversion, if only to avoid the potentially life-threatening charge of being 'heathen' (*kafir*). The decade thus brought about a significant shift away from Aluk to Dolo and toward the construction of a modern 'Toraja' identity as Christian.

There can be no doubt that for Toraja, the Andi Sose incidents have become linked in oral memory with the story of the Ancestors of the Same Dream. But in spite of its continually renewed salience in modern times, we should bear in mind that this is only one element of history which can be mobilised as a means of defining relations with others. As we saw in Chapter II, there are other myths, such as that of Sawerigading or Laki Padada, whose wide distribution in Sulawesi, and emphasis upon genealogical connection, can equally well be deployed in favour of a different view of shared ancestry and cultural heritage.



In 1999, the then Bupati, already concerned at the potential worsening of ethnic relations, convened a seminar for representatives of the four commonly defined culture areas of Bugis, Makassar, Mandar and Toraja, to pool information and discussion of these shared myths. The intention was to reinforce understandings of the shared cultural traditions and historical ties that bind the peoples of South Sulawesi together. But for such initiatives to achieve their aims, people must be prepared to look back beyond the divisions introduced by the world religions. And even within Tana Toraja, as we shall see, the desire to defend a unique identity is complicated by the fact that Toraja themselves are divided in their attitudes to cultural preservation and change. As more and more Toraja have accepted Christianity as part of a 'modern' identity, the dwindling adherents of Aluk To Dolo have become a beleaguered minority. Conflicts remain, too, over expressions of social hierarchy, which some regard as intrinsic to Toraja culture, while others see them as inimical to modern ideas of democracy. But whatever the future may bring, there can be little doubt that, if they feel they need to, Toraja will call upon the past as a resource. We may hope they don't have to. I am told that a few years ago, a group of Toraja students in Makassar requested an audience with Andi Sose, and asked him why he had done what he did in 1953 and 1958. 'It was all a mistake', he replied, 'You should forget all about it.'



## CHAPTER VI

# The colonial encounter and social transformation

South and Central Sulawesi were among the last parts of the Indonesian archipelago to be incorporated into the Netherlands East Indies. As a result, Toraja experience of the Dutch colonial order was relatively brief – a mere thirty-five years. Yet, of all the transformations of the twentieth century, this short period was undoubtedly the one which set in train the most profound changes, and indeed created the conditions for the emergence of a self-conscious ethnic identity as ‘Toraja’. As in other non-Muslim areas of Indonesia, missionary activities came hand in hand with the establishment of administrative control, though their respective personnel did not always see eye to eye with regard either to budgetary concerns, or to desirable priorities and the preferred methods of achieving them. Backed by the power of the administration, missions had enormous power to alter those aspects of an indigenous cultural repertoire of which they disapproved. As agents of cultural hegemony, they at the same time modified in various ways the impacts of administrative regulation upon local societies. Indeed the recipients of their attentions, whose worldviews typically did not distinguish ‘religion’ as a distinctly separate sphere of life, sometimes had difficulty understanding the mission as an organization separate from government. Recent studies of the impacts of Christian missions as part of the colonising endeavour have turned the ethnographic lens on to the missionaries themselves, as strange ‘tribes’ with highly distinctive cultures of their own (Kipp 1990; Schrauwers 2000; Aragon 2000). An examination of the colonial experience in the highlands therefore raises a number of interesting questions. Why were the Sa’dan highlands so late in entering the Dutch sphere of influence? What were the goals of the Dutch, and in what ways was Toraja society altered by this encounter? Given that the missionaries who established themselves here apparently made very little progress in converting anyone up to the outbreak of World War II, how is it that the overwhelming majority of the population today is Christian? And in view of the bitter struggle which Indonesians were forced to wage between 1945-1949 in order to make their Independence a

reality, why do Toraja today look back on this period with so little apparent animosity?

The different regions of Sulawesi had very different experiences of colonialism, depending on their circumstances. The northernmost province of Minahasa, for instance, had had contacts with the Dutch since the sixteenth century. The majority of the population there had converted to Christianity by the end of the nineteenth century, and were forcibly drawn into a cash crop economy, at the same time adopting European clothing and manners. In fact, Minahasa paralleled Ambon in its cultural reorientation toward modernity and Dutch values, which went so far that both of them were sometimes jestingly referred to as a 'twelfth province' of Holland (Buchholt and Mai 1994:5). Both were especially deeply influenced by the educational system which was established by Dutch missionaries. Thus it was that in many other parts of the archipelago, including the Toraja highlands, it was people from these areas who initially served as native assistants to the Dutch – for example as soldiers, teachers or clerks – and sometimes played the part of cultural brokers (Plaisier 1993:97-108; Schrauwers 2000:72). The situation in South Sulawesi was very different. There, by contrast, the powerful state of Bone launched hostilities several times during the nineteenth century against both the Dutch and the British. These rebellions were quashed, notably in 1825 and 1858-1860, but at different times during this period the Dutch were also busy fighting wars in Ambon, Kalimantan, Sumatra, Java, Bali and Lombok, among other places. Regarding the Celebes in general, it was the opinion of Van den Bosch, Governor-General of the Indies in the early 1830s, that 'the less one heard of it the better' (Furnivall 1967:178), and this opinion seems to have persisted more or less throughout the nineteenth century. But the turn of the century opened a new era of conquest, territorial expansion, and administrative reorganization. This consolidation was presided over by J.B. van Heutsz, who as Governor of Aceh had finally succeeded in crushing resistance there and ending the long-running Aceh War. Seen as a hero in Holland, he was then appointed Governor-General in 1904. One of the first areas to which he turned his attention was South Sulawesi, on the stated grounds of the lawlessness and passion for gambling of its inhabitants; although Controleurs (Dutch functionaries, at this point serving largely as liaison officers with local rulers) were by this time stationed in many parts of the island, Van Heutsz was aware that they were unable to exercise any real authority, so that civil service officials had been pressing more and more for military takeover (Van den Doel 1994:66). Abolitionists had also been demanding an end to South Sulawesi's involvement in the slave trade, the dire effects of which upon the Toraja highlands we have already examined in Chapter IV.

The beginning of the twentieth century also saw a major shift in Dutch colonial policy, from a brutally commercial approach to gaining profit from their

colonies, to the so-called 'Ethical Policy'. Dutch exploitation of the Javanese peasantry, who had been forced to turn much of their lands over to sugar production, had by this time pushed the people into such impoverishment that they had become highly vulnerable to crop failure and famine. But at the same time as the welfare of the Javanese became a focus of concern, capitalist enterprise was being intensified in the outer islands, especially Sumatra and Kalimantan. The Ethical Policy was not evenly applied throughout the archipelago, and in the Hague there seemed to be an idea that it chiefly applied to Javanese welfare, which could be paid for by increased profit from the outer islands (Houben 1994:210). However, while the income from Sumatran coal and tin mines, tobacco and rubber plantations continued to grow, not all the outer islands were so exploitable. As for Sulawesi, nobody could have supposed it would be simple to extract a profit from that vast and rugged terrain, much of it heavily forested and little explored, with its scattered and inaccessible populations. The impetus to consolidate control was driven more by concern about the possible interference of other foreign powers, especially the British, if things were left as they were. A gold rush in northern Sulawesi in 1890-1910 sparked prospecting in Central Sulawesi, for instance by an unauthorized team of Australians in 1890, and the Swiss Sarasin brothers made two notable journeys of exploration through the highlands in 1893-1896 and 1902-1903 (Sarasin and Sarasin 1905). All of this increased Dutch anxiety about the possible growth of interest in Sulawesi by other colonial powers (Schrauwers 2000:46). They were also worried about the spread of politicized Islam, and to that end had by 1892 encouraged the establishment of a Dutch Reformed Church Mission, led by renowned missionary and ethnographer Albertus C. Kruyt, in the Lake Poso area of eastern Central Sulawesi.

But in spite of the apparent possibilities for mineral extraction, the 'civilising' enterprise of Dutch colonialism could only make sense in large parts of Sulawesi, including the Sa'dan highlands, in terms of the new notions of the Ethical Policy. Administrators, missionaries and engineers were tasked with bringing the benefits of modernity – notably law and order, agricultural improvement, roads, hygiene, and a Calvinist work ethic – to their newly subject populations. How dramatic a transformation all these goals would effect depended greatly on local circumstances. The populations of Central Sulawesi experienced perhaps the most drastic social reorganization of almost anywhere in the archipelago, since as it happened, several of their most vital social institutions failed to meet with Dutch approval. Swidden farming, residence in multi-family longhouses, headhunting, female shamanism, and the exhumation of corpses prior to the performance of elaborate secondary burial rites, which their new colonial masters perceived as not only heathen but wasteful, were all immediately scheduled to be stamped out; people were compelled to resettle from villages high in the hills to concentrated settlements

in lowlying areas, and their transition through forced labour from swidden farming to the construction of wet rice fields threatened some populations in the early years with starvation (Aragon 2000:109). Compared to these traumas, the experience in the Toraja highlands was nothing like as disruptive. At least, since they were already wet rice farmers, the people were not subjected to total economic reorganization. Only a few villages were relocated, and that on a voluntary basis. The murder of the first missionary to be posted here obliged his successors to proceed cautiously, in order not to alienate the aristocracy further; missionary efforts to expunge ritual activities which they perceived to be wasteful were a conspicuous failure, and such activities continue unabated to this day. Nevertheless, the Dutch colonial régime was quite new in the level to which it interfered in the everyday life of the Toraja, and in the long term, its consequences were similarly far-reaching.

#### *Dutch takeover and its initial impacts*

In 1905-1906, the Dutch moved to take over the whole of South Sulawesi, beginning with the occupation of Bone in July 1905. Other lowland states rapidly capitulated; by September, Luwu' surrendered, and the Dutch turned their attention to the highlands. From Palopo, their troops entered Balusu in the eastern part of Toraja in March 1906. Toraja chiefs, receiving news of the advance of Dutch forces, were hampered by their own internal divisions and distrust from uniting in their own defense, and a number of headmen were quickly intimidated into negotiating and surrendering weapons. Ne' Taming described how his father, So' Dakke', had been (he claimed) the first to meet the Dutch. So' Dakke's uncle, Puang Randanan of Mengkendek, sent him with two followers to Palopo to reconnoitre. The Dutch called them to help carry loads of fish and vegetables from the port, paying them Rp. 1 per day. When they returned, Puang Randanan asked, 'What are they like?' So' Dakke' replied, 'Tall, with white eyes [that is, pale, as if blind], but strong walkers!' A meeting of local leaders was held at Buntu Pune to discuss the possibilities for defense. Puang Randanan was among those who decided that it would be unwise to resist this new enemy.

Ultimately, serious resistance was presented only by the chiefs of the northern and southwestern regions: Pong Tiku of Pangala', together with Bombing and Ua' Saruran of Rano and Buakayu. This was partly due to the geographical fact that they had the most formidable mountain forts in which to defend themselves. Bigalke (1981:105) suggests a further reason: these were important coffee-growing areas, which had become well-armed and confident through converting coffee wealth into rifles bought from the Sidenreng traders. Pong Tiku in particular had already fought numerous battles (both

against fellow-Toraja, in his various campaigns to expand his own sphere of control, and against the troops of Bone in 1897), and was undoubtedly the most daring military leader of all Toraja chiefs. From April till October, he and his troops successfully held off the Dutch in their forts in Pangala', repelling assaults with rifles and other, more traditional weaponry, including a kind of blow gun (*tirrik lada*), used to squirt chilli water into the eyes of the attackers. Finally a major Dutch onslaught forced him to abandon his fort and flee south to Alla', the last undefeated fort, where he joined forces with southern resistors led by Bombing and Ua' Saruran. The Dutch assault on Alla' was a violent affair whose Toraja death toll included as many as nine hundred men, women and children who jumped to their deaths in panic when pursued along the cliffs by soldiers with bayonets (Bigalke 1981:112) – a detail conspicuously absent from the official Dutch military report on the takeover (Lucardie 1912). Bombing and Ua' Saruran gave themselves up after this, and were exiled from the highlands to Makassar for three years. Pong Tiku evaded capture and returned toward Pangala', but was finally caught in June 1907. The Dutch clearly saw Pong Tiku as a serious threat and embarrassment, and learned that he had made enemies among the other Toraja headmen. Imprisoned in Rantepao, Pong Tiku was taken to the river to bathe, where he was shot and killed, it was claimed while 'trying to escape'. Posthumously, Pong Tiku has been made a Pahlawan Nasional (National Hero), and for Toraja has become an admired symbol of resistance to colonialism.<sup>1</sup> He is depicted, astride a rearing horse, in a commemorative statue in the town square of Ma'kale, and his exploits are detailed in a recent biography (Arrang Allo Pasanda 1995). The majority of Toraja leaders chose not to offer resistance. By acquiescing, as Bigalke (1981:115) points out, some of them gained the opportunity to consolidate their recent land seizures, for the political conditions at the moment of Dutch arrival became established as the status quo under the new Dutch administration.

At first the sight of white people was capable of provoking great anxiety. Observing their hobnailed boots and cigarettes, Toraja gave their new conquerors a poetic description as people 'with thorns on their feet and smoke coming out of their mouths' (*ma'lentek keduri, merambu sadangna*). They noted how they fired their guns, sometimes standing up and sometimes lying down. In fact the administration was run by only a handful of Dutch officials. They relied on educated Malay-speaking personnel from other Indonesian regions – mostly Christian Ambonese, Manadonese, and Batak – to fill the ranks of soldiers, teachers, evangelists and middle-ranking civil servants. These people tended to have a condescending attitude to the Toraja as illiterate pagans,

<sup>1</sup> For a comparative study of the constructions involved in the transformation of a Sumbanese warrior into a National Hero, see Hoskins (1987).



still wearing their hair long and dressing in loincloths. Fritz Basiang, who was born in 1906, and was among the first Toraja to attend school, recalled that for their part, Toraja themselves tended to be somewhat in awe of these newcomers and dutifully obeyed their orders.<sup>2</sup>

Like other European colonial administrations, the Dutch imposed their own world view on the highlanders, effecting profound changes on Toraja perspectives. They immediately set about mapping the boundaries of 'the Toraja lands', imposing a much more sharply defined notion of 'territory' than had hitherto prevailed. Toraja territory was now broadly divided into two subdivisions (*onderafdeeling*), Ma'kale and Rantepao, under the new division (*afdeeling*) of Luwu'.<sup>3</sup> Its outlines for the first time unambiguously established, the territory was further subdivided into districts, based as far as they could determine upon existing local politics and shared *adat* customs: fourteen districts in Ma'kale, and seventeen in Rantepao. At the same time, they began the task of registering the population, an essential prelude to the extraction of taxes and *corvée* labour. The Dutch relied heavily on *corvée* labour for the opening of roads, essential both for efficient administrative control and as part of their programme of bringing the benefits of modernization to the newly conquered areas. Each person registered was given a card which served as a 'pass'; not to have one rendered one liable to instant arrest by military patrols. On days when men were doing *corvée* labour, their passes were held to prevent their absconding (Bigalke 1981:124). The number of days' labour which headmen could claim for their own purposes was also strictly limited. E.A.J. Nobeke, the first Controleur (administrative head) of Ma'kale, made another economic innovation by reorganizing the coffee trade: all coffee now had to pass through Ma'kale or Rantepao, where it was subject to government tax and inspection before being exported to Pare-Pare or Palopo. This move weakened the control of the headmen over profits from this important trade.

The Dutch began to establish Ma'kale and Rantepao as their new administrative and commercial centres, and to extend their new roads through the different districts. Some villages on inaccessible hilltops, chosen in the past for defensive purposes, were encouraged to move to new roadside locations; at Kesu', the headman did not take long to perceive the advantages in moving closer to the new source of 'progress', and organized the relocation himself. The Dutch chose to rule indirectly, through the existing village headmen or *to parengnge'*, whose office, however, was reshaped to fit in with the requirements of the new rational-legal administration. Those judged unsuitable to

<sup>2</sup> Fritz Basiang's narrative of his life is fully presented in Waterson (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Later, in 1925, these were united into a single *onderafdeeling*, Ma'kale-Rantepao. Toraja aspirations to be administratively separated from Luwu' were, however, not fulfilled until 1946.

the task were sometimes left with their traditional ritual responsibilities, while elections were instituted for a new *to parengnge'*. Village and district heads were given reasonable salaries for carrying out their duties, which included collecting taxes. In February 1907, a head tax (*sima*) was instituted for all indirectly ruled territories of the Celebes. It was an income tax of 4%, with a minimum annual payment of fl. 2 per year. The effect of this was to begin, in a small way, to draw people into a monetary economy, though for many it was not easy to find the cash. Existing silver coinage had been mostly in the hands of the nobility, who often used it for purposes of decoration as much as exchange. There was a certain amount of passive resistance, as people did their best to under-report their livestock and other taxable property. Those who could not pay might be made to do extra *corvée* labour instead. Herman Rapa', a retired schoolteacher and clergyman who was one of the first to go to school in Dutch times, recalled that all adult men over the age of eighteen were subject to the tax. At one time, many of those who failed to pay were taken to the Bugis district of Pinrang, where they were put to work at 10 cents a day building an irrigation system. Some of them never returned; they contracted malaria on the job and died. Others recalled that, when the government issued an edict abolishing slavery in 1909, the inability of slaves to pay their head tax was a major factor which impeded any genuine change of status for them. Many were obliged to rely on their former masters to pay it for them.

#### *The Dutch Reformed Church Mission*

A matter of major concern to the Dutch was the possibility that Toraja might, through their long association with the Bugis, eventually convert to Islam. As in some other parts of the archipelago, they viewed the highlands as a potential buffer zone which, if its people could be won over to Christianity, could be used to check the spread of Islam as a potentially militant force against colonialism. For this reason, the government was keen to encourage Christian mission activity. In 1913 the (Calvinist) Gereformeerde Zendingsbond (GZB, Dutch Reformed Church Mission) sent their first missionary, A.A. van de Loosdrecht, to Rantepao, with the help of subsidies from the government of *afdeeling* Luwu'. He set about making contacts with prominent headmen, and inviting some of their children to board with him and his wife in their home, where they were taught Dutch manners and morals. The provision of education was to be a major part of mission strategy, and it soon became active in building village schools to complement the two Malay-medium schools already constructed by the government in the towns. Van de Loosdrecht also dispensed medical advice and medicines in the limited quantities that were available to him (Plaisier 1993:277).

The most startling aspect of the Christian message was the idea that all individuals were equal before God, which presented a direct contradiction to the Toraja system of rank. To those in a position of slavery, this was bound to be an attractive message, but to the aristocracy, it represented a corresponding threat to their power base. They were accustomed to controlling the labour of commoners and slaves, not only in the fields but also in the preparation of rituals, the staging of which was a means of confirming their own superior status. Having at first aimed his approach at the elite, Van de Loosdrecht before long became aware of how intimately interconnected was the indigenous ritual system with their political hold over their lower-ranking villagers. They for their part tended to be initially cautious and non-committal. As it became clearer to him how much the nobility might feel they had to lose by conversion, he became increasingly critical of them. He viewed them now as sitting at the apex of an oppressive social system, and openly attacked some aspects of traditional culture which were particularly important to them: cockfighting, gambling and the lavish sacrificing of buffaloes at funerals, which were the main occasions for the public display of status. Resentment mounted among the nobility over the disturbing threat to these customs, as well as to the strong pressures put on their children to attend school. The government in these early years used troops and armed police to round up truant children, or even drag their parents off to jail in Rantepao, which must have been both frightening and humiliating. The penetrating force of the new administration by now was clearly felt, and its demands, especially in terms of taxes and construction labour, were certainly very much greater than anything Toraja people had experienced previously. Moreover, under Van de Loosdrecht's prodding, in late 1915 the government opened official investigations against Pong Maramba of Kesu' (who the missionary had come to feel represented a particular obstacle to his progress) on charges of extortion. A criminal court in Palopo sentenced him to fifteen years of exile in Java, and charges against several other prominent headmen followed. By weeding out the 'old guard' who were particularly resistant to the new religion, the mission hoped that more conversions would follow; but it seems to have deepened the unease of some headmen. By 1917, rebellion was brewing against both the government and the mission. It came to a head in a plot by several headmen to attack the Dutch and drive them out of the highlands. One of those involved was Pong Massangka, the adopted son of Ne' Mattandung, the old headman of Balusu. On the night of 26 July, he and his followers attacked Van de Loosdrecht while he was visiting the teacher's house at Bori', and speared him through the chest. The assassination triggered a revolt in the area, which was soon put down by reinforcements of Dutch troops sent up from Palopo and Enrekang. In the wake of this uprising, a number of other nascent plots against the Dutch were uncovered, and

a total of fifty-six of those arrested, including several prominent headmen, were subsequently sent into exile. Dirk Prins, another of the first missionaries to be posted to the Toraja lands, did not stay much longer, partly because of his wife's poor health. In 1920 he returned to the Netherlands on leave; one night a month later his house at Burake mysteriously burned down. Although the fire was probably caused by accident and not arson, the incident deterred him from ever returning to Toraja (Plaisier 1993:165). But two other men who arrived in 1916, Johannes Belksma and Hendrik van der Veen, were to remain until 1942, becoming the longest serving of all the twelve missionaries sent by the GZB (Plaisier 1993:50). The former took charge of the training of teachers and evangelists, while the latter, a highly gifted linguist, translated the New Testament into Toraja and collected and published significant examples of Toraja ritual poetry.

In the wake of Van de Loosdrecht's murder, the government must have felt keenly aware of the potential dangers of their position, given their own very small numbers. They therefore took pains to alleviate some of the major irritations that had caused the eruption, easing up on pressures to build and attend schools, and restricting the power of the missionaries to compel local attendance at their activities. Fundamental to the Mission's strategy was its three-pronged approach of evangelisation, education and the provision of medical services. The first of these activities was always regarded as primary, however, the two latter being perceived as subsidiary services, as a 'hook' which enabled the missionaries to make contact with the people and win their trust. Albertus Kruyt, in his Lake Poso mission, exemplified the GZB attitude; to him, medical and educational services were always secondary, and even threatened to disrupt the real work of evangelising. By contrast, the Salvation Army, which took charge of missionizing efforts among the To Baku of western Central Sulawesi from 1917, were liberal in their dispensing of medicines and regarded the giving of medical assistance as a way of serving the Lord through good works, thus as a righteous end in itself (Aragon 2000:135). From the administration's point of view, it was convenient to subsidise the Mission's provision of these important services in line with the Ethical Policy's aims of improving social welfare. These developments were in the long term to have a profoundly transformative effect on Toraja society. They not only provided the mission with a powerful means of influencing the young, but also gave Toraja people a significant and still persisting advantage, compared to the rest of South Sulawesi, in access to modern education and better quality schools.

The strict Calvinism of the Dutch Reformed Church tradition was quite foreign to the Toraja in the supreme significance which it attached to inward states in a person's relationship with God. In the missionaries' conceptualisation of the 'spiritual', the Word of God was primary. They therefore attached

tremendous importance to the preaching and hearing of the Word, as the essential catalyst for conversion, by means of which the Holy Ghost might act upon individual listeners and bring them to the Truth (Plaisier 1993:432; Schrauwens 2000:187). The auditory was thus privileged over the visual, as well as over mundane material activities, such as medical and educational work. The main goal of evangelising must be to bring about an inward transformation of the individual, through implanting a consciousness of sin. Plaisier suggests that the missionaries may not have been fully aware that Toraja, hearing them preach about 'redemption' (*verlossing*), a term which in Dutch may have various resonances, actually read into it a different meaning: not, as the missionaries intended, one of 'deliverance' from eternal punishment for one's sins, but of 'liberation' from their laborious earthly existence to a more enjoyable afterlife (Plaisier 1993:399-400). Inescapable, original sin, as a state of being redeemable only through faith in Christ, was a completely unfamiliar notion to the Toraja. Within their cosmology, 'sin' meant the intentional or unintentional breaking of *adat* regulations and taboos (*pemali*). This was regarded as causing disharmony with the environment, expressed through calamities such as illness, crop failures, or landslides. Visible signs of blessing from the deities or ancestors, by contrast, would be manifested in the fertility and prosperity of humans, the healthy reproduction of livestock, peaceful communities, and successful harvests. They were thus very impressed by the tangible benefits which they came to see in Dutch education and medical services; many Toraja welcomed the progress and the opportunities they represented, and there can be no doubt that it was these, above all, which in the long term had the most profound effects on Toraja society. Together with the imposition of peace, after the chaos and brutality of the 1890s, these new institutions encouraged a relatively positive orientation toward the modernising project of Dutch colonialism. The missionaries, for their part, not recognising the significance which Toraja attached to visible signs in their traditional relationships with divinity, were inclined unfairly to accuse their new converts of being overly materialistic and lacking in 'spirituality'. But Toraja did not make that distinction; for them, the practical benefits offered by the mission's social services were in themselves signs of the power of the new religion and its deity, and medical help was valued most of all. In sum, inner motivations for conversion were not as significant as their desire for social development (Plaisier 1993:396, 407, 432-3).

To ensure 'genuine' conversions, the missionaries were prepared to wait a long time, and set high standards in terms of thorough preparation. Kruyt waited fifteen years for his first convert in Central Sulawesi (Schrauwens 2000:9). The Sa'dan mission, too, made only slow progress in establishing small congregations of Christians, and even this modest growth appeared to stagnate by the late 1930s. This picture contrasts rather sharply with the

progress of events in Central Sulawesi, where mass conversions began to occur from 1908, only a year or so after the Dutch administration had fully pacified the area. In the villages where Kruyt had already been proselytizing, most households seem to have followed the lead of their chiefs when the latter made the decision to convert. Their populations had perhaps been made vulnerable to such a shift not only by the shock of Dutch intervention, but by the repeated epidemics of smallpox, cholera and influenza which they had been suffering since 1884. The Salvation Army also experienced mass conversions in 1919, after only two years of work among the To Baku; some villages there had lost as much as three quarters of their population in the great influenza pandemic of 1918 (Aragon 2000:109, 124). Kruyt came to recognise that the process of conversion in Central Sulawesi was inevitably a socio-political, rather than an individual, process (Schrauwers 2000:187, 191). Among the Sa'dan Toraja, however, most conversions were eventually to be of individuals, and not whole communities, though here too there is no doubt that the motivations were various. Conversion was to proceed very slowly in the highlands, so slowly in fact that Bigalke (1981:227) characterizes the pace as 'glacial'. By 1930, less than 1% of the population had become Christian; the figure had still only reached 10% in 1950.

From his research, Bigalke (1981) concluded that the highest numbers of initial converts were to be found in border areas, such as Ranteballa and Pantilang, on the eastern borders with Luwu', as well as in poor areas away from the central valley, such as Dende', Simbuang and Bittuang, where the aristocracy were less powerful. The nobility of these areas felt vulnerable to the more powerful chiefs of the southern domains, and thus were more likely to see a benefit in alliance with the missionaries. By contrast, aristocratic opposition to the Mission was strongest in central areas. The chiefs were often ambivalent, however; the egalitarian message of Christianity posed a potential threat, but they also saw after a time that the schools provided a useful means by which to secure their families' positions within the new administrative order. More recently, Plaisier (1993:435-58) has been able to complicate Bigalke's broad brush picture by means of a more close-grained analysis of conversion in different areas. He notes that not all border areas had many conversions, while in the central valley area, small congregations of Christians did also form, each of them clustered around a school, whose graduates typically became the first converts. From his interviews he concludes that there were many reasons behind the generally uneven pattern of conversions, including especially the individual personalities of chiefs, the degree of charisma of local Toraja teachers trained by the mission, the individual ambitions of converts, and the shifts occurring in inter-village relations as a result of how the Dutch administration had drawn the boundaries on their new maps. In Mengkendek, for instance, the communities of



Gandangbatu and Silanan had two teachers with strong personalities in residence, one Toraja and the other Ambonese. They were also in revolt against the Puang of Mengkendek, into whose domain they had been thrust by Dutch boundary arrangements. These two *tondok*, however, had never submitted to the Puang; their nobility called themselves *ma'dika* ('independent') like those of Saluputti, and were accustomed to running their own affairs. So' Ra'bang, the headman of Gandangbatu, thus took the lead in his community in accepting Christianity. Many of the middle-ranking nobility chose to follow, apparently seeing the new religion as a means to raise their own status. In Dende', the headman was a graduate of the government school in Rantepao, and his community were favourably influenced by another charismatic Toraja teacher, S.T. Lande'. Nearly all the first converts were descendants of two particular *tongkonan*; but later, a feud between the two origin-houses caused a stagnation and falling off of the trend toward conversion here.

In other areas, the nobility did play a major role in influencing conversion patterns, but not in the way that the Mission had envisioned. They thought that, if they could successfully induce a headman to convert, that the rest of his community would likely follow him; and they were at a loss to know why in several cases exactly the reverse effect appeared to obtain. Powerful headmen sometimes converted precisely in order to forestall any such movement by their followers, whom they discouraged from imitating them. Plaisier (1993:438) provides some interesting examples. Puang Mangatta' of Boto', a leading noble of Sangalla' and nephew of the renowned chief Puang So' Rinding, accepted baptism as early as 1923, but showed no signs of leading a Christian life. While presenting a pleasant face to the missionaries, he continued to make offerings and was rarely seen in church. He prevented his followers from converting, for fear that Christian influence would render them disobedient and might lead to their refusing to work on Sundays or in the preparation of traditional rituals. Threatened with discipline by the Mission council, he performed a *volte-face* by becoming a Muslim in 1938. Pursuing a slightly different strategy in dealing with the Mission, So' Toratu, the Puang of Mengkendek, went to catechism classes for ages but refused baptism. At the end of his life, he let it be known that he was still true to the ancestral religion. The Puang of Talion in Saluputti chose baptism in 1935 after dutifully following the catechism classes. But his followers, who had been attending the classes with him, were in the end not baptised. He was taking care to maintain enough non-Christian followers to be able to continue with the performance of traditional rituals, while making the occasional appearance in church. It seems clear from these examples that the nobility were seeking ways to deal politically with the Mission and to contain the threat it posed, no doubt greatly to the frustration of the evangelists who saw them as two-faced



and manipulative. In areas where the nobility were particularly oppressive, however, the effect was to drive their slaves toward the new religion. Plaisier (1993:439) notes, for instance, that Van der Veen's house in Kesu' was surrounded by a Christian community that was very largely composed of people of slave descent. Sometimes, it was the school that provided the way in to this new life.

With regard to education, the government's initial aim was to train a small corps of functionaries capable of holding positions in the modern administration. But they also subsidized the setting up of the mission schools with the aim of extending basic education more widely, in line with the new sense of responsibility for native welfare intrinsic to the Ethical Policy. In accordance with the first of these goals, at first only the children of high-ranking families were recruited. Because they feared that their children might eventually be recruited into the military and taken away from home to serve in distant parts of the archipelago, some nobles initially responded by substituting for their own offspring the children of their slaves or low-ranking dependents. This at least remains a common memory in Toraja. Bigalke (1981:262) concludes that in the end perhaps rather few low-ranking persons may have succeeded in slipping through this 'crack in the school-house door' into new careers in the colonial administration. Plaisier (1993:113-4), however, has succeeded in documenting a number of cases (though he states no figures, and refrains from mentioning names in order to protect people's feelings). The entry into education opened the possibility for bright pupils of slave descent to train as teachers; this dramatically raised their status, for teachers were highly respected. But since this clashed with the status ascribed to them by birth it tended to cause problems for them if they were posted in their home areas. This was less of an issue in the northern areas around Rantepao, where the status system was somewhat more open to the recognition of wealth or achievement. For example, a young man of commoner descent who had been one of Van de Loosdrecht's first pupils and assistants went on to have a successful career as a teacher, and his children became prominent individuals in the local community. When he died in the 1980s, they organized one of the biggest funerals ever held in that district, thereby consolidating their claim to the family's now enhanced social status (Plaisier 1993:113). But in Ma'kale and the southern districts, where the aristocracy attached prime importance to birth status, missionary Johannes Belksma found it wiser to avoid accepting low ranking candidates for teacher training (Plaisier 1993:115 note 77). The Mission expected teachers to perform a leading role in their communities, as evangelists and representatives of the new order. They apparently were unable to imagine women contributing in this role; girls were refused access to teacher training even through the 1930s. The very last cohort of

trainee teachers before the outbreak of World War II did include four women, but even then, the Mission had no intention of actually giving them jobs (Plaisier 1993:116). This attitude is not one that has been carried over by Toraja in the post-independence period, for they generally are prepared to give equal encouragement to their children to study, depending on their ability and regardless of gender.

*The modernizing process and the development of 'Toraja' identity*

Many of those who trained as teachers were from the middle and lower ranks, rather than the higher echelons, of the traditional nobility. The educated began to form a new elite, not entirely distinct from the old ruling aristocracy, but rather an expansion of it. The world view they developed was certainly radically different from the traditional one: culturally modernist, religiously Christian, with a new ethnic consciousness of themselves as 'Toraja' within the complex cultural mosaic of the Dutch East Indies. Bigalke (1981:297) identifies the first recorded use of the term '*tanah Toraja*' in 1934, in a charter drawn up by a newly-formed association for social progress and educational advancement, the Perhimpengan Bunga' Lalan.

Those very few Toraja who obtained higher education were obliged to travel beyond the boundaries of their homeland to get it, and this had an even more radically consciousness-raising effect. In the course of these journeys, which Anderson (1983) has characterised as educational 'pilgrimages', they would inevitably encounter a variety of fellow students from different parts of the archipelago. Becoming aware of their cultural differences, as well as the similarities of their political position as 'natives' within the Dutch East Indies, they would also discover the dream of a nation freed from colonial domination. A minute percentage of the educationally successful might even arrive in the metropolitan countries. But at a certain point on their outward journey, they were liable to find the way blocked to further accomplishment, or absorption into the society of the colonisers, by the barriers of racist attitudes. Then they might find themselves obliged to return home, but by now they would bring with them a very different sense of themselves than that with which they had started on their travels.

One individual whose life exemplified this experience, and whom I came to know well, was Fritz Basiang. He was clearly someone who had been very attracted by all the new possibilities opened up by the colonial transformation of Toraja society. Born in 1905, the same year that the Dutch entered the highlands, he was the son of a headman of a remote mountain village in Banga, Saluputti, and was one of the first Toraja to attend school. He entered the government elementary school (*landschapschool*) in Ma'kale in 1921, thereby taking

the first step of his pilgrimage away from the environment of his childhood. While at school, he lodged in the house of the Public Prosecutor, a Manadonese named Fritz, who influenced him to convert to Christianity in 1923. He graduated in 1926 to the intermediate-level *schakelschool* ('link school'), where lessons were taught in Dutch. This would have provided him the possibility of pursuing his education further, but when he tried for entry to the *normaalschool*, a teacher training school in Makassar, so limited were the places available that he could not get in. Commenting on how tightly the Dutch controlled access to higher education throughout the colonial era, as he put it, in those days 'people were capable, but they weren't allowed to' (I.: *orang bisa, tapi tidak boleh*). Swallowing his disappointment, for a while Fritz went to work in the office of the Dutch Controleur in Rantepao. But his life was soon to take a different turn when he met the German Dr Simon, the first fully qualified doctor to work in Toraja. By 1925, the government had decided on the need to professionalise the provision of medical services, which till then had been left to the Mission. A Dienst der Volksgezondheid (Public Health Service) was formed, with a brief to concentrate on developing preventative medicine. After some difficulty, Dr Simon had been recruited to work with the Mission, but he did not see eye to eye with the missionaries and flatly refused to have anything to do with proselytising in hospital. He soon switched over to being employed directly by the government. He was very dedicated in his work, vigorously expanding the hospital in Rantepao, training paramedics, establishing a network of polyclinics in different districts, and spending half of every month journeying on horseback with his trainees around each of them in order to administer vaccinations and serve patients. The other half of his time was spent doing surgery at the hospital. Fritz was a regular visitor to the hospital, since it was his job to deliver Dr Simon his letters, and so he got to know the doctor quite well. One day in 1928, when he came with the post, he saw a group of young men gathered there, and asked Dr Simon what they were doing. The doctor explained that these were the young men he had selected from different districts for training as paramedics. Fritz asked if he too could be taken on, and Dr Simon agreed. The Dutch he had learned in the *schakelschool* already gave Fritz some advantage over the other recruits, and he served more and more as Dr Simon's personal assistant. He spent an enjoyable year accompanying Dr Simon and the other paramedics on his horseback tours of all the Toraja districts, learning more and more about medicine and feeling strongly drawn to this work because of its social value. Fritz recalled from his childhood the terrible influenza pandemic of 1918, when so many people died that Toraja say they were 'cut down like grass' (*ra'ba biang*). There was no health service then to give them any comfort; perhaps that was one early experience that left its mark and predisposed him to find such a career rewarding.

Seeking to advance his training, in 1929 he asked Dr Simon to send him

to a teaching hospital in Batavia to study nursing. This necessitated a much longer journey and a greater widening of his horizons, for he now met people from all over the archipelago, and in the process became increasingly aware of himself as an Indonesian. More crucially, from his contacts with others in the hospital, he was exposed for the first time to the ideas of the nationalist movement that in that year was gathering force in Java. It was a revelation to him that some people were already dreaming of the day when Indonesia would become an independent country. In 1930, after he had been in Batavia for about 18 months, a letter came from Dr Simon announcing that his contract was over and he was going back to Germany. Daringly, he wrote at once asking to accompany his mentor; Dr Simon agreed, and Fritz thus became, so far as I can establish, the first Toraja to visit Europe. He stayed with Dr Simon's family in Düsseldorf for three years (1930-1932), assisting his mentor in the hospital at Essen and attending the nursing classes he ran there for the Red Cross. Those were strange years to be in Germany; the country was in the throes of political and economic crisis, suffering from mass unemployment and rising tensions between left and right as the National Socialists rose to power. After the 1932 elections which made Hitler Vice-Chancellor, Fritz chose to return home to work in the Mission hospital in Rantepao. He worked there under several different doctors, notably Dr J.J.J. Goslinga, a Dutch missionary doctor who served as head of the hospital and the Health Service from 1935. Under Dr Goslinga, the Mission's involvement with the Public Health Service again became closer. The hospital provided the setting for intensive exposure to Christian ideas and practice; morning prayer sessions were a daily feature, and staff capitalised on opportunities for Christianization by compiling monthly lists of discharged patients and their places of residence, then sending teachers to visit them in their villages in order to carry on the work of evangelisation. It was in this period that Fritz met and married Marta Gora, the first Toraja woman to train as a midwife. Further visits to hospitals in Java followed, where they both augmented their nursing qualifications. Seeing that it would be a long time before Toraja had enough doctors of its own, Dr Goslinga decided to go further, and trained Fritz to perform a number of surgical and obstetric procedures. Because of his incomplete schooling, Fritz would never be able to qualify officially as a doctor, but with the skills that he now acquired, effectively he became a 'doctor without a title'. That training is one that shapes a very particular world view: scientific, rational and humanist. I find it interesting to note that several of the graduates of medical schools such as the STOVIA (School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen, or School for Training Native Doctors) became leading figures in the Indonesian nationalist movement.<sup>4</sup> It is quite clear from the

<sup>4</sup> For comparisons between Fritz's life narrative and those of several published autobiogra-

details of Fritz's narrative that he came home committed to the nationalist cause. But in his case, he also remained to the end of his life a deeply sincere Christian, while at the same time retaining respect for at least some aspects of the traditional social system in which he had grown up as a child. He felt strongly about the value of Toraja kinship ties, but was not interested in assertions of rank, and largely opted out of the ceremonial exchange system with its expensive and competitive funeral sacrifices. Because he contributed so much to the community in other ways, he found ways to minimize his involvement in this all-important aspect of Toraja social life without offending his relatives. He thus was able to shape for himself a new identity for the new and evolving era in which he was born.

A second example of educational pilgrimage is provided by the life of Calvijn Rongre (Plaisier 1993:217-8). He was born in Rantela'bi', Sangalla', in 1918. His father was an impoverished aristocrat, while his mother was of slave rank. He attended one of the Mission primary schools, followed by the *vervolgschool* (intermediate school) in Ma'kale. In 1932, he sat the exams for both the teacher training school in Barana', Toraja, and the one in Makassar, being accepted into both. He chose to go to Makassar, and after obtaining his diploma, was sent by the Mission, together with a fellow-pupil, S. Parinding, to study agriculture at Buitenzorg in Java. Even more than Fritz Basiang, Rongre was drawn into nationalist politics in Java. He also discovered the works of Charles Darwin, and found in them a different argument for the equality of all men than the one he had been exposed to in the Mission schools. From 1937-1941 he taught in the *vervolgschool* in Ma'kale, where he expounded his by now mildly radical ideas. Principally, he wanted Toraja to be freed from the domination of Luwu', and saw a need for emancipation of the lower ranks of Toraja society from the demands placed on them by the aristocracy. By 1937 he had become vice-chairman of the Perserikatan Toraja Kristen (Christian Toraja Union), founded the year before, a modernizing organization which sought to enhance the ethnic unity of the Toraja as a Christian people, promoting changes to those aspects of *adat* which they saw as standing in the way of progress. Once while serving as 'master of ceremonies' at a wedding, he caused a furore by refusing to distribute the expected share of meat to the Puang of Ma'kale. By 1941 he broke with the Mission, finding an excuse to tender his resignation, apparently because he believed his intended future career as a political activist would cause problems for them with the administration. He taught in a private Christian school in Rantepao until the outbreak of war, and later moved to another teaching job in Enrekang. The height of his political career came immediately after Independence, when he became Kepala Daerah or head of the Emergency Government of the Toraja regency from 1950-1952. In

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phies by Indonesians with medical training, see Waterson (2007:132).

this troubled period of transition, he attempted to ease what he saw as potentially explosive social pressures by taking a sympathetic stance on land reform and encouraging agricultural wage labour in place of the traditional system of payments in kind. Caught between anti-feudal and conservative forces, however, he was unable to satisfy either. His humble ancestry undermined his legitimacy in the eyes of the southern elites, who treated him with open contempt (Bigalke 1981:397). Rongre resigned his position in 1952, after which he left for Jakarta, where he lived until his death in 1988.

Both of these individuals, born near the beginning of the twentieth century, lived through tremendous transformations of the world in which they had grown up. As Fritz said in looking back on his eventful story, 'I can honestly say that I have had to face all kinds of experiences in my life'. He himself expressed the view that it was education, and all the possibilities that came with it, that had been the biggest factor in changing his life; he went on to remark how this had resulted in an even greater geographical mobility for his own children, a generation later. For both Basiang and Rongre, education launched them from their tiny home villages into a bigger world, giving rise to a historical and political consciousness that embraced both national and international dimensions. The very notion of 'Indonesia' was only just entering into public discourse in the 1920s; for both men, who had started life identifying with an immediate kin group in a small village community, the passage to adulthood also meant working out for themselves new identities, both as 'Toraja' and as 'Indonesians'. Becoming a Christian also meant joining an international community; Fritz related how, when his parents worried about him being so far away from home in Germany, he comforted them by telling them that the reason he had been able to travel such great distances in safety was because he was among fellow-Christians. For Rongre, as his education took him further from home, his intellectual orientation was also expanding to include nationalist and socialist ideals, while the theory of evolution opened up a more scientific interpretation of the world than that which he had initially absorbed from his first teachers in the Mission school. These men carved out careers for themselves in the new world that was being shaped by Dutch colonialism; and by the time that brief era came to its abrupt close, they were already well prepared to contribute, in their different ways, to the next transformation.

Thus, we can conclude that, comparatively short as the period of Dutch colonization was for the Toraja, in the long term the changes it set in motion were much more far-reaching than at first sight appears. The unimpressive statistics for Christian conversions up to World War II are indeed misleading in this respect. Because of the initial role it played in supplying education and health services, the influence of the Mission in Toraja life far exceeded what those paltry statistics might lead us to suppose. Education continued to have



a steady effect on Toraja society. As rapidly as the Dutch regime collapsed before the Japanese advance, the new paths which it had opened up through the highlands had already had a profound effect in producing, for the first time, a self-conscious and cohesive sense of ethnic identity. Eventually, all of these changes would give rise to a nationalist consciousness (however moderate in Toraja compared to its development in Java), and Toraja people would come to see themselves also as Indonesians.

### *Japanese Occupation and the struggle for independence*

With World War II, the brief decades of Dutch authority came to an abrupt end. South Sulawesi was occupied by the Japanese navy, whose troops took over the Sa'dan highlands in March 1942. With them, from 1943, also came the Heiho, auxiliary forces composed of Indonesians from many parts of the archipelago, who provided labour for the construction of air strips, air raid shelters, anti-aircraft emplacements, and anything else the Japanese wanted. Those sent to this area were mainly from Java and Sumatra. The Dutch were interned in a camp at Awan, near Bittuang, or else at other locations in Kalosi, Pare-Pare and Makassar. The occupation is remembered as a time of great hardship and fear here as elsewhere, though since this area served chiefly as a supply station and there was not much fighting, it was less terrible than in some other places. Hardly anyone stayed in the towns; most returned to their villages, where they tried to grow whatever food they could. Any rice had to be hidden from the Japanese; people would take it up into the hills and try to pound it quietly enough to avoid detection. All available crops and foodstuffs were liable to requisition by the troops. Everything was rationed, and in the face of extreme shortages of items such as salt and cloth, people reverted to the almost forgotten manufacture of rough home-made cloth from pineapple fibre. Pak Tolele, whose father was the District Head of Sawangan in Malimbong in Dutch times, had vivid memories of this period. He recalled how the new overlords moved around in groups, for safety. Barracks were built in various locations for the Heiho. People became adept at hiding their pigs in secret places in the hills to avoid their requisition by Japanese troops, who came round every month to count all the villagers's livestock. He himself was recruited into the Seinendan, a Youth Corps whose members were to be used for 'voluntary' manual labour projects. They had to drill every day on an open field outside the present offices of the Kepala Desa. He remembers learning Japanese drill terms, and a song about shooting the English and Americans, and enslaving all the enemies of Asia. Cloth was so short that a single sarong had to be divided into two, or even four pieces, and he laughed in recalling how family members sometimes had to take it in turns to go out,



wearing the only available piece of clothing, while the rest stayed home for want of anything to wear.

When Dutch personnel, including the doctors, were interned, Fritz Basiang was ordered by the Japanese to take over the running of the hospital in Rantepao. He gave a blackly comic account of having to pull a tooth for the local Kempeitai (military police) executioner and torturer, a man with a terrifying reputation for cruelty. He also remembered how the schools were reopened with a Japanese curriculum, to be taught in Japanese. The teachers were given lessons in the new language, and after struggling to learn a few words, would go to school and teach them to their pupils, before going back to learn some more. Of life at this time, he recalled:

[A]ll the while we were thinking, 'How long can this go on?' We tried to get through each day, but we were always thinking, 'What will happen tomorrow, or the next day?' That was always in our thoughts. And life was very hard. Everything was in short supply. You can imagine [...] we would thresh our rice, and hide it inside big bamboos. Then we'd take a little and try to pound it without making too much noise, away in the gardens, and cook it there. Because the rice, all crops, were supposed to be handed over to the Japanese. Then you just had to do whatever you could to feed yourself [...] If the Japanese had a surplus, they gave out some rations, if not, you just had to try and grow whatever you could to stay alive, and live from the produce of your own gardens. We gathered the edible plants from the rice fields, too. It was no use complaining. You had to work with determination and make do with whatever there was. Most of the townspeople went back to their own villages, so very few people – only those who had to – remained. We were subject to all sorts of oppression if we stayed in the towns.

With the sudden collapse of the colonial system, some of the traditional elite saw the opportunity to reclaim their authority, eroded by the Dutch, and that of the indigenous religion. There was an immediate reassertion of an old competition between the headmen of the Rantepao and Ma'kale areas. Torajans' perceived intimacy with the Dutch left them in a potentially vulnerable situation politically. Some of the Muslim community, notably in Ma'kale but also in other parts of South Sulawesi, at first welcomed the Japanese defeat of their *kafir* colonial masters. They were apparently under the impression that the Japanese were defenders of Islam, or were even Muslim themselves, and Muslim activists used this idea to threaten Toraja Christian converts into abandoning their faith (Bigalke 1981:312; Pasande 2002:55). More traditionalist local leaders, meanwhile, encouraged a return to Alukta. Numbers of Christians fell, and village evangelists, suddenly left without salaries, found themselves in a precarious position. In fact, some of the arriving Japanese were Christians. The Japanese administration later introduced Japanese Christian clergy into Sulawesi, and toward the end of the war, even appointed a Christian administrator to Ma'kale and Rantepao.

As the war dragged on, and it finally became evident that the Japanese were losing, there was an atmosphere of heightened tension in the highlands. Only a small minority were sufficiently politicised and anti-Dutch to have a clear commitment to Indonesian independence. Pak Tolele recalls: 'People were already talking of independence then; they wore the *merah-putih* (the red and white flag of independence), but a tiny one, hidden in their pocket.' Things were stirring among the younger generation of *pemuda* (or 'youth', which in this area was a label loosely attached to nationalists in general, not only those of a radical or militant persuasion as in Java; Bigalke 1981:344). They had links with Muslim *pemuda* in Palopo and most of the news about what was happening in Java reached them this way, though there were also some tensions between the Toraja and Luwu' youth. For people in the highlands, a major preoccupation was the danger that Toraja might lose its autonomy within a newly emerging nation-state, and become absorbed by lowland Bugis or Makassarese power centres. With the removal of the Dutch regime, which had provided a buffer against such developments, it was feared that there might even be pressure toward enforced Islamization. Meanwhile, local leaders of northern and southern Toraja areas seem to have been largely taken up with their own internal competition at the expense of any bigger picture.

In August 1945, rumours at last reached Tana Toraja that the Japanese had lost the war. Pak Banti, then a small boy, remembers seeing many Japanese planes flying overhead from the direction of Manado, some of them on fire, as they fled from the Allied attack on Morotai in the Moluccas. In Rantepao, people were summoned to the football field for the announcement that Japan had surrendered. Australian troops were to come and take over – though they did not actually arrive for several months, until November. In the ensuing power vacuum, there was a great deal of uncertainty. Pro-nationalists at once began to seize weapons from the Japanese, without waiting for the arrival of Allied forces. The Australians were soon replaced by troops of the NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration), who, under an agreement signed between the Netherlands Government and the major Allied powers, were responsible for restoring Dutch administrative and judicial power in Indonesia. These troops included many soldiers formerly of the Dutch Colonial Army (KNIL). They began to recruit as many Toraja youth as they could, using the region as a training ground. But just as many had taken to the hills as guerrillas for the nationalist cause; some of the KNIL recruits deserted also. The youth movements in South Sulawesi were very vigorous, until in 1946-1947 the special forces of the notorious Captain 'Turk' Westerling perpetrated a series of massacres in which 40,000 people are claimed to have died. Even after this, guerrilla activity continued, while in Tana Toraja, the tentative formation of new political organizations began, closely scrutinised by the continuing Dutch administration but in an atmosphere of mounting expect-

tation as the nationalist struggle gained ground. Many Toraja were anxious to achieve a break from Luwu', a desire which was met in September 1946, when Controleur Van Lijf passed a resolution to that effect, making Tana Toraja a self-governing subdivision within the *afdeeling* of Luwu'. The first government to be formed was a council of headmen called the Tongkonan Ada', chaired by the Puang of Ma'kale. This somewhat ineffectual body continued in office until Indonesian Independence became a reality in December 1949, bringing a sudden end to a period of relative isolation and precipitating a new political era for Tana Toraja.

There followed the Emergency Government (1950-1952) led by Rongre, already referred to above. Political parties were at last able to form more freely, the main ones to emerge initially being Parkindo (Partai Kristen Indonesia, the Indonesian Christian Party), Masyumi (a reformist Muslim party which also gained support from some of the southern aristocracy) and a secular, socialist-inclined party called the Partai Kedaulatan Rakyat (People's Sovereignty Party). Sukarno's PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Party) had relatively little following in Tana Toraja, and the PKI, or Indonesian Communist Party, while active in forming organizations at the village level, placed less emphasis on expanding party membership. Political tensions over land reform, and the problematic question of the integration of South Sulawesi's irregular troops into the newly formed national army (already discussed in Chapter V) made this a very troubled period. The density of Tana Toraja's population made the land reform issue much more explosive here than in the rest of South Sulawesi. Land actions mounted throughout the early 1950s; by late 1953, 5000 pieces of rice land were under dispute, at which point the Committee formed to screen these cases announced a December deadline for consideration of any further disputes (Bigalke 1981:418-9). This Committee proceeded very slowly through the rest of the decade with its settlement of cases, and without offering much in the way of resolutions, but it succeeded in putting a brake on mass actions, by sending police and troops to patrol villages to prevent further popular seizure of lands. Socially, Toraja was approaching what Bigalke (1981:397) describes as the brink of revolution. But it was not only internal problems that prevailed. Throughout the 1950s, the highlands faced harrassment from Muslim guerrillas of Kahar Mazakkar's Darul Islam movement, as well as by troops commanded by Andi Sose, in the two periods in which they were stationed here (1953 and 1958), the results of which have already been described in detail in Chapter V. This period was to have a sharply polarizing effect on relations between Christians and Muslims, simultaneously sidelining the development of secular political alternatives. At the first nation-wide elections in 1955, Parkindo won a decisive victory in the Region of Luwu', gaining five of the seven Toraja seats on the regional Council, and complete control of the DPR-D (Dewan Perwakilan

Rakyat – Daerah, People's Regional Representative Council) in Tana Toraja itself. Christian conversions suddenly soared; from 1950 to 1965, the membership of Gereja Toraja experienced an annual growth rate of 10%.

For some years after the second routing of Andi Sose in 1958, Toraja was reduced to 'a state of isolation unparalleled since the 1870s' (Bigalke 1981:441). Throughout that year, and into 1960, Darul Islam intensified its attacks. To travel beyond the highlands was to enter hostile territory; there had been widespread destruction of roads and bridges; and an end to guerilla fighting was not achieved until the early 1960s. Kahar Muzakkar, who by 1960 had been driven into isolated Southeast Sulawesi, was finally tracked down and killed in an attack on his camp in 1965. That year was also momentous in Indonesia for the horrendous outburst of violence in the counter-coup against the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In the bloodbath which brought Suharto to power, close to half a million people may have died. Toraja was less affected by these events than some other areas, especially Java and Bali. Reminiscing about this period, a friend expressed his opinion that religious feeling, as well as the ingrained acceptance of distinctions of rank, in Toraja had hindered the Communist Party from gaining widespread support here. However that may be, farmers' movements with links to the PKI did attract considerable support in some areas, notably parts of Ma'kale, Kesu' and Madandan; they do not appear to have been so active in Saluputti. They appealed to the poor and the landless, who hoped for redress of their grievances against a feudal system, and also to those who sought to reclaim lands seized in inter-village wars at the close of the nineteenth century. These people had become frustrated by the lack of progress in getting their cases heard during the 1950s. In 1965 there were no massacres of suspected communist sympathizers here on the brutal scale of what happened in Java and Bali, but several dozen Toraja PKI members were arrested and imprisoned, and some lost their lives.<sup>5</sup> Others were allowed to remain at home but had to report to the police daily, weekly or monthly, depending on the alleged degree of their involvement. This went on for years afterwards. Under the New Order régime, the military extended its control throughout the country, right down to the village level. Each hamlet even had its appointed Hansip or security guard who was supposed to report to them. In areas which had shown support for the PKI, blacklisted families subsequently suffered since the local military forbade any organizations or individuals to help them, thus further increasing the poverty and social isolation against which they had been reacting in the first place.

With the establishment of Suharto's Orde Baru ('New Order'), with its heavy ideological emphasis on *pembangunan* ('development'), economic

<sup>5</sup> See G. Robinson (1995) for an account of events in Bali.

progress slowly returned. Roads which had become more or less impassable during the conflict were gradually mended and improved, and travel at last became safe once more. The 1970s saw an outflux of Torajans seeking higher education or employment beyond their homeland, and their remittances began to have a marked effect on the still overwhelmingly subsistence economy at home. Houses began to be rebuilt, and expenditure on ceremonies boomed. Some went to work for the logging companies in Central Sulawesi or in Kalimantan, and a considerable number migrated to open up farms in uncultivated areas of lowland Luwu'. There was also an influx of foreigners with the modest beginnings of a tourist trade which has grown considerably in recent decades, providing new jobs in hotels, restaurants and tour businesses. The keen interest which these visitors displayed in Toraja architecture and traditional rituals led some people to reevaluate the distinctive qualities of their indigenous culture, which some converts to Calvinism had come to despise as worthless. In the early 1980s, a receiving station was built and television became available for the first time in the two towns of Ma'kale and Rantepao. Later in that decade, cocoa became a profitable new cash crop, stimulating still more migration to less densely populated parts of Central and Southeast Sulawesi, where Toraja have done well from cocoa planting. At home, too, profits from cocoa and vanilla have raised local incomes and enabled people to purchase rice to meet the deficit of what they grow themselves. Now they can eat rice all year round, where previously many relied heavily on cassava as a secondary staple. By the 1990s, signs of change and prosperity were still more marked. The inward rush of modernity and the shrinking of distances has touched the Toraja highlands as it has the rest of the globe. When a Toraja became minister of telecommunications in the early 1990s it was not long before Tana Toraja joined the IDD network. At the same time, Government projects were introduced to extend metalled roads, piped water and electricity to more outlying villages all over Indonesia, and television and satellite dishes soon followed.

Looking back on the Toraja experience of colonialism, we can now suggest some answers to the questions raised at the start of this chapter concerning the receptivity of the Toraja to Christianity in the longer term, and the reasons why their memories of the Dutch period are on the whole relatively favourable. Dutch missionaries had laid the groundwork for fundamental changes in the Toraja world view, but we have seen that the decisive shift toward Christian conversions on a large scale came only after they had departed. The choice of a Christian identity was for these new converts more a direct result of South Sulawesi's political conflicts than anything else. Given the violence and insecurity of the periods both before and after the years of Dutch administration, it is in retrospect not surprising if many people recall those decades without obvious animosity. The introduction of education did indeed have the effect,

as elsewhere in Indonesia, of forming a new intellectual elite, but that section of society did not have so much time to become as thoroughly frustrated with Dutch political repression, and resistance to demands for greater autonomy, as was the case in Java. And while the struggle for Independence exacted an especially bitter cost in lowland South Sulawesi, for Toraja it was the ensuing decade that was to prove if anything more traumatic. What we can say for sure is that the changes set in motion by the Dutch had barely begun to work themselves out by the time their brief era of domination drew to a close.





**PART TWO**

***A house society***



## CHAPTER VII

# The mythical origins of humans and their houses

Having discussed how Toraja historically have formulated their relations with other peoples, I turn now to their view of themselves. Here too we find a richly imaginative body of stories in which myth, genealogy and history are woven together, always bound up with landscape and the house. Houses, as origin sites, figure very prominently in Toraja life and imagination, so perhaps it is no surprise that they should serve a special role as carriers of history, or what Fentress and Wickham (1992:113) have called 'structures for remembrance'. In a predominantly oral society, houses have served this role partly because genealogies are always closely attached to them. Genealogies themselves have been a major vehicle for remembering the past and justifying relationships and claims to precedence in the present. Genealogies always begin with a real or mythical founding couple (husband and wife) who first built a particular house; their children are named, together with the houses that they in turn founded, so that the deepest genealogies represent a sort of map of settlement, as descendants moved out across the landscape from the original house. In effect, one might trace a genealogy of houses, underpinning those of human beings themselves, and embedded in the landscape. As in many of Southeast Asia's ranked societies, genealogical knowledge is not evenly distributed; obviously it was the nobility who had a vested interest in remembering long genealogies, while genealogical amnesia is the rule among ordinary people. The extraordinary architecture of Toraja origin houses makes them all the more powerful as 'structures for remembrance', for their impressive presence in the landscape simultaneously embodies and reinforces these hierarchical distinctions.

The idea of the house as a substitute for written history was made explicit to me by a nobleman of Alang-Alang (Sanggalangi' district), Pak Tandiruru. Tandiruru was a genial and voluble informant, who once spoke to me for six hours without stopping, and who through his wide knowledge of Toraja aphorisms and sayings provided many insights into aspects of social life. I once recounted to Tandiruru an incident recorded by Bigalke (1981:5), who

recalls a conversation he had with a Bugis social scientist, at the start of his research. When he announced his intention to write a history of the Toraja, this man replied loftily, 'Oh, do they have one?' Tandiruru's reaction to this story was immediate. 'They have *lontara*,' he said, referring to the palm leaf strips on which the old Bugis texts were written, 'but we have the *tongkonan*.' In fact, both the Toraja words meaning 'to carve' (*manguki*; *massura*) also have the extended meaning of 'to write'. *Sura* can mean carving, painting, writing, and also a letter or book; *banua sura*, a 'carved house', means a noble house, and consequently a house 'with history'.<sup>1</sup> Only the nobility were permitted to have their houses decorated with carving, and noble informants would also refer to the fact that only these *tongkonan* possess a long genealogy incorporating the names of famous ancestors. Genealogy – and hence history – is thus viewed as a prerogative of the nobility, as is the house which is the embodiment of that history. Although I found that the majority of people – even those of noble descent – recall their ancestors to a depth of little more than two or three generations, certain individuals at least in noble families do cultivate long genealogical memories, and some genealogies may have a depth of up to thirty or so generations, going back to the supernatural founding couples of important origin houses or even to the first human couple on earth. Stories about the founding of these houses, with their strongly mythical elements, obviously served a legitimating function, enhanced in many cases by the association of supernatural power with certain surviving objects or natural features connected with the house. Possession of powerful heirlooms connected with ancestral figures makes the house supernaturally charged, justifying the authority of its descendants at the same time as providing authentication for the stories themselves.

The relationship between oral and written traditions can be complex. Jack Goody's (1987) careful delineation of the distinctive effects of writing on cognitive processes has been qualified by writers such as Finnegan (1988), Tonkin (1992), and Fentress and Wickham (1992), who caution us that no society is an entirely literate culture, including our own. They propose that once writing has appeared, there are no 'characteristically oral' or 'characteristically literate' ways of describing the world. It is therefore worth remembering that, in spite of the predominance of oral traditions, Toraja society has been at least partially literate since the late nineteenth century, when most Toraja chiefs were becoming literate in the Bugis script and using it for communication. We have seen how the slave trade from Toraja was built upon the cooperation of highland and lowland elites, and how this relationship brought with it some degree of penetration of lowland court culture into the highlands. Nowadays genealogies, like other fragments of an older knowledge, are often written

<sup>1</sup> Tandiruru often used the Indonesian *bersejarah* to express this idea of 'having a history'.

down, doubtless lessening the felt compulsion (if it exists at all among the younger generation) to memorize such materials; but my observation has made me painfully aware of what O'Flaherty (1988:29 note 34) has aptly termed 'the paradoxical tension between the secure oral preservation of a text and the insecure written preservation of a text', for cockroaches eat notebooks, houses burn down, nephews 'borrow' and never return these fragile documents, and in the meantime nobody any longer feels the responsibility for remembering.

The perceived importance of remembering has fluctuated in recent decades for other reasons than the new education of the young, however. The relevance of houses and genealogies did not go unchallenged in the years following Indonesia's Independence. The administration established in 1950 had the job of replacing old village heads associated with the Dutch regime, though in most cases, other high-ranking individuals (if younger and with a modern education) were installed in their places. In districts where the old heads resisted change, a compromise was reached by letting their sons replace them (Bigalke 1981:387). In the early 1950s, parallel with developments in other parts of Indonesia, politics in Toraja were becoming radicalised, and vigorous branches of the BTI (Barisan Tani Indonesia, a peasant organization connected to the Indonesian Communist Party) and Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth) were founded in Ma'kale and Rantepao (Bigalke 1981:402). The struggle for Independence had aroused a powerful mood in favour of democratisation among a broad section of Toraja society, for whom an obsession with genealogy provided further evidence of the nobility's feudal attitudes, which they saw as long overdue for reform. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, traditional architecture came under attack both from government and the Protestant church. In this period, government officials typically viewed the people of the 'Outer Islands' as 'primitive' and 'backward' compared to Java. Toraja were urged to modernize by abandoning the *tongkonan* and building modern bungalows. At the same time, zealous converts to the Calvinist Gereja Toraja (Toraja Church) vigorously rejected the *tongkonan*, along with other aspects of Toraja culture, as signs of spiritual darkness (Adams 1986:3). In any case, as we have seen in Chapter V, a great many houses had been burned by Islamic guerrillas during the 1950s, and very few families had the economic resources to spare to rebuild them.<sup>2</sup> Given all these factors one might have predicted, at that time, the rapid demise and eradication of traditional Toraja architecture. By the 1970s, however, conditions had become peaceful again and new wealth began to be available from the remittances of the increasing numbers of Toraja people finding employment outside of their homeland.

<sup>2</sup> The guerrillas also destroyed most of the oldest traditional houses in Bugis areas, which were perceived to embody 'pagan' and 'feudal' ideas (Pelras 1975).

Then money soon began to be put back into rebuilding projects. At the same time, the obvious admiration shown by visiting tourists for Toraja culture and architecture gave some Toraja a reason to reassess the traditional houses and ceremonies which they themselves had begun to despise. By the 1980s, government policies toward minority cultures had also, if perhaps unevenly, become more tolerant. There has been some corresponding revival of interest in *tongkonan* and genealogy as a source of history, as people try to construct or maintain a distinctive identity as 'Toraja' in the face of increasing out-migration and the rapid changes occurring in their society. The rebuilding of origin houses still commands remarkably strong approval within Toraja society.<sup>3</sup> Some members of the nobility, aware of the lack of interest among the younger generation, now see the preservation of genealogical knowledge as an important task, if Toraja history and identity are not to be lost. They have had time, too, to regret other losses. Since the early 1970s, there has been a rapid development of interest in Toraja among international art dealers, who have systematically, and with increasing rapacity, drained the societies of the archipelago of anything that can be commoditized and transformed into an object of value in the art market. They have been the cause of bitter quarrels in many families where individual members have – against the wishes or without the knowledge of the rest – allowed the sale of antique heirlooms, or worse, connived at the stealing of ancestral effigies (*tau-tau*), traditionally considered a most serious crime. A spate of such incidents in the early 1980s led to the loss of hundreds of effigies. The famous cliff burial site of Lemo, in particular, was stripped bare of its *tau-tau*, which have now, for the sake of the tourists, been replaced with crudely carved and unconsecrated replicas.<sup>4</sup> Thus their owners may now lament that origin houses have become denuded of their stored power, just as their political functions have been superseded by the modern administration.

### *Types of mythical narrative*

The corpus of myth in Toraja, although rich, is rapidly dwindling as its custodians (mostly aged priests of the traditional religion) die without successors interested in memorizing the heritage of oral literature which they carry. Many have already passed away. The stories I relate here are only tiny fragments of this very diverse corpus. The diversity itself is characteristic. Some stories are much more widely known than others, while some are regional

<sup>3</sup> See Waterson (1984b, 1990). Adams (1988) and Volkman (1990) also comment on the role of the house in a changing social order.

<sup>4</sup> See Adams (1993).

variants. Some are bound up with specific claims and their recounting may be prompted by the concern to make a particular point at the present moment. What is certain is that existing origin-myths differ so widely from each other that they simply could not be stitched into a coherent whole. This has never been a problem, since it is quite characteristic of localized, living oral traditions that they should vary, just as much as the details of ritual performance vary from district to district.<sup>5</sup> Each person tells their own story in their own place; a sense of incompatibility, a need for coherence, need not arise except under the changing conditions of modernity, when *aluk* finds itself in confrontation with exclusivist, text-based world religions with their claims upon a unique 'truth'.

The mythical accounts in this chapter, as well as deriving from different districts, hold differing statuses in relation to each other; they move from the more general (and probably less contentious) to the more particular. There are one or two human ancestors whom almost all Toraja seem to acknowledge as important, and the details of their stories, though not without variation depending on the teller, are more or less widely congruent, though there is a certain amount of disagreement as to which came first. But as soon as it comes to their children, diversity escalates, becoming tied to particular histories of particular houses still existing today. As confusing as I found this wealth of variation at first, I came to accept it as part of what makes the past relevant and 'useable', to borrow Commager's (1967) phrase, in the present. By contextualizing these differences, I shall try to make sense of the role of myth in Toraja thinking today. The tangled strands of mythology weave their way down through genealogy, reaching toward the present and catching up threads of more recent history on the way. Myth, of course, is my term for it, though Toraja themselves sometimes use the Indonesian term *mitos*, borrowed from the Greek; but the distinctions they drew were not the same as mine. The Toraja language has no exact term for 'myth' (compare Nooy-Palm 1979:133). The word sometimes used is *ossoran*, which literally denotes anything forming a sequence; this includes myths, genealogies, generations, the inheritance of heirlooms or particular characteristics from generation to generation, and the verses of funeral chants (*ossoran badong*) (compare Tammu and Van der Veen 1972:391). Myths concerning creation and human origins contrast with folk stories, not regarded as having 'really happened', which are called *ulelean* or *ulelean pare* ('rice tales'). These tales were traditionally told in the evenings during the period when the rice was ripening, or at harvest time.<sup>6</sup> A third category of story is called *dandanan sangka* ('*dandanan*: 'a row'

<sup>5</sup> Such variations are well documented in Koubi (1982) and Nooy-Palm (1979, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> People in Malimbong associated these tales with harvest time; Nooy-Palm's informants, however (mostly from Kesu' and Sangalla') stressed that they used to be told specifically as the



or progression; *sangka'*: 'cool', 'healthy'). These constitute supposedly true stories in which something 'starts out badly but leads to a good conclusion'; they generally point some sort of moral. In practice the distinctions between these categories are often far from clear: the events of *dandanan sangka'* are often hard to credit and show clear similarities with myth, while mythical characters appear in genealogies and folk motifs may figure in purportedly historical accounts. While I struggled to distinguish between 'myth' and 'history', Tandiruru, by contrast, judged stories concerning events in the sky to be 'pure' myths, which couldn't really have happened, while any that described happenings on earth could be taken as 'true' myths; others made their own judgements and rationalizations. There is, therefore, a critical component to Toraja assessment of the past, too. It is far from being taken for granted and is indeed frequently argued over. But the weaving together of these components is by no means unique. It must rather, as we have already seen, be taken as typical of social memory in general.

I have chosen here just one version of a creation myth, told to me in poetic verses of great beauty by Bua' Sarungallo of Kesu', a man who possessed the most extensive knowledge of Toraja tradition and oral poetry. Coming from Kesu', he was heir to a tradition clearly related to the great *merok* chant collected by the Dutch linguist Van der Veen (1965) from the same area. Throughout his life, he maintained his commitment to the Aluk To Dolo, though other members of his family had become leading members of the Toraja Church. He was keenly aware of the ironies that had arisen from the interaction of the two religions, for he commented once that Van der Veen himself used to make contributions to *aluk* rites and ceremonies because he was anxious to record them, even though he must also be held to have contributed to the demise of what he was studying.<sup>7</sup>

Toraja myths give a picture of a cosmos coming into being not by a single act of creation, but as a long-drawn-out process involving various deities and kinds of creative activity. It is quite clear in this account that Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the heavens, was not the only creator deity, notwithstanding the position of pre-eminence he later attained under the influence of Van der

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rice began to ripen. Noting that the themes of the stories, many of which concern poor children who eventually become rich, parallel the immature rice which eventually ripens, she suggests that they may have been intended to promote the growth of the rice (Nooy-Palm 1979:133).

<sup>7</sup> In fact, he knew Van der Veen well, for the latter had once wanted to adopt him when he was a year old, only his parents had refused. He had continued to see Van der Veen on and off until his final visit to Toraja in the 1950s. At that time, Van der Veen had lamented his continued adherence to the Aluk To Dolo, to which Bua' had replied: 'Why? If the Dutch are Christian and the Toraja are not, why should this represent a danger for the Toraja but not for the Dutch? I live a decent life, I do not do evil or things which are forbidden, I play my part in society, am I not good enough?' To which Van der Veen could only respond, 'Yes – only you don't know Jesus Christ.'

Veen, who selected him to stand as the translation for 'God' in his translation of the Bible into Toraja. A contrasting creation story, which I heard from Ne' Tarapa', an elderly *to minaa* of Mengkendek, features two Puang Matuas, a male and a female, who came into being spontaneously, along with 'everything that breathed', when the sky and the earth first separated from each other. The male was Puang Matua Langi' ('Puang Matua of the Sky'), and dwelt in the south or 'tail' of the sky (*pollo'na langi'*), the female was Puang Matua Tana ('Puang Matua of the Earth'), and dwelt in the north or 'head' of the sky (*ulunna langi'*). They each created one person, who married and gave birth to four children, after which the two Puang Matua quarrelled over who should lay claim to these offspring, and went to war with each other. There are many other differing accounts of the events of creation. The following discussion summarises Bua' Sarungallo's account, the most detailed that I collected.

*Laughter from the stone: cosmology and creation*

Out of chaos, the sky and earth separated, giving birth to three beings, deities known as the Titanan Tallu ('Three Hearthstones'). They were Pong Tulakpadang ('Lord who supports the Earth'), Pong Banggairante ('Lord of the Broad Plain'), and Gaun Tikembong ('Clouds that Grow Dense'). They in turn created the sun, moon and stars. Pong Tulakpadang went into the underworld, where he judges those who transgress against the *aluk*; he will pull their plants down and cause crop failure. Pong Banggairante stayed upon the earth, and Gaun Tikembong went into the heavens. Banggairante married Tallo' Mangka Kalena, 'Egg which Came into Being by Itself', and they had eight children; later in the account come other self-generating females. The sky-being, also finding himself alone, searched in vain across the heavens for someone to wed. Failing, he plucked out his own rib and made a son, Usuk Sangbamban ('Single Rib Bone') who was doomed to the same search. He eventually wandered far to the east, where he heard the delightful laughter of Simbolong Manik ('Hair-bun like Golden Necklace-Beads') coming from within a large granite boulder. Struggling to break open the rock, he was reduced to tears of exhaustion. She then instructed him how to make an offering to the rock, upon which she burst forth like a torch in the darkness. The product of their union was Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the sky, also known as To Kaubanan ('The White-haired One'). He in his turn searched in vain for a woman to marry. Eventually, on his mother's instructions, he succeeded in obtaining another woman from the rock just as his father had done. Once more they were at a loss, unable to reproduce themselves. His wife, Arrang di Batu ('Light from the Stone') then instructed Puang Matua

how to search for gold in the west, after which he built a forge and created the (female) ancestor of humans, Datu Laukku' ('Lady [whatever she wants] Will Come to Pass'), as well as the ancestors of cotton, iron, rain, bamboo-poison, chickens, buffaloes and rice. The ashes from the forge, which Puang Matua threw away, fell done to earth upon the mountain-sides and became trees and plants. Humans, then, were forged originally from the same substance as these other things, though the latter items are described as being destined to provide for Datu Laukku' and her descendants, and, in the case of buffaloes and chickens, to be sacrificed as offerings. Humans continued to live in the sky for some time before the first couple, Bura Langi' ('Foam of the Sky') and Kembong Bura ('Rising Foam') descended to earth. Notably absent from this act of creation, however, are pigs, which occupy such a vital place in the Toraja social world. It was left to the grandson of Datu Laukku', To Tanaranga ('He who Works the Earth') on his travels, to encounter a female deity, ancestor of pigs, who was first heard squealing from within the rock. After he made the appropriate offering, she burst forth, and subsequently reproduced abundantly in the large stall built for her, her children being destined to be used in ceremonies.

The story indicates halting progress in reproductive affairs, and a notable autonomy of female beings. The first females are self-generating, and impart knowledge of rituals to their husbands and sons. The first, female ancestors of both buffaloes and pigs are said to have reproduced independently, giving rise to the missing males by means of some magical power. These initial acts of parthenogenesis only gradually give way to heterosexual reproduction. Other myths describe two more occasions on which Puang Matua created humans: when the first house was built, in the sky, there were no carpenters and no priest to perform the necessary rituals, so he made three carpenters and a priest. On another occasion, he made two women of clay for two slave brothers without wives, animating them with the help of the Lord of the Winds, Datunna Angin. He sent the swallows to catch the Lord of the Winds in a net, and induced him to enter the beings he had created; the Lord of the Winds agreed only on condition that when they died, he should be allowed to leave through their fontanelles. Breath, a component of human vitality, and wind are thus associated.<sup>8</sup> This latter myth also serves a legitimating function in placing the origins of the system of social rank and of slavery far back in the earliest times, when people still lived in the sky.

Various points may be made about the life-giving stones. Some people still keep (or until recently kept) magic stones (*balo'*) which they believed helped buffalo to reproduce, cured sickness, made them invulnerable, or

<sup>8</sup> Compare Geirnaert-Martin (1992:63-4) on Sumbanese *mawo*, a component of vitality which is associated with moisture, clouds, and rain.

enabled them to walk long distances without wearying. Large round granite boulders, like giant eggs, scatter some parts of the Toraja landscape. They are characteristic of the Malimbong area, and one or two that are situated at the site of an origin house are attributed supernatural powers and are even said to be always growing bigger. The Toraja interest in stone finds many parallels among other Austronesian peoples, where the use of megaliths has continued in diverse forms into contemporary cultures. The Toraja used to (and occasionally still do) erect standing stones (*simbuang batu*) as memorials to important aristocratic individuals, though nowadays they tend to be rather small, unlike the great stones on some old funeral grounds like the one at Bori', north of Rantepao. But most fundamentally for Toraja cosmology, the dead are buried in stone graves (*liang*) cut into cliff faces or granite boulders. They become ancestors, who, as elsewhere in Austronesia, are believed to become a source of fertility and continued life for their descendants. This movement back into the stone reverses that of the myths, but with a similar result, one which emphasizes the cyclical nature of life processes as asserted in the Toraja world view. In fact the endurance of stone itself is used as an image of immortality, for 'to live for ever' in Toraja is expressed as *tuo batu*, 'to live like a stone'.

#### *The house of Puang Matua*

The houses built by humans, according to myth, had their prototype in the sky, for Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord', built a house there. This house, however, is extraordinary in several respects. First of all, according to the account of *to minaa sando* Tato' Dena', he brought into being a simple shelter (*lantang tibang*) similar to those later constructed on earth by the first humans, in which he set up the forge where he worked at his creations. But later, he built a house with 'iron pillars, posts that never decay' (*a'riri bassinna, lentong tang manapona*). The creation of this house was also recounted to me by Bua' Sarungallo, and it features in the poetry of the *merok* chant recorded by Van der Veen in the Kesu' area (1965:107-17). A tree with seven branches and seven leaves was felled to provide the timbers for the first house, but it slid into a deep pool and could not be recovered until offerings of atonement had been made. The chant speaks of this first dwelling as a 'booth' of four poles roofed with precious textiles (*maa'* and *doti langi'*), and an account of the inaugural rituals held for it is given, in which, interestingly, mention is made of dressing the posts befittingly in jackets and sarongs (Van der Veen 1965:113) – a practice still followed in Toraja at the installation of a house 'navel-post', and formerly also customary in Roti (Van de Wetering 1923). The chant also describes how long journeys were undertaken to obtain precious heirloom



A blacksmith's forge on the slopes of Mount Sesean, 1983. The boy sitting above is working the bamboo bellows. The creator deity Puang Matua is described in ritual poetry as creating the first human ancestor in his forge with the 'twin bellows' (*sauan sibarrung*), just as seen here.

textiles, crises, and beadwork for display at this ceremony (just as is done at the inaugural rites of noble origin houses today).

Van der Veen's chant continues with a description of how subsequently, Puang Matua decided to build an iron house in the centre of the sky. Once again, rites were held for it. This house differs significantly, several people told me, from earthly houses in that it faces east-west, toward the rising sun (*banua dipauang*). Toraja always orient their houses to the north, and, according to Kila', it is prohibited (*pemali*) to imitate Puang Matua by allowing your house to face to the east. This would result in ill fortune for the occupants. A dramatic and beautiful image of this most sacred of houses is found in the verses recited by Tato' Dena':

<i>Ula' balu peporinna</i>	It is bound together with pythons
<i>Panakan pepamarra'na</i>	Its lashings are made of red snakes
<i>Sando peba'naba'nana</i>	And it is decorated with scorpions
<i>Banua dibangun leko'</i>	House oriented in the opposite way [to human houses]
<i>Dipopemba'ba lurekke</i>	With its door set in the north side <sup>9</sup>
<i>Sitontongan barre allo</i>	Face to face with the sun
<i>Unganga' lindona bulan</i>	Looking at the face of the moon
<i>Tondok dipapai mawa'</i>	<i>Tongkonan</i> roofed with <i>maa'</i> cloths
<i>Ditarampakki masura'</i>	With tiles of <i>masura'</i> cloths <sup>10</sup>
<i>Dibubungi lotong boko'</i>	With a roof ridge of black cloths <sup>11</sup>
<i>Seleng mangimba randanna</i>	And a ridge-covering of <i>seleng mangimba</i> cloths
<i>Tindak sarira longana</i>	The rainbow forms the points of its eaves
<i>Miang kila' pamiringna</i>	Its rafters are flashes of lightning
<i>Sundallak dambo-dambona</i>	And all its ornamentation gleams like stars

### *The first carpenters*

The first houses on earth were created by people who, like many of the first humans, are described as 'still being like the deities' (*to mendeata pa*), in other words possessed of supernatural powers, and in circumstances charged with mystery. These first carpenters had to work at building, all the same, unlike Puang Matua who, according to Tato' Dena's account, simply had to concentrate in order to bring into being his house in the sky. The originator of house

<sup>9</sup> Most Toraja houses, by contrast, have the door in the west side, though there is some regional variation.

<sup>10</sup> These are similar to the long indigo-patterned cloths called *sarita*.

<sup>11</sup> This kind of cloth is used in high-ranking funerals to decorate a buffalo (called *tulak bala* in Saluputti), which is kept stalled under the house throughout the ritual period and becomes the final sacrifice on the day the corpse is taken to the tomb.



carvings is widely named as a woman, Malalun Sanda. I first heard this story from an elderly priest, *to minaa* Saleda of Talion, now deceased. When the first carpenters were in the forest, Malalun Sanda came to bring them food. She was menstruating, and when she sat down on some timbers, her blood left patterns on the wood. This became the inspiration for the first wood carvings. A more detailed version was recounted to me by Pak Kila' in 1994. Kila' tells how Malalun Sanda, the sister of Manaek (the famous founder of *tongkonan* Nonangan) and daughter of Pabane, married a man from Rangri' in Tondon district.<sup>12</sup> At night she saw a house descending from the sky and landing on Rangri' mountain. At cock-crow, the house would go back up into the sky. One night, she approached to investigate more closely, and saw that the house was covered with beautiful carving. She watched night after night, waiting for the house to descend. Then one night, after it had come down, she saw the *deata* or spirit who lived in it emerge. While its owner was away, Malalun Sanda lashed the house to the surrounding trees with thongs of buffalo hide. When the *deata* returned and tried to pull the house up into the sky again, it remained where it was. The *deata* vanished and Malalun Sanda then moved in to the house and lived there. Later the house was moved to Kesu', whose inhabitants became the first to carve their houses. This is why the finest carvers to this day come from the neighbouring villages of Kesu', La'bo' and Ba'tan. There were many people who wanted to make a buffalo-head motif (*pa'tedong*), but they couldn't figure out how to do it. One day, Malalun Sanda was sitting on some wood and her menstrual blood made a pattern there. When she got up, there was the *pa'tedong* motif. To this day, in recognition of Malalun Sanda as the originator of house carvings on earth, a woman must make the first cut when the carving of a house begins, otherwise the carpenters will cut themselves while working.

Tato' Dena' tells of a carpenter named Anggilo, who was a *to manurun*, one who descended from the sky. He brought the idea of carving with him, having seen Puang Matua's carved boat (*lembang sura'*) in the sky. Descending in the north on Mount Sesean, he built a house nearby at Sa'dan. People told him of a remarkable woman carpenter named Bombong Beru, but he searched in vain for three months without finding her. She was a person gifted with special powers (*to diere*): she could fell a tree with a single blow of her axe, and cut planks from end to end with one stroke. Hearing that a handsome man was looking for her, Bombong Beru came to Sa'dan from her home at Sinaji (a large mountain in Mengkendek, in the far south of Toraja), walking the distance in just three days. She found Anggilo working wood in the forest. She was wearing men's clothes and her hair was concealed, so Anggilo did not realize she was a woman. She asked him for his axe, and proceeded to cut

<sup>12</sup> There is no longer a *tongkonan* on this site.



a plank with it in just four strokes. The two of them then built a house called Ramba Titodo (*ramba*: 'to drive along'; *titodo*: 'stumble') in Sa'dan. They wanted to move it to Sinaji. During the night, they set the house in motion, and it went along by itself, but when dawn came, it came to a halt at Sibunuan, near Madandan. The house stayed at this spot and became a founding *tongkonan*; its ruins, according to Tato' Dena', are still there. Before moving to Sa'dan, Bombong Beru had already built several other *ramba titodo* houses, capable of independent movement, at Sinaji. They had 'moved and stopped' at three different places in the south: at Tangsa, Sangbua, and Banua Puan, becoming three linked *tongkonan*, all inhabited by descendants of the widely acknowledged ancestor Tangdilino' (see below). Tato' Dena' concluded this account by adding that all the children of Tamboro Langi' (perhaps the most famous of the *to manurun*, whose story is also related below) also spread out and founded new houses (*untale' tongkonan*).

The ancestor Tangdilino' had four carpenters who built his house in the forest at Sinaji. Their names were Pong Kaekae, Pong Lellesu', Pong Kalolok and Pong Sabannangna.<sup>13</sup> The same Anggilo of the preceding tale executed the carvings. The house they constructed for Tangdilino' became the prototype for all Toraja *tongkonan*, for it already had three essential characteristics: it had an extended roof ridge with pointed eaves (*longa*), it was decorated with carving (*sura'*), and it was consecrated with rituals (*aluk*).

The four carpenters all worked together. Pong Kalolok was really a tree who had taken on human shape. He worked wood the same way Bombong Beru did, just by stretching or squashing it to the desired sizes. He had no need to use a chisel for mortising joints; he simply drove one piece of wood into another to join them. Pong Sabannangna had a cord with which he measured the wood, but Pong Kalolok thought this was useless, and threw it into the top of a *bilandek* tree. The other three became jealous of him, and plotted to kill him, for they said, 'He's too clever, and everyone will want to use only him'. So they murdered him, and he was transformed into carpenter bees (*tabuan*) and termites (*ane*) which eat wood. He told them, 'Now my worms will work your house for you', and humans are powerless to stop them. As well as Tangdilino's house, these carpenters built three other houses at Sinaji, and then drove them out of the forest like buffaloes. These houses, like Anggilo's, were 'start and stumble' houses (*banua ramba titodo*), capable of independent movement (though in other versions of the story, the shifting of Tangdilino's house is described more prosaically as having been

<sup>13</sup> A variant version is given in Van der Veen (1965:160 note) The names of the protagonists differ slightly, as does the identity of the murder victim. The name of Pong Sabannangna ('Lord who has a String') is here given as 'Pusa'bannangna', which could be translated as 'Lord whose String is Lost'.

achieved by pushing it over wooden rollers). The first three stopped at Tiang, Lakawan and Pamulungan (all in Enrekang, south of the borders of present-day Tana Toraja), while Tangdilino's house was established at Marinding in Mengkendek, and was called Banua Puan. Its site is still remembered and kept clear of other structures to this day.

These elaborate tales about houses and carpenters show parallels with some of the stories already described, in that they depict a gradual and halting progression toward the present state of affairs, rather than a single moment of creation. The tree who becomes a carpenter, transforming trees into house timbers, and himself sacrificed for his skill, suggests a time when things had barely separated from an original unity. Supernatural qualities imbue the houses themselves, lowered as they are from the sky, or animated with their own powers of movement. House names and locations mark out as if they were a map of early efforts at settlement. Given the importance of houses in the Toraja world view, it is not surprising that they should be the object of narrative attention. Characteristically, several of these most ancient founding house sites are mentioned as being now vacant, though the memory of them is preserved.

#### *The first humans on earth*

According to Bua' Sarungallo' (and there is wide agreement on this point), the first human created by Puang Matua was a woman, Datu Laukku'. She and several generations of her descendants lived in the sky. It was only after six generations that a couple, Kembong Bura and Bura Langi', were lowered down to earth by Puang Matua, by means of a stone ladder, the Eran di Langi' ('Ladder of the Sky') which at that time still connected earth and heaven. They had one son, Pong Mula Tau, who married a woman named Sanda Bilik.<sup>14</sup> This couple had two sons, Londong di Rura and Londong di Langi'. Londong di Rura founded a house at Rura in Mengkendek, in the far south of present-day Tana Toraja. He incurred the wrath of Puang Matua by marrying together his four sons and four daughters. In Tato' Dena's version, these eight children were actually four pairs of opposite-sex twins, known as the Rindu Karua ('Eight Twins'). The girls claimed that the twins were born to marry each other, and rejected the hands of the four sons of Pong Mula Tau and

<sup>14</sup> The name appears in numerous genealogies, most commonly as the wife of Tamboro Langi'. It could mean 'A Complete Number of Rooms', though Nooy-Palm (1979:25) translates it as 'The Dam in the River', which fits with the fact that she is one of those female founding ancestors who emerged out of a river pool.

Kembong Bura, who had proposed to them.<sup>15</sup> Enraged by these incestuous unions, Puang Matua threw down the Eran di Langi' and sent a great flood which destroyed Rura and all its inhabitants, at the very moment when they were celebrating a great *ma'buu'* festival. The rejected suitors, having taken offense, declined the invitation to the festival and were thus spared from the flood. The place where this happened is still remembered today, a marshy spot close to the road which runs between Enrekang and Ma'kale, while the ridge of mountains which runs between Ma'kale and Rantepao is said to be the remains of the Eran di Langi'. Pong Suloara' of Sesean, the first earthly *to minaa* or priest, led a ceremony of atonement at Rura, with sacrificial offerings of pigs. Then Londong di Langi', who had been spared from the flood, went as an emissary to Puang Matua to inquire what sort of marriage prohibitions ought to be observed. Puang Matua's reply was to take six betel nuts and plant them in the ground. First he planted a whole nut, which failed to germinate. Then he split a nut in half and planted it, and this too failed to grow. The next nut he divided into quarters, and it grew a little and died; then he split a nut into sixths, and this too grew a little and then died. The last two nuts he divided into eighths, and into twelfths, and these grew and flourished. The whole betel nut represents brother and sister, and the one split in half, first cousins, neither of whom may be married. The next two nuts stand for second and third cousins, who may be married if an offering of atonement is made, and the last two, fourth and fifth cousins, who are quite free to marry and indeed are favoured marriage partners.

Versions of this story vary according to region. The above is the story as it was told to me by Tato' Dena'. In the Tallu Lembangna and in Kesu', whose aristocracy were particularly wealthy and powerful, the nobility have in fact long made a practice of marrying their first cousins, with the expressed aim of preventing the dispersal of property. Bua' Sarungallo's telling of the myth reflects this custom; in his version, Puang Matua first planted a whole nut, which failed to grow, then nuts split in two, four and eight parts, all of which sprouted, indicating that marriage with first, second or third cousins could be taken as permissible. Feelings against the marriage of first, and even second, cousins are very strong, however, in other parts of Toraja.

Londong di Langi' ('Cock of the Sky') became one of the most prominent founding ancestors in noble genealogies (compare Nooy-Palm 1979:25), though it is his descendant Tangdilino', six generations later, who is more

<sup>15</sup> As I shall discuss in a later chapter, this theme of the union of twins could be said to represent a sort of impossible ideal in some bilateral kinship systems of Southeast Asia. There is a saying in Toraja that opposite-sex twins are 'married' in the womb; this occurs as a motif in the myth of Sawerigading (see Chapter II).

commonly spoken of today. Tangdilino' ('Cannot be Shaken') is universally remembered as the founder of a most important *tongkonan* called Banua Puan, at Marinding in Mengkendek.<sup>16</sup> This is claimed by some to be the first house to be decorated with carvings, but more importantly, it was the first house on earth to have ceremonies performed for it. No house has stood at Banua Puan for as long as anyone can remember, but the site is still remembered, and it used to be customary for anyone passing the spot to throw down a few grains of rice as a kind of offering of respect. In 1994, plans were afoot to rebuild this house, to which a great many noble families in Toraja can trace some link. Since perhaps the majority of noble houses in Toraja can claim descent from Banua Puan, in theory small contributions from thousands of descendants could easily meet the cost of this project, which had the backing of a prominent descendant from Marinding itself. It stalled, however, on the problem of finding someone who could be fully trusted to manage these funds. Some said that to be complete the house, if rebuilt, would require great additional expense in the holding of further ceremonies of the kind Toraja call *Rambu Tuka'*, or 'Smoke of the Rising [Sun]', having to do with the enhancement of life and fertility. Others claimed this was not necessary, since the house had undoubtedly celebrated them all in the past. To date the project has not been realised, but Banua Puan remains in most peoples' minds the most significant of all origin houses. In Tato' Dena's words, it 'became the origin house of all Toraja' (*mendadi tongkonanna sang Torayan*). According to the genealogy which he recounted to me (Genealogy 2), Tangdilino' had two brothers, Pondan Padang and Passontik. While he stayed at the 'middle of the earth' (*tangana padang*) at Banua Puan, his brothers travelled further away, each of them taking with him a portion of the *aluk*. Pondan Padang went to the west, and Passontik to the east. This dividing of the *aluk* into three is one of the means by which Toraja explain the origins of the manifold variations in the details of ritual practice in different regions of Toraja.

Tangdilino' is also well remembered as the progenitor of (variously) between seven and ten children who spread out across the Toraja landscape, founding new houses as they went. The names of these children and the locations to which they dispersed remain fairly stable in social memory, in spite of minor variations in individual accounts. According to Tato' Dena', there were ten children, of whom eight were pairs of twins. These births were not surprisingly considered remarkable, and the sibs were known as the Rindu Karua

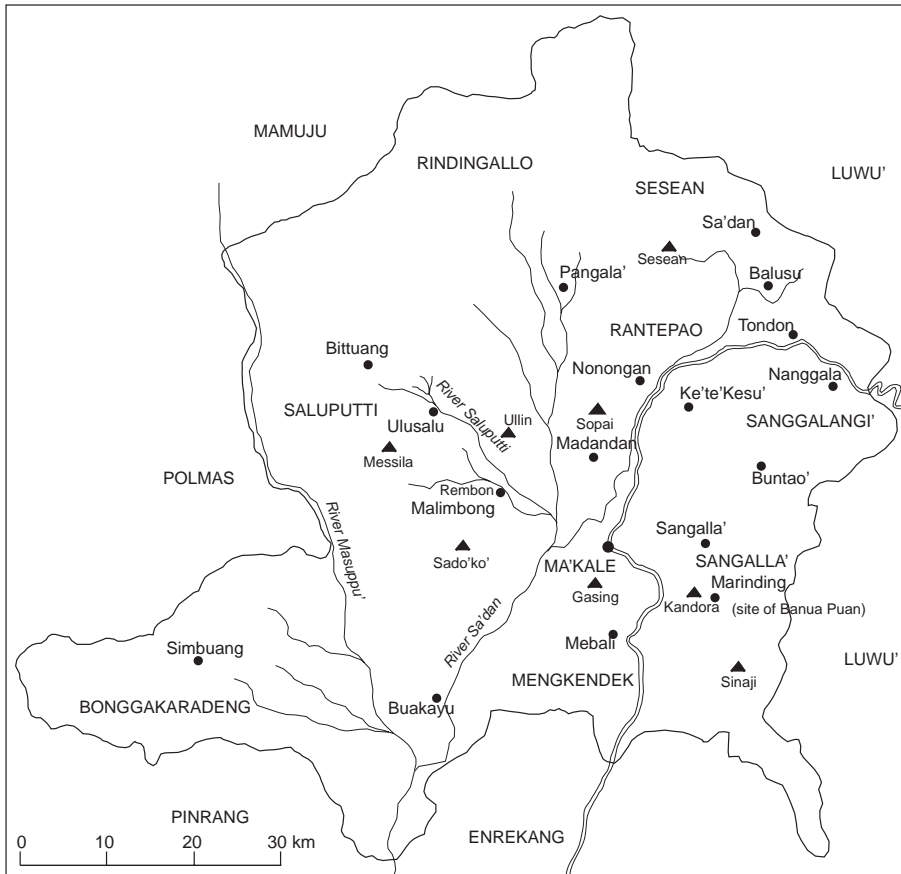
<sup>16</sup> The name is often translated as 'Not From the Earthquake' (*lino'*: earthquake), but can more correctly be translated as 'Cannot be Shaken'; compare Pelras (1996:80) for similar noble titles among the Bugis. In Tato' Dena's version, Tangdilino' is the grandchild of the first couple Pong Mula Tau and Kembong Bura (see Genealogy 2).

(‘Eight Twins’), just like the children of Londong di Rura.<sup>17</sup> Characteristic of Tato’ Dena’s telling of the genealogy is that it comprises not just a sequence of marriages and offspring, but the names of the houses founded by each descendant or the locations to which they moved. The recitation of genealogies thus provides a sort of geographical and historical map of the settlement of Toraja. Moreover in his account, each of Tangdilino’s children took with them their own share of the *aluk* as well as a powerful heirloom object (*balo’ penai*) that served as their inheritance.<sup>18</sup> For example, Bobong Langi’ (‘Beaded Headdress of the Sky’), who went to Mamasa (a closely related Toraja region to the west of Tana Toraja) and became the ancestor of the Mamasa people, took with her a kind of closed basket used for storing valuables, called Kampolo Pirri’ (‘Basket Full to the Brim’), and a kind of song style performed at *ma’bua’* rituals, called *to menani dena’* (‘singing like pipits’). Her brother Pamemangan, who went to Sillanan, took a container of stone (like those of bamboo formerly used for sowing seed), called Pongke Anduran. Bue, who went to Duri, took with her a pair of swords with forked tips, called Dua Bontik (‘Two Points’) and Tallu Topongna (‘Three Tips’).<sup>19</sup> The share of Pote Malea, who went to Palopo, was the Tokeran Gandang, Dedekan Karongean (‘Hanging of the Drum, Beating of That which is Hung Up’), while Pata’ba’ received the Pangka Rapi’, a forked weaning-muzzle for calves. Tato’ Dena’ is exceptionally knowledgeable, and his version is unusually detailed, especially regarding the obscure names of the different portions of *aluk* allotted to each sibling. But the remembering of the place or house names associated with each descendant is a much more general feature of how genealogies are recalled. According to Tato’ Dena’, Tangdilino’ remarried after the death of his first wife, Buen Manik. With his second wife, Salle Bi’ti’ of Boto’ in Sangalla’, he had six more children. Tato’ Dena’s own ancestry can be traced to one of these. In Bua’ Sarungallo’s version, Tangdilino’ is shown as having eight children, and their destinations are also carefully recorded. The eldest son, Pabane, is shown as arriving in Kesu’, where he married Ambun di

<sup>17</sup> Eight is an important number for the Toraja, signifying completion. Even numbers here (as also in Sumba) have positive connotations, unlike in some other parts of the archipelago such as Aceh and Bali, where there is a strong preference for odd numbers, which are used to symbolize life as an uncompleted process, in which case, completion may be negatively associated with death (see Waterson 1990:129 and note 17).

<sup>18</sup> *Balo’* in a general sense refers to heirloom objects, regarded as imbued with their own power, but is also commonly used to refer to stones believed to have special power (see above). Formerly, very many *tongkonan* possessed such stones, but with conversion to Christianity they are becoming less common.

<sup>19</sup> Her full name was really Tele’ Bue. Tele’ means literally ‘vagina’. In earlier times, girls and boys of aristocratic families were quite often called simply Tele’ or Laso, ‘Vagina’ or ‘Penis’. Nowadays people find these names embarrassing, but they appear rather commonly in genealogies. The heirloom swords are also mentioned in Van der Veen (1965:62, verse 292).



Map 6. Tana Toraja, showing some of the main mountains and villages

Kesu', granddaughter of Puang ri Kesu', the founder of *tongkonan* Kesu'. The well-known story of their son, Polo Padang, and his half-sister Manaek, who freed him when he became trapped in the weir of a fish pond, is recounted in Nooy-Palm (1979:153-4). In exchange for being rescued, Polo Padang surrendered his right to succession to Manaek, who subsequently became known as Datu Baine (the 'Female Lord'), and founded another important *tongkonan*, Nonongan.

*Sky and water meet on earth: the to manurun di langi'*

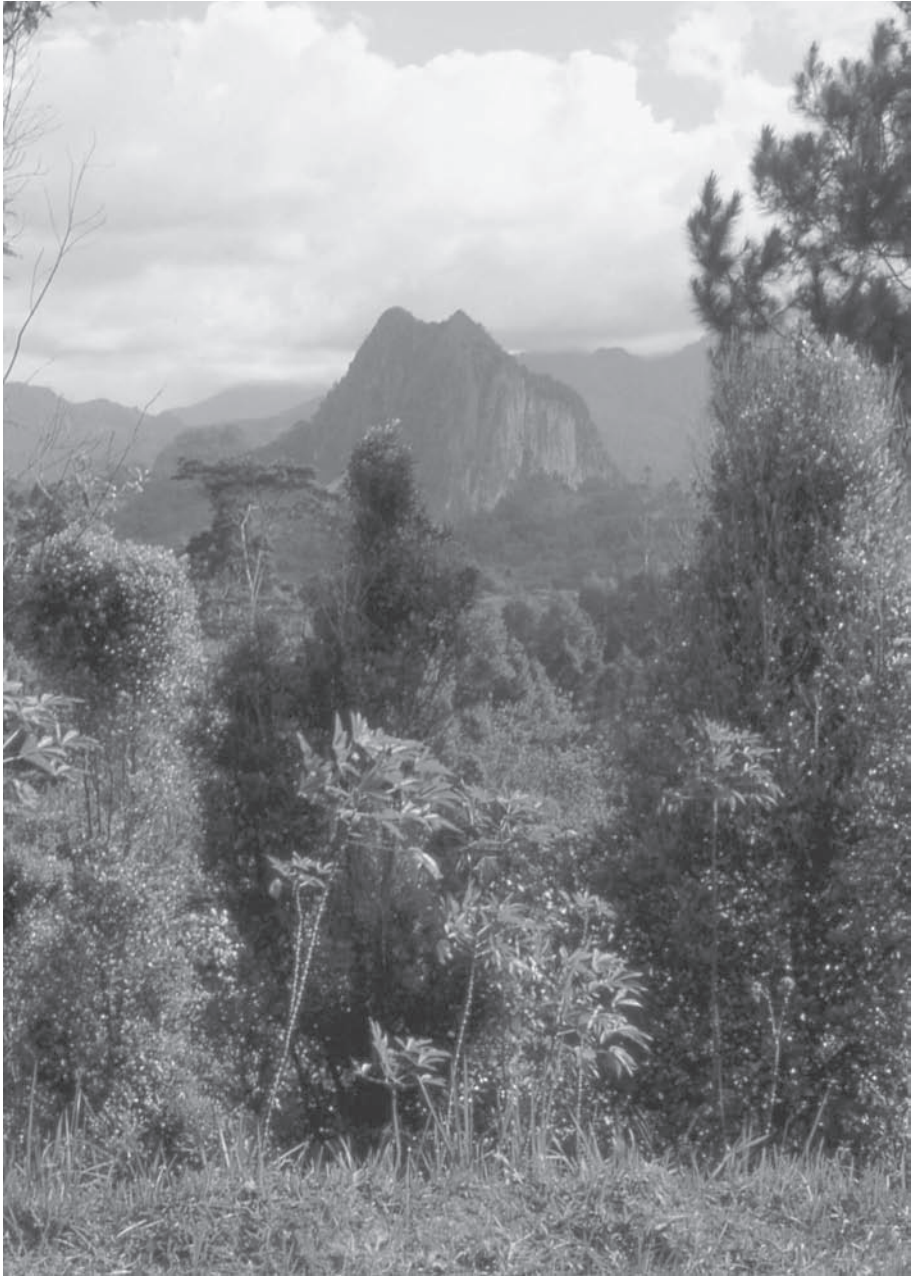
Another major category of founding ancestors are couples, of whom the male partner is said to have descended on a mountain top, while the woman rose up out of a river pool or spring. In a paired phrase, they are more completely known as the *to manurun di langi'*, *to kendek diomai liku* ('ones who descended from the sky, ones who rose up out of a pool'). The pairing of upper- and underworld beings, male and female, is characteristic and, as we saw in Chapter I, represents a widespread Austronesian motif. The local population supposedly recognized the superior qualities of these new arrivals, the *to manurun* or 'ones who descended', and invited them to become rulers.<sup>20</sup> The stories thus legitimated the position of noble *tongkonan*, whose descendants traditionally exercised political power over their local domains. The children of these founders, too, are often described as dispersing to new locations to found their own houses. People all over Toraja can claim descent from one or another of these ancestors, though they feature most prominently in central, southern and western areas. It is between these areas that competition over ancestors today appears to be keenest. The central Kesu' area claims To Manurun Puang ri Kesu' ('Lord of Kesu') as its most important founding ancestor, while in the south and west, Tamboro Langi' is more important. Nobles from central and southern areas often expressed scorn at the idea of any important ancestors coming from the west, although westerners disagree, and are anxious to gain more recognition for their own claims.

Perhaps the best known *to manurun* is Tamboro Langi' ('Sky-Drum'), from whom many Toraja can claim descent, and whose story is very widely known. Crucial details differ, however, depending on which area the teller comes from. Tamboro Langi' is an especially important figure in the genealogies of origin houses in west Toraja. According to people in Saluputti, Tamboro Langi' descended on top of a mountain called Ullin and married a woman, Sanda Bilik, who rose out of a pool at the meeting place of the Sa'dan and Saluputti rivers at a place called Sapan Deata near Maulu', not far west of Ma'kale. Ullin, a peak in Banga district, is particularly associated with the *deata*, nature deities, who are said to congregate there annually after the harvest. It forms a triangle with two other peaks, Sado'ko' and Messila, which dominate the landscape around Malimbong. All three are associated with *to manurun*: Sado'ko' with an ancestor called Gonggang ri Sado'ko', and Messila with Kila' Ta'pa ri Ba'tang ('Lightning Striking a Tree'), about whom I never heard any stories except that he appeared on Messila in a lightning storm, so that people assumed he had come from the sky.

As for Tamboro Langi', having descended from the sky, he first of all built

<sup>20</sup> For further variants of myths concerning the *to manurun*, see Nooy-Palm (1979:145-61).





The mythical Mount Kandora, on whose peak according to some accounts the ancestor Tamboro Langi' first descended from the sky, seen from the site of Banua Puan, where Tangdilino' built the first *tongkonan*, 1996

himself the *banua ditoke*, or 'hanging house', in the branches of a tree, where it was swayed by the wind. Sanda Bilik's home, by contrast, was under the water. When he proposed to her, she at first refused to live in the 'hanging house' because, she complained, it was too cold and made her feel giddy. But Tamboro Langi' protested that he found her house too stuffy, and so, as a compromise, they built a house on the ground at Ullin. Thus this sky-and-water couple came to rest upon the earth. Those from west Toraja frequently mention in support of this version that at the division and distribution of meat at funerals (a crucial index of relative social status for the participants), the priority of Ullin as an ancestral site is encoded in the recitation of the meat divider (*to mentaa*), who first calls out the name of Ullin while throwing down from the meat-dividing platform what is usually a tiny, symbolic portion of meat (*sangakka*'), called *taa Ullin* ('Ullin's share'). (This rule, at least, is followed in western and southern areas; the houses named in the chant show regional variations which will be further discussed later). One acquaintance recounted to me how he had once attended a funeral in Mengkendek, in the company of a prominent local aristocrat, Puang Sakka' of Talion. When the *taa Ullin* was thrown down from the platform, Puang Sakka', as the nearest descendant of Ullin present, stepped forward to claim it. By doing so, he had the pleasure of publicly asserting the precedence of his own ancestors over those of his hosts. This is just one of the ways in which myth (or genealogy, or history, inseparable as they are) continues to perform legitimating functions in the present.

Tamboro Langi', however, is too important an ancestor to be monopolized by west Torajans. The southern 'three domains' of Ma'kale, Sangalla' and Mengkendek, the so-called Tallu Lembangna, also claim a special relationship with him. The nobility of this region, the nearest that any part of Toraja ever came to formation of a state, remain by far the most status-conscious of any in Toraja, and show scant regard for west Torajans with their comparatively egalitarian traditions. Versions of the myth from this area commonly assert either that Tamboro Langi' descended first of all on Mount Kandora in Ma'kale district (where he made the 'hanging house'), and then moved to Ullin, or that he stayed at Kandora and never went near Ullin at all. A detailed account from Tato' Dena' tells how Tamboro Langi' appeared first of all on Mount Gasing, near Ma'kale, dancing in a horned headdress and shaking bells (*manganda*' – a kind of men's dance performed at the *ma'bua*' rite). He was thus the originator of this kind of dance. He then ascended into the sky again, and next came down on Kandora, but after dancing, he could not get up into the sky again, for the pull of the earth was too strong for him. Then Puang Matua gave him the 'hanging house' to live in. When people were celebrating a *ma'bua*' ceremony at Lambun (in Tapparan), Tamboro Langi' went to attend, and it was there that he saw Sanda Bilik. When the ceremony was

over, Sanda Bilik gathered up all the heirloom valuables that had been used in the rite, placed them in a basket and took them with her.<sup>21</sup> Tamboro Langi' followed her all the way home, and saw her go down into her house in the pool at Batu Sapa' (Sapan Deata). Soon after, he sent his emissary, Soge', to propose to her. He asked, 'What shall I say when I get there?' Tamboro Langi' instructed him simply to take some betel (*pangan*), customarily offered when making marriage proposals, and to sing:

<i>Karaengku diona liku</i>	My Lady of the pool
<i>Puangku to' bura-bura</i>	Ruler of the place of foam
<i>Kendek ko anta umpangan</i>	Come up so that we may eat betel
<i>Anta ruba to baolu</i>	That we may tear the betel leaf

Sanda Bilik rose out of her pool to talk to him. She asked what he had come for, and he replied that he had been sent by his master up on Kandora, who wished to marry her. Her first response was: 'Ah! Whom will he find to be his wife, for the wind blows hard up where he lives!' Soge' returned to Kandora and told Tamboro Langi' of her reply. Tamboro Langi' said: 'Ah! But it's the same for me; I'll suffocate in her house down in the pool!'. Soge' considered and then suggested: 'Lord, if you truly want to marry her, let us cut the rope of the hanging house, let us bring up to earth the house in the pool.' At length the match was negotiated. Tamboro Langi', as well as lowering his house, also contrived to bring down from the sky a vast expanse of empty, richly fertile land for them to live on. Then they built a house at Ullin. They had eight children, but eventually two of these returned to the sky, while two returned with their mother down to the pool, leaving on earth only four sons. Once again these sons and their descendants are described as spreading out and founding new houses. One of them, Puang To Mambuli Buntu, married Manaek, the founder of the famous *tongkonan* of Nonongan. Another, Puang Sanda Boro, married a beautiful woman, To Bu'tu ri Pattung, ('One who Appeared out of a Bamboo').<sup>22</sup> According to this latter version, Sanda Boro had journeyed while hunting as far as the Bay of Bone, where he was about to split open a bamboo when he heard a tiny voice calling to him to spare her. A beautiful princess emerged, and he married her, founding a house at a place called Batu Borong.) Their eldest son was Laki Padada (see Chapter II, and Genealogy 2), the illustrious ancestor who plays such a

<sup>21</sup> In other words she had lent them to the celebrants. Leading origin houses in possession of treasured heirlooms typically lend them to related branch houses when needed for ceremonies, in return for payments of meat and rice. This motif is repeated in the story of Gonggang Sado'ko' (see below).

<sup>22</sup> See also Nooy-Palm (1979:148).

crucial role for Toraja in locating themselves in relation to the South Sulawesi kingdoms.

Between these two figures, Tangdilino' and Tamboro Langi', and their stories, some clear parallels can be seen. They both founded famous *tongkonan* which are no longer standing, but whose sites are remembered, they both had a large number of children who spread out over the Toraja landscape and founded new houses at remembered locations, and they both are rather closely associated with the establishing, or subsequent distribution among their descendants, of the *aluk* – that system of ritual prescriptions and proscriptions which, in my informants' accounts, is seen as the framework for Toraja social life and sense of order. Tangdilino', according to some versions, was responsible for establishing a body of religious and ethical rules called the *aluk sanda pitunna* ('*aluk* of the complete number of sevens', or 7777), while Tamboro Langi' is said to have brought down from heaven with him the *aluk sanda saratu*' (or '*aluk* of the complete one hundred'), created by Puang Matua.<sup>23</sup> Both of these numbers carry the sense of completeness; 7777 in particular should not necessarily be taken literally but rather, is intended to convey the sense of a limitless number. While the *sukaran aluk* (*sukaran*: 'measure'; *aluk*: 'way', 'action', 'ritual', 'religion') is generally said to have been given to humans by Puang Matua, there are once again a number of variations in the accounts of how this was effected.<sup>24</sup> Some say the first woman, Datu Laukku', brought the *aluk* down to earth. Or, in Bua' Sarungallo's account (in which Datu Laukku' still lived in the sky), it was the first couple to descend to earth, Puang Bura Langi' and Kembong Bura, who brought the *aluk sanda pitunna* down with them. Actually, though, they brought only the seven hundred and seventy-seven, and left the seven thousand behind, or else it would have been too much for humans to bear. Others say Pong Pakulando, the slave whom they designated to carry the *aluk* for them, found the burden too heavy for him and decided to leave the seven thousand behind. In still other variants, that part fell into the sea and was lost as they were on their journey, or again, it was taken back up to heaven by the two children of Tamboro Langi' who returned there, or by some other mythical figure. In a story told by Tato'

<sup>23</sup> Nooy-Palm (1979:146-7) gives an account derived from Tandilangi' (1968) in which the *aluk* 7777 was brought by Tamboro Langi'; but later in the same account, this is also identified with the *aluk* 100. On the other hand, Tato' Dena' maintains that the description *sanda saratu*' really belongs to the *pemali* or prohibitions, which are termed: *pemali sanda saratu'* *passalanan dua riu/ tangdikemba' dirundunan / tang ta'pu' dipeolai* ('the complete one hundred prohibitions/ the two thousand taboos/ impossible to enumerate all of them/ one can't hope to keep every one of them'). Tato' Dena's exposition of the structure of the Aluk to Dolo as a religious system is discussed in more detail in Chapter XIV.

<sup>24</sup> According to Tato' Dena', the term *sukaran* is used because Puang Matua 'measured' the *aluk* against the human body to see if it could stand all these regulations!



Landscape in Malimbong, looking across to the saddle-shaped ridge of the sacred Mount Ullin, where the founding *to manurun* couple Tamboro Langi' and Sanda Bilik built their *tongkonan*, 1999

Dena', a sister of Tamboro Langi', Karaeng Kasumba, went back to heaven taking 7,700 with her, leaving 77 for humans on earth. All of these details carry the same implication, namely, that the regulations of *aluk* form an all-encompassing system. If there were any more rules, it would be impossible to keep them all, and humans would be doomed to transgress.

The link with Tangdilino' is specified in some detail in an account I collected from *to minaa* Saleda of Talion. He recounted that half of the original *sukaran aluk* was lost in the flood at Rura, and it was Tangdilino', with the help of Pong Suloara, the first *to minaa* from Sesean, who reconstituted it in a new form as the *aluk sanda pitunna*. The account of the division of the *aluk* into three, either among Tangdilino' and his siblings, or among three of his descendants, seems to be extremely widespread throughout Toraja. Verses are often quoted which refer to Bobong Langi', Pata'ba', and Pabane, three of his children, who went to Mamasa (west), Pantilang (east), and Kesu' (centre), taking with them one, twelve and two buffaloes respectively. These determined the number of buffaloes to be slaughtered in each area when holding the *ma'bua'*, the greatest of the life-affirming rites. Bua' Sarungallo, among others, recounted these details as also explaining the different titles used for the aristocracy in each region. Bobong Langi's aristocratic descendants in west Toraja are called Ma'dika (literally 'Free', cognate with I.: *merdeka*), and are said to *sikambi'*



*sepu' tipurru'* ('to look after the closed betel-bag'); Pabane's descendants in the 'central' region (the Tallu Lembangna and Kesu') are called Puang ('Lord'), and *sikambi' karandang bulaan* ('look after the golden basket'); while Pata'ba's descendants in the eastern region are given the title siAmbe'/siIndo' ('Father/Mother'), and *sikambi' batu tedong* ('look after the buffalo stone'). The three objects again appear to be heirlooms inherited by each sibling. The 'buffalo stone', also called Pundu Sarai, was reportedly given to Pata'ba' by Puang Matua to help in the reproduction of buffaloes, because at that time there were still no male buffaloes on earth; the first bull buffaloes were born from the females impregnated with the aid of this stone. Bua' Sarungallo told me that the stone was still to be seen in the area of Rantebua, and that people brought offerings there – though he added that since most people in that area had become Christian, they had ceased to do so, and for the same reason there are no longer so many buffaloes there either!

#### *The to manurun in Malimbong*

For all the prestige of Ullin as an origin-site, the descendants who reside there at the present time are modest people of few pretensions. It is a long climb of several hours, after fording the Saluputti River, to reach the summit. Here, from a saddle in between two small peaks, a magnificent landscape unfolds on either hand. One can see far into Malimbong to the west, and east to Rantetaio and Ma'kale. The area around Ullin is today called Surakan, and the oldest surviving *tongkonan* there are called Tanduk Tanga and Bottong. The supposed original site of occupation is a rather unimpressive garden patch below the summit, in which some small boulders referred to as the three hearthstones of Lai' Ullin, Tamboro Langi's daughter, would be easily overlooked if not pointed out. Strangely enough, their reputation is more spectacular among some of those in distant places who have never been here. One elderly man at Mareali near Ma'kale assured me that if you ran out of matches, you could touch a bunch of dried rice-stalks to these hearth stones, and while you turned your back it would catch alight. The inhabitants of Tanduk Tanga, the *tongkonan* closest to the site, had never heard this story, but they laughed and said it might once have been true, since the people long ago were all *to mendeata*, people with supernatural powers. Other people who had never been to Ullin also assured me that the foundation-stones of Tamboro Langi's house were still to be seen there, or that Sanda Bilik's marvellous pot, the *kurin dedekan* or 'tapping pot', which became full of rice whenever you tapped it, was still stored away somewhere by the descendants living at Surakan (although they themselves had never heard of it). Thus it seems that Ullin's reputation is magnified by distant descendants with an interest

in tracing a tie there, even as others in different areas dismiss all of its claims as an origin-site. Genealogies of Tamboro Langi' and his descendants which I attempted to gather from the present-day inhabitants at Surakan were patchy and contradictory, but some interesting details can be gleaned from them. In one of them, Gonggang Sado'ko', commonly considered as the most famous *to manurun* of western Toraja, features not as a *to manurun* at all, but as the grandchild of Tamboro Langi', who rather than descending on Mount Sado'ko', simply went to live there. I had heard a number of tales from people in Malimbong about this ancestor's remarkable exploits. Might this feature represent the trace of a process by which distant ancestors, originally regarded as being of ordinary human origin, later come to have supernatural origins attributed to them? The legitimating function of *to manurun* stories was evident, too, in the way the descendants of particular *tongkonan* in Malimbong chose to glorify one founding ancestor, while dismissing others.

Next to Tamboro Langi', probably the most important ancestor in Saluputti genealogies is Gonggang Sado'ko'. According to the late Mangesa', a former Kepala Desa (village head) of Malimbong (1965-1971), who reckoned himself an eleventh-generation descendant of Gonggang, when Gonggang descended on Mount Sado'ko', the local people, not knowing what to call him, gave him this name and sent a delegation asking him to rule over them. He instructed them in agriculture and religion, and organized the population into groups, making some warriors, others farmers, and allotting still others ritual functions. He married Marrin di Liku (*liku*: 'pool'), a woman who rose up out of the water at a place called Pasapa', where the rivers Sa'dan and Saluputti flow together.<sup>25</sup> Owing to his supernatural qualities, Gonggang enjoyed great longevity and was still alive at the time of Arung Palakka's attempted invasion of Toraja, in the resistance to which, in Mangesa's account, he played a leading role. In other people's accounts Gonggang is sometimes represented as the first human on earth in western Toraja, and is credited with 16 children, the names of whom correspond to several of the deities in the Toraja pantheon. But, as Mangesa' pointed out, how could he have told people what to do if there were not yet any other people on earth?<sup>26</sup>

In *desa* Malimbong at the time of Dutch takeover, there were two rival

<sup>25</sup> Marrin di Liku is a name that appears in many different genealogies. The wife of another famous *to manurun*, Puang Manurun di Langi', who features in genealogies of Kesu' and Sesean areas (see also Nooy-Palm 1979:142), is also sometimes named as Marrin di Liku. A genealogy collected from Y.B. Tandirerung of Pattan, Uluvalu, traced twenty-four generations from Marrin di Liku, here named as the wife of Tamboro Langi'. Other frequently occurring names for water-women include To Bu'tu ri Uai ('One who Appeared from the Water'), or Bu'tu ri Limbong ('Appeared from the Pool') (see genealogies).

<sup>26</sup> A variant account, derived from Pak Rante Sulu' of Talion, is recorded in Sikki et al. (1986:117-22).



noble families whose main origin houses were at Pasang and at Pokko', near Sawangan. Pasang's genealogy commences with Gonggang Sado'ko', Pokko's with another remarkable ancestor, Pa'doran. The connections between these two *tongkonan* and a third one at Buttang, the village where I did my field-work, can be seen in Genealogy 3. In conversations with descendants of these two houses, it was noticeable that an elder of Pasang elaborated the story of Gonggang, while deriding the tale of Pa'doran as nonsense, while another who had a closer link to Pokko' passed over Gonggang in order to relate at length the story of Pa'doran.<sup>27</sup> Pa'doran is said to have been born two generations or so after Gonggang, but also to have commanded Gonggang's army in the war against Bone. He was not a *to manurun*, but a *to mendeata*, for he had received powers from the deities in a dream. He could walk several miles in a single step and had unnatural strength. If he stood on Mount Sado'ko', he could reach Messila in a single stride, and with a third stand upon Ullin. Everyone was afraid of him and held him in awe. Like Gonggang, he became a leader and is said to have organized the people in matters relating to agriculture, warfare, *adat* and religion.

Everything Pa'doran said came to pass. When he said, 'My buffalo is big', it at once became enormous, and when he said, 'It will make a mountain with its horns', the buffalo tossed its head and ploughed two great furrows with its horns. The hill thus thrown up between them is called Buttususu, still a landmark in Malimbong. In another version, the *deata* instructed him in his dream to go to a certain place in the forest, an unknown location called Banua Puak, and take buffaloes from there. These were not like ordinary buffaloes (*tedong*), but enormous, and were called *tonggo*.<sup>28</sup> On reaching this place Pa'doran saw a buffalo so large he was afraid, but a voice said, 'Take it!' Having returned home through the mountains, the buffalo tossed its horns, throwing up three villages – Buttususu, Bea, and Matande; its droppings formed the mountain called Gattungang, near Buttususu. Pa'doran continued on and stopped to rest at Ratt Sendana (now the site of the *desa* office). The buffalo was so huge it could stretch out its neck and eat all the rice from there to Dera without getting up. Pa'doran decided to settle at Pokko', and picked up huge boulders in one hand to build his house.

<sup>27</sup> The following stories about Pa'doran were gathered from Malle' (a former District Head of Malimbong), a descendant of Pasang, and Mangesa' and Tolele (both former Village Heads and descendants of *tongkonan* Pokko' and Buttang).

<sup>28</sup> This is an old Toraja name for buffalo (Tammu and Van der Veen 1972:675), also meaning 'wide, huge'. A wild buffalo called *tonggo* also features in some accounts of Tangdilino's carpenters building his house in the forest. The carpenters were amazed by the size of its droppings and the wide path it made through the forest. They caught it and brought it home with them, leading it by the tail. A little boy showed them how to lead it by the nose, and said its name was *tedong*; it became the first domesticated buffalo.

One story recounted about him is identical to a folk tale widely known in other parts of Indonesia, notably in Minangkabau (where it has been made the explanation of the name Minangkabau itself – *menang kerbau* meaning ‘victorious buffalo’) and also in Java and Manggarai (Erb 1997:71). Once when challenged by a descendant of Gonggang Sado’ko’ to a buffalo-fight, Pa’doran took a suckling calf and fastened little iron horns tipped with blow-dart poison (*ipo*) to its head. His opponent brought a huge fierce bull for the contest. The calf ran in underneath the bull as if to suckle, and butted it in the stomach, causing it to run off and die. On another occasion, Pa’doran was invited to a funeral by the people of Deata in Ma’kale. They asked him to climb up on to the meat-dividing platform (*bala’ kayan*), as if to honour him by asking him to take part in the meat division, but actually they planned to kill him. He divined their intentions, and called down torrential rain, under cover of which he passed in one step from Deata to Mamabo (on the boundary between Ma’kale and Talion districts) and then with one more stride was back home at Pokko’.

Pa’doran never married. When he felt that death was approaching, he wanted to build a house where he could be placed after his death, since he refused to be buried in a stone grave and did not want his body to rot. He told his family, ‘If I die, don’t weep for me, don’t bury me, let me stay in the house.’ He instructed people to make a basket (*baka*) for him, though no-one could imagine how such a big tall person could possibly be fitted into a basket. Everyone came to help build the house. He allotted each person tasks in fetching the necessary materials, and insisted the house must be finished in twenty-four hours, beginning at midnight and finishing before the first cock-crow the next day, otherwise it would have to be abandoned. All the materials were assembled, along with the basket, but they were unable to finish the house in time and it all turned to stone. Some of these stones could still be seen around the Pokko’ *tongkonan* in 1979. They appeared to be natural pillar-shaped formations, one of which had a hollow in the top of it, shaped like the impress of a very small foot. This was said to be Pa’doran’s footprint; that such a giant of a man should have left such a tiny footprint was explained as further evidence of his supernatural qualities. Pa’doran then climbed into the basket and turned into stone himself. The basket containing these stones was still stored in the house at Pokko’ but could not be viewed indiscriminately, only upon sacrifice of a small male pig with a white band on its stomach, and a cock with red feathers and white legs. The woman then living in the house explained to me that at times Pa’doran would descend from his basket and go out walking, and then the whole village would shake as if there were an earth tremor, and a rattling as of coins could be heard inside the house. Another similar tremor would occur on his return to the basket. In fact earth tremors are sometimes felt here; I experienced one myself.

Some time later, I arranged to make the necessary sacrifices and view Pa'doran's remains. After careful and elaborate offerings had been made, the basket was carried down and placed in the yard, and water was brought to bathe the contents. Then the stones were taken out, washed and laid out on a mat, with considerable discussion among the participants as to which part was which. There were a lot of smooth round river stones, the two largest of which were selected to be his testicles. A reddish axe-shaped stone was said to be the liver of his famous buffalo. Other stones were named as his eyes, ears, blood, penis, etcetera. One of his leg bones appeared to be missing, and this was attributed to the fact that he was *to mendeata*, and no-one really knew where he had died, or indeed, whether he had died at all. There were also a number of sea shells in the basket, proving, as I was told, that Pa'doran had travelled even as far as the coast, even though in those days this meant passing through hostile territory where few Toraja dared venture. (In the old days, informants recalled, even the neighbouring villages of Pasang and Tombang had been in a state of feud and it was impossible for their inhabitants to visit each other safely.) In 1994 I learned from friends in Buttang that the old house at Pokko' had been abandoned and was derelict; Pa'doran's remains were presumably being stored in the house of some other descendant, though no-one seemed sure where.

One other *to manurun* in Malimbong was associated with the *tongkonan* at Parinding in Sa'tandung. Batotoilangi' ('Appeared from the Sky') married a woman called Mandalan i Limbong ('Deep in the Pool'), who rose up out of a natural spring, which is still used as a water source today by the villagers of Parinding. They had eight children. One day, Batotoilangi' was offended by the smell of someone roasting dog meat, and returned to the sky, while his wife went back to her pool. Various taboos are associated with the house, not only on the eating of dog meat, but also of rat (field rats are occasionally consumed in some parts of Toraja), snails, or meat from funerals. It was also forbidden to spit on the site of the house. The current house, however, is built slightly to the side of the original site, so these prohibitions no longer need to be observed. Batotoilangi's stemmed wooden rice-bowl (*dulang*) is still kept in the house, together with a hook-shaped spoon; it is old and broken-looking, but if you laugh at it, it is said you will be struck by disease. This founding couple, according to the inhabitants of the house, lived about eleven generations ago, at about the same time as Gonggang Sado'ko'. Before leaving, Batotoilangi' told the people that they would know he was still around when they heard thunder or when it rained. If ever a chicken is sacrificed here, even in the dry season, it is said that a light shower will fall. When there is a rainbow, it always appears with one end on the site of the original house, stretching over the *barana'* (banyan) tree which grows beside it. If descendants of the house see a rainbow after making offerings, this is taken to mean that Batotoilangi' and

the *deata* have received it. In the past, the house had many slaves attached to it, who all lived at the bottom of the hill on which it stood.

It is not hard to see how all these myths and stories, woven into the genealogies of politically powerful noble houses, served to elevate and justify the status of their inhabitants. Mythical personages feature even more prominently in the genealogies of other areas, such as Kesu'.<sup>29</sup> In my fieldwork, I often encountered the myths first, being later surprised to find the names of their heroes and heroines featuring in the genealogies. Were these once real human beings, about whom marvellous tales had been elaborated? Or were the tales told first, and the names subsequently embedded in family genealogies? There is really no way of knowing. But their continued usefulness as points of reference in the present is still sometimes dramatised, either at house ceremonies like the one at Nonongan (described in Chapter II), or at funerals, when the chant of the meat divider recalls the names of founding houses and ancestors, and links them to their present descendants.

#### *Questions of precedence and links with the past*

What kind of time frame do these genealogies encompass, and how are these famous ancestors related to each other chronologically? Here we encounter as much flexibility as in most of the other details. One old man whom I encountered on a hike in the western mountains claimed a mere five generations between himself and Gonggang Sado'ko'; the written genealogies I collected show around eleven, while others claimed him as the first human on earth. Y.B. Tandirerung of Pattan, Uluvalu, traced 25 generations between himself and Tamboro Langi'; Tumanan of Tondok Tanga, at Ullin, says only that the descendants of Tamboro Langi' and Sanda Bilik 'went out and returned' nine times until the present day – most of the intervening generations have been forgotten.<sup>30</sup> Bua' Sarungallo's genealogy has a depth of 25 generations between himself and the first human couple, Kembong Bura and Bura Langi', but once in conversation to me he said that, at the time when Tangdilino's children were spreading out and taking their shares of the *aluk* with them, humans had already been on earth for 33 generations. Moreover he reck-

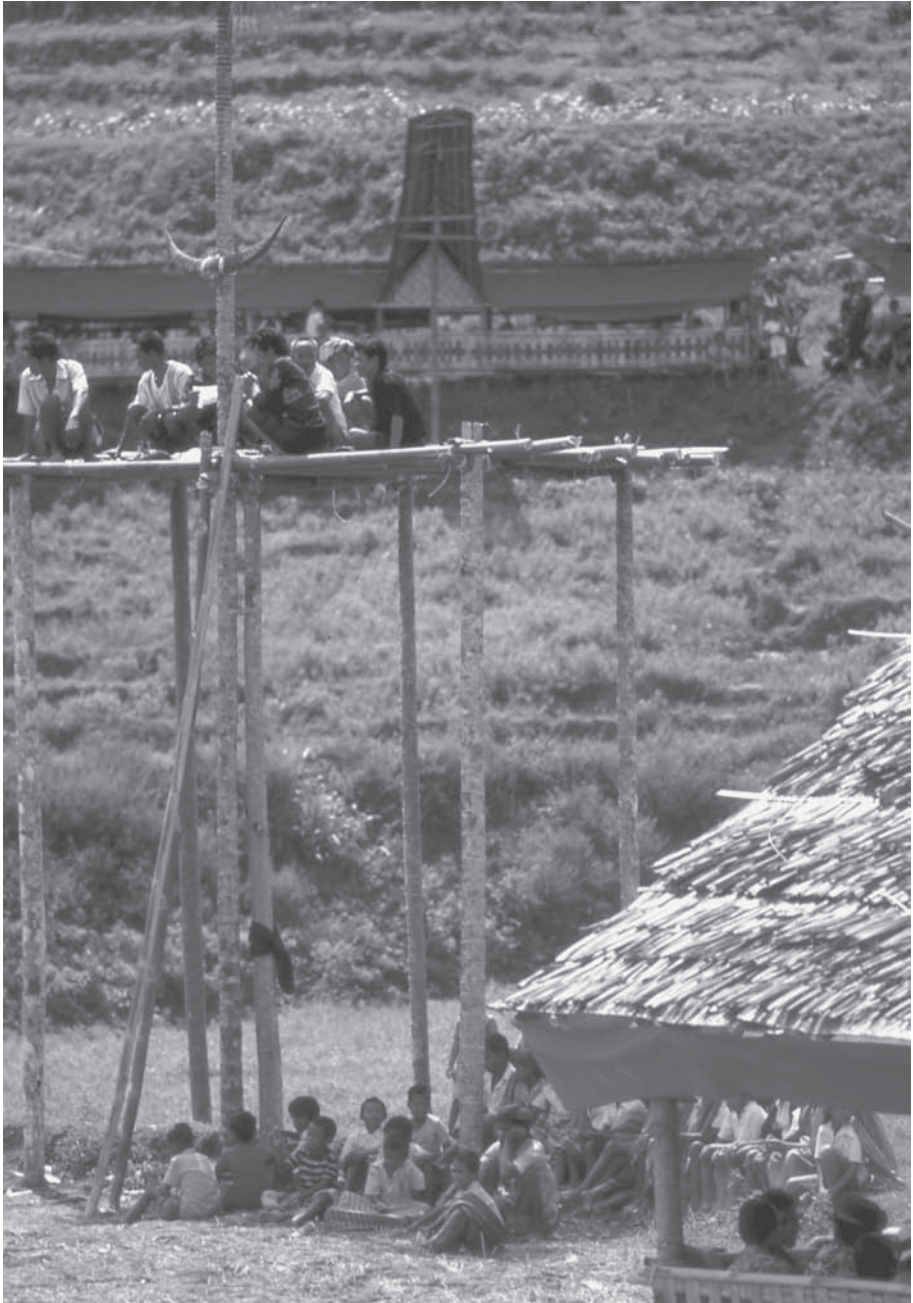
<sup>29</sup> Examples include Manaek, Polo Padang, and Deatanna (Nooy-Palm 1979:153-6); Laki Padada; Lambe' Susu ('Long Breasts') of Riu (Koubi 1978; Nooy-Palm 1979:158); and Landorundun ('Long Hair') (Nooy-Palm 1979:158).

<sup>30</sup> This idiom is phrased in terms of leaving the house, in order to found new houses, after which individuals would not be able to marry back into the founding house until the passage of four generations, given the rules about not marrying close cousins. Marriage between such distant descendants of the same *tongkonan* is called *sule langan banua*, 'to return to the house'. This would give a hypothetical depth of 36 generations.

oned a generation as 30 years, given what he claimed was the later age of marriage in past times. Tato' Dena's genealogy lists 15 generations between himself and Tangdilino', 17 from the first human couple, Pong Mula Tau and Kembong Bura. A genealogy compiled by L.T. Tangdilintin and reproduced in Nooy-Palm (1979) has a maximum depth of 31 generations, while another collected from Puang Tarra' Sampe Toding of Sangalla' places 30 generations between himself and Tamboro Langi', and Pak Pasang Kanan's genealogy, also from Sangalla', traces 32 generations back to the same founder. There is, of course, nothing unusual in such variations, for the phenomenon of genealogical telescoping is acknowledged to be common in many places. While descendants of important origin houses may carefully preserve written versions of their genealogies, I am fairly sure that in some cases, if I had elicited a genealogy orally from the same individual on two separate occasions, I would have encountered some variation also. The telling itself may vary depending on the context in which it is elicited, and such variations are not necessarily perceived as critical (if they can be perceived at all, in an oral context) by the persons concerned. There is, all the same, considerable congruence in some cases; for example the two main genealogies deriving from Gonggang Sado'ko' which I collected in Malimbong, from Malle' and from Mangesa', coincide very substantially, save for the omission of a single generation, and some minor variations of birth order, attributed gender, and spelling of names. Malle's version also retains more siblings in each generation, most of which have been dropped from Mangesa's. This suggests rather firm memorisation of a consistent tradition which probably does have considerable historical content.

Where variation clearly does become politically significant in the present is where questions of precedence are involved. Which particular founding ancestor came first is the subject of sometimes heated debate. Kila', for example, argues that Tangdilino' must have preceded Tamboro Langi', since his grandchild Manaek married Tamboro Langi's son, To Mambuli Buntu; and this is widely corroborated by other genealogical accounts in which these personages occupy stable positions in relation to each other. Tato' Dena' maintains that the two men lived contemporaneously. Pak Rante Sulu', from Talion, claimed that, on the contrary, Tangdilino' was a descendant of Tamboro Langi', adding that in his opinion, 'The most important thing now is that Ullin should be recognized as far as Gowa (the old kingdom of Makassar) as the most original and important *tongkonan* in Toraja'. This claim (which many would doubtless regard as eccentric) appears to subordinate Banua Puan to Ullin, in an effort to boost the prestige of west Toraja. Its author teaches Toraja history and culture in the relatively new Sekolah Menengah Industri Parawisata (Tourism Training College) in Ma'kale – the only school in Toraja in which such a subject features on the curriculum.





Village elders sit atop the meat dividing platform (*bala 'kayan*), awaiting the sacrifice of buffaloes. Sapan's funeral, Buttang, Malimbong, 1982

Tangdilintin's genealogy (in Nooy-Palm 1979) confirms Kila's account of the relation between Tamboro Langi' and Tangdilino', while showing the founder of Kesu', Manurun di Langi', as appearing one generation previous to Tangdilino'. The main point to note is that such contentious variations are rather typical. They are likely to be activated, at the present time, on occasions when descendants of different houses find themselves in situations of competition with each other.

The division and distribution of meat at funerals is a key social moment in Toraja life, one which provides a visible and material commentary, continuously revised and reiterated, on the relative social standing of the participants. It can be fraught with tension, which has on rare occasions been known to explode in physical violence where a person believes himself to have been insulted by not receiving his due. More than any other procedure, this one establishes and maintains claims to precedence. Partly, one's prestige and the size of the share to which one is entitled depends upon the 'boldness' of one's own sacrifices; the more pigs and buffaloes one is known to have slaughtered, the more meat one will receive. But it is also based upon inherited rank; the recitations of the meat-divider here become a repository of historical and genealogical memory, continually kept alive in performance and having real social consequences in the present. This task has traditionally been carried out by the traditional ritual specialists, the *to minaa*. For a long time the Toraja Church disapproved of it as a 'pagan' element of the funeral rite which Christians were supposed to dispense with, but in recent years it seems that it has become more acceptable again, and has reappeared in Christian funerals, even if not performed by a *to minaa*.

The meat-divider, or *to mentaa*, stands on top of a tall platform, the *bala' kayan*, and recites a chant, calling out the names of a string of founding origin houses while throwing down their shares of meat. The precise houses named will differ from area to area, and the amount of meat distributed to them depends partly on the size of the funeral and whether there is any descendant present to collect it. Since key sites such as Banua Puan and Ullin have not had a house standing on them for centuries, the meat they receive may be only a token scrap (*sangkarra'*). But these scraps are nonetheless important as a reaffirmation of historical links. Kila', explaining how meat dividers in the northerly Sesean area will first call out the names of Banua Puan, Kesu' and Nonongan, remarked that this practice is called *untundan basse* ('waking up the oath'), which he expressed in Indonesian as *membangkitkan sejarah*, 'arousing history', in other words bringing to life the historical link traced through remote lines of descent to these famous ancestral houses. To give meat along the correct paths to one's founding *tongkonan* he furthermore described as *umbumbun garonto' tallang*, 'to strengthen the base of the bamboo-culm' (*rapu tallang*, 'a bamboo culm', with its many shoots sprouting from a single base,



is also an image used to refer to a bilateral kinship grouping); such prestations are not considered to create any debt.<sup>31</sup> An elderly *to minaa*, Ne' Roya, at Siguntu' in Sanggalangi' district, recited the opening phrases of his meat-divider's chant which names Marinding (Banua Puan), Kesu' and Nonongan as the houses of the earliest ancestors, with many poetic phrases describing their exalted status. Kesu' for example is termed *sikambi' panta'nakan lolo* ('guardian of the seedbed of umbilical chords'), a phrase expressive of its importance as a place of human origins. By contrast, Pak Kondo, who sometimes performs the meat division in Banga (Saluputti district) said that here, Ullin would always be first named, and might receive a large share which would be taken by any descendant from Ullin who happened to be present; next would come Mebali (the *tongkonan layuk* or 'great house' of Banga).<sup>32</sup>

Tato' Dena', who comes from Mandetek (in Ma'kale district), explained that there are three major categories of ancestors who may be remembered in the meat division. The number of ancestral houses named depends on the size and 'level' of the funeral ceremony, measured by number of buffaloes, since this affects the amount of meat available for division. Most important of all are the two ancestors associated with the spreading of the *aluk*, the ritual prescriptions governing Toraja life, the *nene' ussio' sukaran aluk*. They are Tangdilino' of Banua Puan and Tamboro Langi' (of Kandora, in this version). Secondly, there are the *nene' lumion tondok*, the ancestors who established the boundaries of villages. These are principally the children and later descendants of Tangdilino' and Tamboro Langi', who travelled to different places where they founded houses of their own, as recalled in genealogies. Thirdly, there are the *nene' to pada tindo*, the Ancestors of the Same Dream. In this area, at a five-buffalo funeral (the lowest level to qualify for the recital), Banua Puan and Kandora in the south, Ullin in the west and Sesean in the north would be named, along with Tiang, Olang and Tangsa, origin houses closer to Mandetek. But for a very high-ranking funeral, there would be much more meat available and all of the houses of the Ancestors of the Same Dream would be named. His chant would then go on to name locally important houses such as Tadongkon, Pangi and Deata, in the immediate environs of Mandetek.

<sup>31</sup> He further commented that Christians often 'forget', or do not wish to remember, to give these shares of meat, claiming that they are part of the *aluk* ('religious' prescriptions) rather than *adat* (or permissible 'custom'). Christians are not supposed to employ the services of a *to minaa* and so the meat distribution at a Christian funeral may be carried out by someone else whose performance will not be considered complete by traditionalists; in this way, as other informants also commented, a mode of enacting historical memory is also lost.

<sup>32</sup> Mebali is linked to Ullin by a story which attributes its founding to a daughter of Tamboro Langi'. One day while pounding rice on Mount Ullin, the sound of her pestle echoed back to her from Mebali ('to answer'), so she moved to that spot and founded *tongkonan* Appang Bassi there. The name of this house means 'iron threshold', a reference to an heirloom object apparently long since lost.

Local variations on the meat-divider's performance, then, provide regular occasions for the public affirmation of certain historical ties, made visible by the distribution of meat either in the form of a token gesture, or more substantial shares, which in each locality trace both distant original ancestors, and more immediate ones. The ties of descent and kinship are always connected with the locations of named houses, however much variation there may be concerning which houses are named. Names of ancestors, and of the places they settled, are recalled together and remain intermeshed.

What is to be gained from such claims? The urge to contest status within the realm of local politics is still strong, and to some extent the arena is now a wider one. During the 1980s and 1990s, areas which could present themselves as richest in 'authentic' Toraja culture were more successful in claiming shares of tourism development funds from the national government. These areas could hope to make gains in terms of better roads, more funds for the maintenance or renewal of origin houses, and a greater number of wealthy visitors passing through. If Ullin were to be recognized as a vital origin-site, some people hope that in future tourists may come there, particularly if (as was mooted in the 1990s) plans were to proceed to cut a major new highway through from the airport at Rantetaio, passing right over the mountain. During the 1990s, too, there was much talk of resurrecting the house at Banua Puan, though to date the plan has not been carried through. Had it succeeded, it would have served to satisfy the sense of historical pride among Mengkendek descendants of Tangdilino', and – they had hoped – provide an added draw to tour groups to pay a visit to the site. Such imagined benefits may be unrealistically exaggerated at times, since the tourist trade fell drastically after 1997, and has since shown only slow signs of recovery. Local histories currently may be playing a more significant part in the process of redividing local administrative units (*lurah*, formerly known as *desa*) into *lembang*, in a supposed return to more authentic community boundaries, based on agreements about the details of shared ritual practice and the division of meat. What is clear is that mythical ancestors and events, and finely-carved houses to go with them, are still an essential ingredient of these contested Toraja histories, constituting a resource that continues to be called upon in a variety of present-day contexts.



## CHAPTER VIII

# A system of rank under strain

Like many other Southeast Asian peoples, Toraja society has traditionally been divided into ranks of nobles, commoners and slaves. Here I describe one of the myths that places the origins of slavery far back in time, among the sky-beings, before humans had even descended to earth. This tale serves to naturalise the status of *kaunan* (slaves, the unfree) as a category already present in the very beginnings of society. But in the picture I will then sketch of the ranking system, I am at pains to emphasise how far the application of status differences varies from district to district, giving each its own particular ethos. I also seek to provide at least some anecdotal evidence (since that is really all that is available to the ethnographer) of how the system has been strained, although not overturned, by the social transformations of the twentieth century. There were several kinds of unfree status in pre-colonial Toraja society, as was often the case in other societies of the archipelago (Reid 1983a). In earlier chapters we saw that it was only in the late nineteenth century that this 'closed' system of slavery began to co-exist with a much more brutal 'open' system of commercial slave trading. They were not necessarily connected, however. Those who kidnapped people for sale were no respecters of rank, but preyed upon people who lived in remote and weakly defended areas. So those who were sold (*to dibaluk*) were not the same as *kaunan*, and were by no means always of humble origins. Disruptive as this period was to social relations, during the course of the twentieth century there were to be other forces of change, less violent but perhaps more far-reaching, that would pose a challenge to social assumptions about rank as a natural quality of birth. Efforts legally to abolish the status of *kaunan* were one thing; another was the way in which education, and the at first limited opportunities for white collar careers, began to create a small stratum of the urban middle class, who seem to have come quite often from middle-ranking families, and sometimes used the Church to oppose certain aspects of ritual by means of which the aristocracy asserted their superior status. Then there were the heady days of left-wing politics in the 1950s, and the struggles over land reform led by peasant organizations which, as we saw in Chapter VI, eventually came to very little, ending in the violent suppressions of 1965. In more recent decades, since the 1970s, it has been the influx of new

wealth from migrant Toraja working outside their homeland that has posed the challenge to the old status distinctions as expressed in ritual privileges. To sum all this up and conclude just how much rank means to people in Tana Toraja today is far from easy. But I aim here to give at least an impressionistic account of relations between the free and the unfree in the not so distant past, since this is important to an understanding of the bonds that tied villagers to a local nobility and their ruling origin houses or *tongkonan*. I shall also give some examples of how those relations have at least in some instances, if by no means everywhere, been effaced.

### *On the mythical origins of slavery*

In Bua' Sarungallo's account of the origins of life in the upperworld, an episode is described which accounts for the rules preventing marriage between ranks, and also for the *tarian pempitu* or 'Seven Ordeals' which were in pre-colonial times a means of settling disputes between two parties who could not agree. Pande Nunu, an ancestor whose name means 'Skilled Carpenter', is described as choosing a wife from a place called Padang di Illin, which was where slaves lived in the sky. His wife, Tumba' Ballan ('Weaving Woman') is described as 'wearing bracelets of clay, one whose anklets were of mixed metals'. Women used to wear very heavy anklets of brass – I was once shown a few that had been preserved by villagers in Buttang, and elderly people in the 1970s could remember the time when women still wore them. The description implies that she herself was of 'mixed' blood, having slave ancestry. Two sons were born of their union, Datu Bakka' (Lord Red-White-and-Black'; *bakka'* describes the colour of a cock with red, white and black feathers), and Pong Malaliong ('Mr Empty-headed'). When they were grown up, they wanted to marry their cousins, but were refused, on the grounds that although on one side of the family they shared ancestors who had been fashioned out of gold by Puang Matua in his forge called the 'Twin Bellows' (the *sauan sibarrung*), on the other side they were descendants of the lowly inhabitants of Illin. The two brothers then refused to work; they refused their ceremonial tasks of cutting bamboos for roasting-spits, and planting sugar-palm branches for shade, and they refused to 'plough the rice fields like buffaloes'. Then Puang Matua fell to thinking deeply, in the heavens, and created the Seven Ordeals as a means of settling their quarrel. In these ordeals, disputants contest against each other to see who can remain immersed under water longest (*siukkunan*); who can plunge a hand into boiling water and pull out a needle without scalding (*sipakoko*); or who can endure having stones dropped on their hands (*simala*'). If these fail to settle a dispute, one might progress to a cockfight (*bulangan londong*); hand-to-hand combat (*silondongan*); a ritualised

battle, commencing before dawn, and halted when the sun came up or when one side had incurred a fatal injury (*sira'*); and if all else fails, pitched battle without restraint (*sirari*). The brothers underwent all these ordeals and lost, but refused to admit defeat. Refusing hand-to-hand combat, they agreed to *sira'*, the ritualised confrontation at dawn. There as the sun came up, one whom the brothers loved deeply was killed; his name was Tarasui Langi' ('Fury of the Sky'). Then at last the brothers knew they had lost, and wearily went back to work. But Puang Matua fell to thinking again, and made two women out of clay, women with bracelets of earth, for the two brothers. But they couldn't breathe or talk, so he sent the swallows to catch the Lord of the Winds in an all-encompassing net he had made, and asked him to enter into the two women and give them breath. The Lord of the Winds' reply was that 'he refused to be eaten by worms, to be devoured by birds'. Puang Matua then swore an oath that when the women died, the Lord of the Winds would be allowed to depart by the crown of their heads 'and return to his brothers at the edge of the sky, in the high mountains'. Then the Lord of the Winds consented to enter the clay women; they came to life, and married Datu Bakka' and Pong Malaliong, and they all lived happy and contented.

The story does not, then, explain how slavery came into being – it simply is already there, even in the upperworld. There is no account of who first populated the slave village of Padang di Illin; Puang Matua's creation of wives for the two brothers is a secondary event. But the impossibility of a change of status, and the rejection of mixed marriages, is the message of the tale. In some districts the more feudal of the old aristocracy may still voice such opinions, but the forces of social change have to different degrees eroded the system.

#### *Regional variations in the ranking system*

Rank remains a significant social concern today, in spite of the considerable strains which have pulled at the fabric of Toraja society, weakening without overturning the formerly rigid hierarchy. But to say just how significant it is, is not so straightforward. That it is important is discernible at times from people's actions and deportment, as well as from the frequency with which concerns with rank are expressed in conversation.<sup>1</sup> Yet there is considerable variety from district to district in the extent of social differences, and the degrees of obsession with rank. Hierarchical attitudes are deeply ingrained in some regions, less so in others. The aristocracy continue to enjoy positions of

<sup>1</sup> Compare Kuipers (1998) on the dispositions and deportment expected of nobles as opposed to those of humble rank in Sumba. Similar differences can be observed from time to time in Tana Toraja, though much more so in some areas than others.



privilege and respect, and have occupied a high proportion of roles in the local administration. While education has opened a new route to jobs and career positions in the modern administration, noble families have been able to use their wealth to ensure their children an educational advantage. Although since colonial times an educated, Christian middle class has to some extent developed a more meritocratic and egalitarian ethos, in Toraja society today one can find a wide range of opinions about the significance of rank. In local elections for *desa* or *lembang* heads in Saluputti, almost invariably the votes continue to go to candidates of noble rank, who would have been entitled to leadership positions in the past. When asked about this, people often observe that the commoners, as much as the nobility, still prefer to choose someone of high rank to lead them; or (which is not quite the same thing) they think that even a talented, highly educated person of low rank will experience difficulties in carrying out his duties if he does not also enjoy the respect due to a person of high birth. (The great majority of candidates are male, though in the past few years I have heard of more women standing for election as *desa* heads; to my knowledge, they have invariably come from aristocratic families.) Public speaking, which involves a certain elegance in the use of poetic and symbolic turns of phrase, as well as the ability to sound authoritative, has traditionally been a noble accomplishment; and, just as the priests of the indigenous religion, the *to minaa*, were traditionally always of high birth, some people today claim that aristocrats make better pastors, because their sermons are more likely to demonstrate a mellifluous control of the higher registers of the language.

As for slavery, the Dutch legislated (rather ineffectually) against it, and its abolition was reiterated in 1949 by the government of the Republic of Indonesia, but the status of *kaunan* (slave) has not disappeared from public memory either. Although this is a very sensitive and difficult area to enquire about, we can say that in some areas, the descendants of former slaves often continue in a position of marked dependence on their former masters, while in others, the relationship has genuinely been allowed to lapse, or has been eroded to the point where it is no longer significant. As we shall see later, the celebration of mortuary rites provides a colourful and highly competitive arena for the demonstration and reiteration of claims to rank and prestige. The vigour with which these rituals continue to be staged ensures simultaneously a means for maintaining and for contesting the ranking system; aristocrats grumble that nowadays, those of low status but new wealth often try to hold rituals of a level that would formerly have been denied them.<sup>2</sup> We might conclude that rank remains a driving force behind the efflorescence of ritual life, accounting for some of its continued dynamism, even as certain performances may ironically enact a contestation of what it once stood for.

<sup>2</sup> Volkman (1985) provides telling examples of this process.

With the fall of Suharto, the ensuing era of Reformasi reopened some unresolved issues about the importance of rank in societies right across Indonesia. On the one hand, the new political atmosphere has greatly relaxed the fear of authority that was a defining feature of life under the New Order; it has opened up potentials for people at the grassroots to take much greater initiative in running their own affairs. On the other, devolution, with its invitation to the regions to return to more 'traditional' local structures of administration, also offers to revive some dreams of faded glory among local royalties and aristocracies. Those dreams may be quite unrealistic; any such resurgence of a 'golden age' of feudalism is most unlikely to be welcomed by their former subjects, who doubtless have a different vision for the development of democratic politics in Indonesia. It is too early to say much about how such tensions may play themselves out in Tana Toraja, though my guess is that the characteristically high levels of Toraja education and outmigration are likely to militate against a reversion to older attitudes.

The degree of deference accorded the nobility in any case varied across different regions of the highlands. Distinctions of rank were most pronounced in the southern Tallu Lembangna, the 'Three Domains' of Sangalla', Ma'kale and Mengkendek. The nobility here are addressed by the title of Puang ('Lord') and the area is known as the *padang diPuangi* ('lands [where the nobility are] called Puang'). By the late nineteenth century (as discussed in Chapter I), these domains came closest to anything resembling a centralised polity in the highlands, though to call them 'kingdoms' would be in my opinion a definite exaggeration. The ruling Puang of each of the Three Domains was chosen from among the families of the highest elite and inaugurated by a special ceremony. They had some of the qualities of ritual or spiritual leaders; Nooy-Palm (1979:56) says of the Puang of Sangalla' that, though he was not untouchable, as Polynesian princes were, he was treated with veneration, and his bathwater was believed to have healing properties. The Puang claimed to have white blood, and had intermarried extensively with the royalty of the lowland kingdoms of Gowa (Makassar), Bone, Wajo' and Luwu'. Since Independence, they have no longer officially functioned as rulers, but they have retained considerable political influence.<sup>3</sup> So far, the Bupati (the administrative head of the Kabupaten of Tana Toraja), when he has been Toraja (under Suharto's New Order administration, they were alternately local and non-local), has always come from this southern region.

In the eastern part of Toraja, around Kesu' and Nanggala, the nobility are addressed not as Puang but as siAmbe'/siIndo' (literally 'Father'/'Mother'), and this territory is known as the *padang disiAmbe'i*. The aristocracy here own large landholdings, and there is a relatively high concentration of land-

<sup>3</sup> See for example Crystal (1974).

less people, who must depend for their livelihood on sharecropping or on day labour in the rice fields of others. In the northern district of Sesean, well described by Volkman (1985), nobles are also called *Ambe'*, but the status system here appears more fluid and more strongly tied to the competitive politics of meat distribution. The title *ambe'* is also more specifically applied to the leaders of *saroan*, groups of households who both cooperate in organizing ritual activities and compete with each other in contributing animals for sacrifice. In these groups, the distribution of sacrificial meat is a dominant preoccupation; 'meat', she writes, 'is both a political medium and, at least in part, the substance of politics itself' (Volkman 1985:82). Rather than relying simply on claims to high birth, *ambe' saroan* must actively build reputations and followings by being 'bold' (*barani*) in the extent of their sacrifices; they are known as 'big men' (*to kapua*). Volkman (1985:80) characterises the *ambe'* of Sesean as being 'a cross between a New Guinea big man and a Bugis prince'.

In the western part of Toraja, in the districts of Saluputti and Bonggakaradeng, the nobles are called *Ma'dika* ('Free'), and the region is known as *padang diMa'dika'i*. Their history has it that they settled here in order to escape from the arrogant domination of the aristocracy in the Tallu Lembangna. They feel themselves quite distinct from the people of the Three Domains, and are proud of it. An old nobleman of Simbuang, in the far west, told me that they never eat bananas that grow on the south side of the trunk, since they pointed toward the Tallu Lembangna. In west Toraja, unlike the rest of Tana Toraja, there is no distinction between polite and intimate forms of the word 'you'; anyone, regardless of age or rank, may be addressed simply as *iko*, which would be very insulting if used to superiors in other parts of Toraja. For this reason, people in Saluputti also like to refer to their region as the *Padang ma'iko* ('land where we call each other *iko*'). They claim a sense of greater equality, and mutual caring (expressed most significantly in not forcing extreme degrees of competitiveness in the payment of funeral sacrifices), with the phrase *tasikaboro'* ('we care for each other', 'we love each other') and *tae' tasitukka'* ('we don't force each other'). In my experience, descendants of slaves here have also enjoyed a fuller liberation from their former lowly status than appears to be the case either in the southern or eastern regions.

All over Toraja, with some degree of local variation, the system of rank was composed essentially of four groups, called *tana'*. *Tana'* means a stake, of the kind traditionally driven into the edge of rice fields to mark boundaries. The highest aristocracy were called the *tana' bulaan* or 'golden stake'. The lesser nobility (often claimed to have originated from intermarriages between the *tana' bulaan* and commoners) were called *tana' bassi* or 'iron stake'. The commoners were called *tana' karurung* ('stakes of the sugar-palm', which has a very hard wood), and the lowest group was composed of slaves (*kaunan*), called *tana' kua-kua*, after a kind of reed. The idea of the stake, or boundary,

refers in particular to the barrier to intermarriage between the ranks. More specifically, there were severe sanctions, in the past, against a woman of high rank having relations with a lower ranking man. Exile or death was the penalty, in pre-colonial times, for the guilty pair, though whether the punishments of burning, drowning or strangling which popular memory recalls (and which are mentioned by Nobeles 1926:27), were ever actually meted out, is hard to know. Nooy-Palm (1979:47) suggests that they were not, though they do feature in folk tales. Even today, a marriage of someone of the highest rank with a person of slave descent is relatively rare and may lead to complete severance, at least for some years, of relations with the parents. On the other hand, it was a common occurrence in the past for men of the aristocracy to have sexual liaisons with women from the ranks of the commoners and slaves. Their children traced descent equally from both parents (at least in Saluputti), which tended to mean that they would be difficult to order around.<sup>4</sup> One woman I talked to in the early 1980s gave a picture of society that might prove shocking today to younger Toraja, more heavily influenced by Christian mores. She related how her father, a prominent noble, had been a noted womaniser, who used to stand on a hill above the marketplace to keep an eye out for a pretty young woman on market day, then send one of his followers to bring her to him:

Things were like that in the past! If someone important – a *to parengnge'* (headman) for example – wanted a woman, he just took her; and she would be pleased, too, because he was someone wealthy and important. Noblewomen also used to marry many times, and people would say, 'that's a real woman!' (*pia baine tongan to'o!*). It was considered *jago* (admirable) for a woman to have many husbands.<sup>5</sup> She might be married already, and then someone else would come and try to take her off, and she would marry him instead. Some noblewomen used to like gambling too, like men – they often played dice, and sometimes went to cockfights. That was in the old days.

The *tana'* are divided also by the different ritual privileges accorded to them; whatever the ambiguities resulting from mixed marriages, there is a clearly articulated principle that one should follow the *aluk*, or ritual prescriptions, of the mother's family or region. The *tana'* also determine the number of buffaloes to be paid as a fine (the *kapa'*) if one is the guilty party in precipitating

<sup>4</sup> Mixed rank has not necessarily prevented certain individuals from achieving high positions in society; it is commonly known for instance that a former Bupati of Tana Toraja is of such heritage, and although people often mentioned the fact, it did not prevent him from holding office.

<sup>5</sup> I.: *jago* (literally 'fighting cock') is a word more commonly applied to a man who is handsome, dashing and brave. Its use in this context suggests that what is considered admirable for those of high rank may sometimes cut across the gender division, in the same way as skill in public speaking, termed *ma'kada muane* or 'to speak like a man', is not regarded as an exclusively male talent, even if it is mostly men who demonstrate it.

a divorce: 4, 6, 8, 12, or 24 for the *tana' bulaan* (in the past usually 12 or 24 was the figure agreed on, out of a sense of pride), 4 or 6 for the *tana' bassi* (or in Malimbong, it might be less, depending on the kind of marriage ceremony that had been celebrated), 2 or less for the *tana' karurung*, and for the *tana' kua-kua*, one eighth or one sixteenth of a buffalo, or a sow big enough to have littered.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what proportion of the population were formerly slaves, commoners or aristocrats. The *tana' bulaan* are a very small minority, though much intermarriage has taken place between them and the *tana' bassi*, both in Malimbong and elsewhere. I was often told that most of the latter can trace some tie to the *tana' bulaan*. In fact, the frequency of sexual relations across the boundaries of the *tana'*, at least on the part of aristocratic men, raises the possibility (as some people maintained) that most people in a village community could trace some kin tie with their ruling nobles – a fact that may well have served to strengthen allegiances to ruling *tongkonan* and their inhabitants in the past. Pak Tandiruru of Alang-Alang, who had followed his father and grandfather as District Head of Nonongan, once commented in typically forthright manner: 'Most people have a slave ancestor somewhere in their genealogy. I'm not ashamed to admit it, even if others pretend not to have one.'

Slavery remains a sensitive subject, and the information I was able to gather on this subject is necessarily anecdotal and impressionistic. It is correspondingly difficult to assess many questions, such as what proportion of the population was enslaved, how often people enslaved themselves through debt, whether they were well or poorly treated, whether slaves were able to save or own property, the possibility of masters requisitioning such property if they did have any, or the relative difficulty for debtors of paying off their debts to free themselves. Allowing for the possibility of variations from district to district, there was general agreement that in the past, all or most of the nobles had slaves. One could not be a proper aristocrat without them, according to some. A noble of Malimbong explained, 'A true *tongkonan* in the past had slaves in it, people who could be ordered (*to disua*), who could be told to go here, go there, fetch this, fetch that...' The occasional commoner also might own slaves. A few were even slaves of slaves (the so-called *kaunan tai manuk* or 'chicken-shit slaves'), though this was rare, since few slaves owned anything. These were the most vulnerable category of individuals, those most at risk of being sold.<sup>6</sup> Commoners formed the bulk of the population, sometimes being referred to as *to buda* ('the many').

When I asked people from different areas to give me their estimates of the percentage of population in each rank, I found considerable differences,

<sup>6</sup> Some said this group only appeared in the late nineteenth century, at the 'time of the Sidenreng people', when Toraja was drawn into the slave trade (see Chapter IV).

though those of the north and west were agreed in saying that proportions of both the nobility and slaves were small, with commoners making up the majority. As a point of reference, Kennedy (1953:159-60) provides a rare example of figures for hamlets of a single village, Marante in Kesu':

Table 1. Population of Marante by rank in the early 1950s

	Tondok	Bone'	Balatana	Linda	Average total
% nobility	38	21	4	4	13
% commoners	29	57	50	70	58
% slaves	33	22	46	26	29

In the Tallu Lembangna, a broad division is drawn between those who are free (*to makaka*) and those who are unfree (*kaunan*).<sup>7</sup> The late Puang Rante Allo, the leading noble of Tengan in Mengkendek, told me that perhaps 5% of the population there belonged to ruling families and held the title of Puang (*tana' bulaan*), 15% were *to makaka*, and an astonishing 80% *kaunan*. He was apparently lumping ordinary commoners, the *to buda*, into this category of 'dependents'. Pak Ulia Salu Rapa', of the ruling family of Nanggala, estimated that there, the nobility constituted 10-15% of the population, the commoners 45-50%, *kaunan* 30% and *kaunan tai manuk* 10%. Nanggala is one of the districts with the highest concentration of land in the hands of the aristocracy, with many commoners who are landless, surviving either by sharecropping or day labour. Pak Kila', by contrast, stated as his estimation that slaves in most areas would not have exceeded 10% of the population; in his own home district of Sesean, he said, they formed as little as 3 or 4%, and not all noble houses owned any.<sup>8</sup>

There were several categories of slaves, whose degrees of servitude, or chances of redeeming themselves, varied. In Malimbong, the following categories were recognised:

*Kaunan garonto'* (*garonto'*: 'base, trunk, origin') were slaves who could neither free themselves, nor be sold. Those who were born slaves, or were captured in war, as well as certain classes of debtors, came into this category. Theoretically, they could free themselves by payment of 'one hundred of everything' (*sanda saratu'*) – a hundred buffaloes, a hundred pigs, chickens,

<sup>7</sup> In other areas, *to makaka* refers to the lesser nobility, or *tana' bassi*.

<sup>8</sup> Adams (1988:62) gives figures for 214 households surveyed in Tikunna Malenong, Kesu'. These show a total of nobles: 16.3%, commoners: 74.2%, and (former) slaves: 9.3%. Comparison with Kennedy's data for different hamlets in the same district suggests a decline in the number of those admitting to being descendants of slaves, and Adams proposes that this may be accounted for by the efforts of those in this category to raise their status by leaving Tana Toraja, seeking chances to earn a better living outside their homeland, and using new wealth to raise the family's status at home – a process discussed at some length also by Volkman (1985).



rice fields, cats, pillows, spoons etcetera, right down to the meanest household objects. This condition was purely hypothetical, and clearly stands for impossibility, since there was no remembered instance of anyone who had succeeded in making such a payment. This category included the *kaunan bulaan* ('golden slaves') or *kaunan tongkonan* ('slaves of the origin house'), hereditary slaves who had belonged to a certain *tongkonan* over generations, and who formed part of its inalienable property, or *mana'*. These people acted as personal servants for their masters, and often did household chores such as cooking, though they were forbidden to eat off the same dishes or wear the same clothes. They had specific ritual duties at funerals, or at rites to celebrate the rebuilding of the house, for which they were rewarded with specific cuts of meat. Puang Rante Allo once mentioned a Puang of Mengkendek (whose name he declared could not be spoken) who at some time in the past had sold off the *kaunan bulaan* of his house. This was considered so disgraceful that the rest of his family disowned him and drove him into exile. The seriousness of this offence may have rested more in its disturbance of the proper order of things inherited from the ancestors, than in a sense of injustice to the slaves themselves. But it also has to do with the fact that he was selling what did not belong to him, for the slaves were the inalienable property of the house itself, a mark of its status and prosperity. Similar rows have been caused in other families by individuals who have tried to sell off heirloom wealth of the house without the knowledge of other family members.

*Kaunan to mengkaranduk* (to *mengkondok*) were those who, out of hardship, threw themselves on the mercy of a nobleman and asked him to feed them. Such a man, and his wife and children, would then enter the noble's service for an unspecified length of time, but could redeem themselves by payment of at least four buffaloes and a pig. To free oneself in this way is called *ma'talla'*, or *usseroi kalena*, 'to clean oneself'. *To sandang* were those who became slaves through debt, often incurred because of funeral expenses or by gambling. If one fell into debt one could also ask a member of one's own family to pay it off, and become a slave to them, provided they were not more closely related than third cousin, the degree within which marriage is prohibited. It was forbidden to become the slave of any relative closer than this; presumably, if they undertook to pay one's debts, it was done in the spirit of siblingship (*kasiunuran*) which ideally characterises kin relations. It is of some interest that the same cut-off point was apparently used to define one's closest kin with regard to the institutions of both marriage and slavery. *Kaunan dilaak* were those who, captured in inter-village wars, were rescued by some other warrior (*pa'barani*) who, just because he liked the look of someone, might say to his captor, 'You can't take him; that's my friend'. In such a circumstance one became the slave of one's protector, but could redeem oneself on payment of four buffaloes, like the *to mengkaranduk*.



*Changing relationships between nobles and their dependents*

Slaves did not always live in the same villages as their masters, but in nearby hamlets, coming to work whenever summoned and being rewarded with food. At ceremonies, they had to help build shelters for the guests, and roasting-spits for the sacrificed animals. A noble rarely went anywhere without being accompanied by a group of retainers, and when he went to a funeral, he took along a large crowd of villagers in order to impress other guests, as is still often the case today. But an older nobleman of Malimbong stated that in the past, when villagers knew that their headman would be attending a funeral, they would save up their own pigs and offer them to him to take, which suggests a far higher degree of interdependency than exists today. His slaves would carry his pigs, and help to cook the meat, being rewarded with meat from the head, belly or ribs. The host's slaves in the past would serve betel to the guests, a task now performed by young people of the family. Some slaves sharecropped rice land from their masters, the harvest being divided equally between them. Or a slave might be allotted a portion of garden land belonging to the *tongkonan* to work. He was then under obligation to sacrifice a pig (*mangiu'*; literally 'to pour out') at the master's funeral, without its being considered as a debt by the master's family; this applied even if there were relations between slave and master, as when a noble had taken a slave woman as mistress. Conversely, the master was expected to provide the sacrificial pig for a slave's wedding or funeral. A female slave might be selected to perform a special ritual function in a high-ranking funeral, as the *to pangulli'*, 'one who removes maggots' from the corpse, while it was stored in the house prior to the celebration of the funeral. That person would be rewarded with a small piece of rice land for her dedication.<sup>9</sup> It is said to be *mabusung* (a breach of taboo, liable to incur supernatural punishment) for nobles ever to take back land thus given, but I heard of several court cases resulting from their efforts to do so, which the recipient's family had resisted. Nobles who find it hard to accept the loss of their dependents typically make remarks to the effect that any slave wishing to be free should first pay back their debts; but clearly, the official abolition of slavery, first by the Dutch and then by the government of independent Indonesia, long ago rendered any such demand untenable. For their part, I encountered several examples of nobles renegeing on their customary obligations of *noblesse oblige* toward their former dependents. The desire to be free of these relationships, then, can cut both ways.

<sup>9</sup> The Dutch attempted to ban this practice, along with various other aspects of the funeral rites. Nooy-Palm (1986:177) and Volkman (1985:87) give details of other mortuary ritual functions formerly carried out by slaves.

Most of the time, slaves worked on the land allotted them. Not all of them worked every day for their masters, but they had to come when called to perform chores such as fetching wood or water, looking after livestock, and preparing food. Slaves were often given pigs to tend, and they were entitled to half of a sow's litter. Slaves who herded buffaloes might eventually get to own one, for the reward for this was one calf in eight, or one in four (though I was told that in Malimbong, the rate for slaves might be as low as one in sixteen, and in any case the nobles' small sons often acted as herders, so that the services of slaves could be dispensed with, especially in the days before the Dutch introduced schooling). While some people stated that a slave (especially in the Tallu Lembangna) was always at risk of having any livestock requisitioned by his owners, others insisted that slaves did have the right to own property, and that it was wrong of masters to take it away from them. A friend recalled how in his childhood, when visiting his uncle at Singki', he would often see his uncle's slaves busy pounding rice or tending the buffaloes. Slaves would be diligent in helping with the rice harvest, earning a share of the rice for their work, and their labour would certainly be called upon whenever preparations for a ritual were in progress. Nowadays, he added, former *kaunan* can no longer be forced to provide this labour, but people still hope that they will 'know their place' and come to help. These days, however, they are more likely to work for wages, or to help in communal labour simply in their role as *pa'tondokan*, or fellow-villagers, who traditionally work together as a community obligation, either for ritual preparations or in roofing a house.

Slaves could be inherited like other property. Sometimes when an inheritance was divided, if there was not enough rice land for all the siblings, some might be given slaves as their share instead of land. The slaves thus inherited were exempted from service to the other siblings. *Kaunan bulaan*, or slaves attached to an origin house, were viewed as the property of the *rapu*, the whole group of its descendants. They might have to serve any of them, but especially those actually resident in the house. If a noble changed residence at marriage, he would not take house slaves with him, but would make use of his wife's for daily requirements, and send for his own family slaves only when their work was needed for special occasions. Slaves could only marry or divorce with the permission of their masters, and if the slaves of two different owners were given permission to marry, then they and their children had to serve both of them. Over time, rights in slaves might be shared between many people and the slaves and their offspring had many potential masters to serve – though they were more likely to be willing to work for those who were generous.

Nobles like to claim that the *kaunan* relationship, which in some areas seems to have evolved into one of clientage, is more costly to them than to

their dependents. Pak Ulia Salu Rapa' of Nanggala related how he had once seen a family slave come to his mother in Nonongan and ask for rice because someone had died. Ulia told him to take 200 *kutu*' (sheaves), but the man was angry and said, 'I want 1,000, or I won't be your slave any more!' So in the end he was given 800. According to Ulia, while some descendants of *kaunan* would now rather go off elsewhere to seek a living, others, rather than risk destitution, prefer to stay and continue in a relationship of clientage. Donzelli (2003:279), while living in Mengkendek, learned that members of the nobility there could still count on former dependents being willing to work for them. She observes that the relationship of subordination is commonly expressed by means of the verb *mamali*' ('to long for' or 'to feel affection for'), describing a supposed yearning of low status persons for their former masters, who for their part express their side of the relationship in terms of responsibility (the word *parengnge*' (chief), for instance, is derived from the verb *rengnge*', to carry a burden by means of a strap over the forehead, as Toraja women carry their heavily-laden vegetable baskets (*baka*) home from their gardens.<sup>10</sup> How much nobles in the past may have abused their power is difficult to assess, but it would seem to have depended very much on the character of the individual, for they certainly could wield power arbitrarily within their communities. As leaders of the village councils or *kombongan ada*', which settled disputes, they could impose crippling fines on villagers for any misdemeanour. An elderly priest of Talion described to me how his grandfather had found grounds to challenge various individuals who he claimed had insulted him, and had had them fined as many as twelve buffaloes for such offences. Other nobles denied that such exploitation was common.

The *kaunan* relationship was euphemistically cloaked in the language of kinship. Pak Tolele from Sawangan commented: 'Even in the old days, people never liked to say *kaunan*; they called them *siunu*' ('siblings', relatives), because they protected them.' Sometimes the relationship was cast in terms of the dependence of children on their parents: slaves were referred to as 'children' (*anak*), and the master looked up to as a father (*disanga ambe*'), who could be relied on to help out in times of serious need. The ideal noble was expected to be generous, as expressed in the phrase *ma'tarik lindo pionna*, 'to pull on the front of his loincloth', meaning to dispense help to those in need. For their part, slaves were supposed to 'know their place' (*untandai kalena*, literally 'know their body/self'), or *untandai kano'koranna*, literally 'know where they are entitled to sit'). This sentiment is one still commonly voiced by today's nobility, more often nowadays as a complaint about former *kaunan*

<sup>10</sup> This expression of desire or 'intentional tension' toward powerful people is today carried over into the context of politics as a way of expressing people's 'support' for political candidates (Donzelli 2003:280).

who try to forget their station. The insistence on reminding people of their former status is no doubt a strong incentive to descendants of former slaves to leave Tana Toraja in search of job opportunities elsewhere. At the time of my first fieldwork, when I lived in the village of Buttang, there were four families of former *kaunan* living at Pasang, the neighbouring hamlet, who used to serve related noble houses in Buttang, Pasang and Kata. But their attachment to these houses, so far as I could observe while living there, has effectively been broken. Only one of these families still shows up to help on ritual occasions. Their children have done well in school, and having migrated in search of work, have prospered and helped their families build nice houses in the village. There is no reason for the families of these former *kaunan* any longer to show any special deference to their former masters.<sup>11</sup> There was only one woman in Buttang itself who was of slave ancestry, but she had married someone from a high-ranking family, and the fact was never referred to. Her brother had lived with a branch of the former owner's family in Rantepao for about ten years. Like many actual nephews and nieces from the village, they had paid his school fees, while he in exchange was expected to do household chores for them. He was much more diligent than many of them both with his schoolwork and the chores. Later he became a teacher at the technical school, and subsequently took a job in the Public Works Department in Palopo. When he fell in love with a girl of very high status, it was the mother of the Rantepao family who helped him to ask for her hand, and made all the arrangements for the marriage when, because of his promising prospects, the match was accepted. Effectively, this person has become an adoptive son, his humble ancestry erased by his educational achievements. He still visits whenever he comes to Rantepao, and in fact family members commented that he was more filial in his attentions than some of the actual nephews, who had received just as much help with their careers, but never came to call.

<sup>11</sup> This situation contrasts with that described by Adams (1988:57) for Kesu', or by Tsintjilonis (1997) for Buntao', where it appears that ex-*kaunan* remain closely subordinated to their former masters, doing chores and generally still being treated as family retainers. Tondon is also often mentioned as the area where the aristocracy remain the most reluctant to cede control over their former dependents. When I interviewed an elderly nobleman of this area, he declared that nothing could change the status of slaves, who would suffer supernatural sanctions if they tried to escape their position. 'Slaves can never be free', he insisted, 'and we're not ashamed to use the word here in Tondon.' I never heard such remarks in Saluputti.

## CHAPTER IX

# Trunk and branch

*Kurre sumanga'na te'e padang tuo balo'  
Saba' parayanna te'e lipu tumuko-muko padangna leon gandang to diponene'  
Napalingkarongan te'e to dipobunga'na pa'bangunni banua  
Naosokki kayu sanda pati'na nanii bendan a'riri' posi' tongkonanna to diponene'  
Esungan kapayunganna to dipa'bunga'na rebanne siosso' na situran-turananni  
Nanii pamisa' pa'inaanna siosso' to ma'rapu tallang sola to ma'limbo kaluku  
Na bendan bangunan banua  
Tunannangmi kayu sanda pati'na  
Bendan mi tongkonan layuk  
Tunannangmi osokan ao' dao  
Natimangi kurre sumanga'na to merrapu tallang  
Nasaladanni pole paraya pantan to ma'limbo kaluku  
Nasiosso'i taruk bulawanna  
Sola lolo tu manik, nalepong tu kandaurena.*

Thanks to the land which bears good fortune  
Thanks because of this peaceful land whose boundaries were established by the  
drum of the ancestors  
They made level this place where the house was first built  
They erected the timbers cut to different lengths and established the spot where  
the navel-post of the ancestral *tongkonan* stands  
Noble sitting-place of those who were the first of the descending generations  
The place for reaching agreements among the descendants numerous as the bam-  
boo trunks, the ones united like a clump of coconuts  
The place where they agreed to build the house  
And assembled all the timbers cut to different sizes  
The great house is erected  
The bamboo roasting-spit is made ready there  
Those numerous as the bamboo-trunks offer thanks  
Those united like a clump of coconuts make thank-offerings together  
The descendants like golden bamboo-shoots  
And offspring like the beads of a necklace, united like [the strings of hanging  
beads in] a *kandaure* ornament.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Invocation made when the 'navel' post of an aristocratic *tongkonan* is installed, recounted to me by the elderly *to minaa*, Ne' Roya of Kadundung, a descendant of *tongkonan* Nonongan in Sanggalangi' district, in 1994. At this time he had retired and converted to Roman Catholicism.



An old *tongkonan* in the hamlet of Kata, on the hillside above Buttang, 1994.  
Older houses were comparatively small and lacked the exaggerated projection and curve of the roof which is now fashionable.

The *tongkonan*, or family house of origin, is simultaneously a material structure – the house itself – and the group of people who claim membership in it. Having seen how the house serves as a vehicle for history, I turn now to the way people relate to houses, and the way houses relate to each other, in the present. The house, I argue, is the focal point of a kinship system which otherwise appears to lack any distinct boundaries. Just as the founding of houses and their remembered sites in the landscape provide a sort of template for constructions of the past, so the relations between houses in the present serve as the framework within which people remember their genealogical links to each other. Even to ask the correct questions about relationships, I discovered, required me to recast them in terms of relations between houses. This dawning awareness was crucial to the slow process of learning to see past the categories I brought with me to the field from my own training as an anthropologist. Only then could I get a clearer picture of how Toraja themselves conceived of their kinship system.

Toraja trace ties not only to the house where they were born, but also to the birthplaces of their parents, grandparents, or more distant ancestors. Descent is traced bilaterally, and houses on both the mother's and the father's side of the family are of equal importance. Throughout their lives, people maintain



ties with a number of different houses. It is not necessary to live in the house in order to trace a connection. Toraja live in basically nuclear family households (sometimes including additional relatives such as a grandparent or grandchildren), and the origin house is no exception. Out of all its descendants, only one nuclear family is actually resident in it. Whose family this should be may be chosen by a meeting of all the descendants, who traditionally selected from among themselves the person they considered wealthiest, cleverest, bravest, the best public speaker, or otherwise best fitted to be the family spokesperson. In the case of politically dominant aristocratic houses in the past, that person would also exercise political power over the community. The person chosen might be a man or a woman, though particularly if a woman were chosen, her spouse must also be regarded as competent and reliable. Nooy-Palm's data from Kesu' and the Tallu Lembangna show a strong preponderance of male *tongkonan* heads, but the information I gathered in the westerly districts showed a more even distribution of male and female heads. Although men undeniably dominate in political life, a woman is not precluded from holding political roles. Where she does so, in all the cases I have observed, this is by virtue of high rank, which overrides considerations of gender. Nowadays, many descendants of formerly powerful *tongkonan* have taken advantage of educational opportunities to make successful careers in business, government or the civil service in Jakarta or elsewhere. They still retain their ties to origin houses and may wield considerable influence within the family, so it is no longer necessarily the case that the *tongkonan* resident today is its wealthiest or most powerful descendant.

Since residence is not a limiting factor for membership in a house, any one person may potentially claim to belong to dozens of different houses, and the membership of one house intersects with that of another. Membership of many houses is possible because links are only activated at certain times; this occurs principally in the context of rituals, or of the rebuilding of a house, to which all members ought to contribute. A woman's links to her houses are not curtailed at marriage; on the contrary, husband and wife together undertake a dual responsibility to contribute to the houses and ceremonies of both of them. It is in fact considered wrong not to maintain an approximate balance in their efforts in both directions. The expense involved in asserting one's connections provides the practical limit to these activities. Most people, if asked, will begin by expansively declaring their *tongkonan* to be innumerable, but when pressed, will name the houses of their parents and grandparents, and those of their spouse's parents and grandparents, as the ones with which they maintain real ties. Sometimes not even all of these will be named. But we have seen that the tracing of genealogical ties is a matter of greatest concern to people of high rank. Very high ranking individuals may really be able to trace ties with a great number of *tongkonan*, though their links to some of



these are likely to be demonstrated only at very long intervals, if at all. To trace the boundaries of any individual's allegiances to houses is therefore no simple matter, though we can learn a lot by looking at how people organize the rebuilding of a house. This happens rather often, since repeated renewal is part of the process by which a house comes to be regarded as an 'origin house' in the first place. Because of this, houses may be renewed before it is physically necessary. Secondly, since membership in a house entails jealously guarded rights to land, and to burial in house tombs (*liang*), it is useful to examine disputes in which a person's membership might be challenged (see Waterson 1995b).

Like other Austronesian peoples, Toraja often make use of botanical idioms to talk about kinship. As in the chant above, the descendants of the house are described as bamboo shoots, clumps of bamboos and coconuts, numerous yet springing from the same source. That source is the house, which is the site of their unity, the place for discussion and agreement among kin, and the place to which all the descendants must return in order to celebrate rituals. Toraja also share with other Austronesian peoples a pattern of ideas in which the house is thought of as a living thing, whose proper construction and well-being become intimately entwined with the vitality and well-being of its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Botanical metaphors combine rather characteristically with images of wealth and heirloom valuables: the bamboo shoots are 'golden', that is precious, the descendants are numerous, beautiful and united like the hundreds of beads in an heirloom ornament. This combination of images of the natural and the man-made is not as contradictory as it might appear. The tree of wealth, the world-tree that unites the upper-, middle- and under-worlds, is a familiar image in Toraja culture, one that also recurs across Southeast Asia and resonates with the Hindu image of the tree of the world. Tato' Dena' described a tree growing from the earth right up to the sky, which was used by Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the heavens, to make a carved boat. It had three trunks, each bearing a different kind of leaf in the form of precious cloths: *maa*, *seleng* and *posirrin*. This was the:

*Kayu bilandek, sangbara' lino*  
*Tangke datunna, tallu daunna*

Tree growing from earth to heaven, tree as old as the earth itself  
 With magnificent trunks, and three [kinds of] leaves.

Sandalwood (*sendana*) and banyan (*barana'*) trees are particularly sacred to the Toraja, and the association of trees and wealth recurs in other invocations such as the *merok* chant recorded by Van der Veen (1965:21, verse 15). The

<sup>2</sup> A comparative study of these ideas can be found in Waterson (1990, 2003).

kind of sandalwood planted in the northeast corner of the house courtyard at the *merok* and *ma'buu'*, the most important of the life-enhancing rites, is called *sendana sugi'* or 'rich *sendana'*, and this verse of the chant runs:

*Kurre sumanga'na te sendana sugi',  
Saba' parayanna te kayu mentangke ianan.*

Hail to this richly laden *tjendana* [sandalwood] tree,  
Abundant be the blessing upon this tree, whose branches are full of precious things.

The house itself is both tree and not-tree, natural and man-made: it is a reconstituted tree, whose vital power must be domesticated through the performance of the correct rituals which accompany every stage of felling, working and reassembling it in the form of house timbers. One might recall the lack of separation between what we should regard as the animate and the inanimate, in the myth we encountered which featured a tree who is really a carpenter, making timbers for houses endowed with the power of movement. Like the tree of wealth, the house should be full of heirloom valuables, and when a house ceremony is held to celebrate the completion of rebuilding, these will be taken out and hung on the house façade and front pillar, so that it really does have its 'branches full of precious things'. Further on in the chant, this tree, to which the buffalo to be sacrificed is to be bound, is associated with humans in a remarkable way: it is described as having human blood, and sharing the life-fluid of the people of the earth (*kayu ma'rara tau [...] kayu ma'lomba' to lino*) (Van der Veen 1965:153, verse 778). Nooy-Palm (1988:40) even notes that many *tongkonan* are called after trees. We may conclude that an intimate symbolic association exists between trees, houses, people and wealth.

#### *Houses, land and graves*

Property and valuables owned by a house are called *mana'*. Most *tongkonan* hold some property which is regarded as indivisible; this includes resources such as bamboo and coconut groves, as well as rice fields. Part of the wealth of an aristocratic *tongkonan* was made up of heirloom valuables such as old swords and krises, beaded *kandaure* ornaments, large circular gold ornaments called *lola'*, and textiles. In past times, as we have seen, it also included slaves (*kaunan*).

How does land become categorized as *mana'*? This happens most often when a childless person designates part of their land to become *tongkonan* property instead of being divided among the heirs. The family that resides

in the *tongkonan* will work it and has a right to the produce, except when it is needed to meet expenses such as the renewal of the *tongkonan* roof. There seem to be wide variations in the extent and importance of *mana'* lands. Pak Ulia Salu Rapa', for instance, the leading nobleman of Nanggala, declared that all important *tongkonan* had *mana'*, but in Saluputti, I found that many origin houses had little or no *mana'*; some houses that had held *mana'* had redivided it among the descendants at some point in the past. This makes it difficult to assess how much the occasional dubious, or contested, assertion of membership in a *tongkonan* might be prompted by the desire to claim a share in control of such lands. In a broader sense, named rice fields remain associated with particular houses as they are passed down from parents to children, and although these may not be designated as *mana'* in the strict sense, they are also thought of as the inheritance of the descendants of a particular house. To be a true *tongkonan* member, one needs to know not only genealogies and the names of ancestors, but also the names of the rice fields and how they have been inherited. Otherwise one is not equipped to defend them against any false claims to ownership. Land is very rarely sold outright, and hardly anyone holds individual title to land; it is really use rights that are inherited. If one person allows land to pass out of the family (for instance, by pawning it to meet a gambling debt, or allowing a false claim to be made on it), the anger of other family members will be aroused. An acquaintance who worked as a school teacher in town was quick to demonstrate his knowledge of the names of rice fields and their owners around his home village, when another man tried to make a claim on a rice field inherited by his mother. Another friend suspected a relative of embroidering his version of the genealogy of a house from which they were both descended with a view to claiming shares in *tongkonan* land.

All *tongkonan* also have their own *liang* – family tombs carved out of solid rock, which are used over generations. Membership in the house also gives one the right of burial in its tombs. The house and the grave are often referred to as a pair (*sipasang*), an idea accentuated by the imagery of ritual verses in which the grave is called the 'house of the ancestors', or 'house without smoke, village where no fire is lit' (*tongkonan tangmerambu, tondok tangdukku apinna*). Anyone who really knows their genealogy also knows in which *liang* particular ancestors are buried, and, if the ancestor is distinguished enough, even their precise position within the burial chamber. Today, as many stone graves are running out of space, Christians especially may opt for another style of tomb, the *patane*, which is easier and cheaper to make, being dug out of the earth and lined with concrete, often with a miniature house built on top. This style of grave has been traditional in Kesu' and Tikala, and is a common sight in the Mamasa Toraja region to the west of Tana Toraja. Over the last decade or so, they have sprung up around the countryside in other



Family tombs (*liang*) carved into granite boulders, Malimbong, 1979

districts too, now usually executed entirely in concrete and surmounted by an elaborate, painted model *tongkonan* on top in place of the older style of wooden house. Tombs are often named after the person who originally made or commissioned them; *liangna Dondan* ('Dondan's *liang*'), for instance, refers to the original maker and not to any particular famous ancestor buried inside. All those directly descended from the maker of a tomb have a right to be buried there, but lateral kin (for instance, descendants of the maker's siblings) do not, unless they have intermarried.

Given that people can trace ties to more than one house, it follows that they also usually have a choice of potential burial places. The finality of this choice, however, makes it more problematic than one's allegiances to houses in life. One may easily maintain ties with many houses during one's life, and one may well reside in a house which is not one's house of origin, but at death one must rest in one place. Acute feelings of shame are aroused by the thought of being placed in a tomb where one has no right to be; but even without this rare possibility, there may be a debate, more or less heated, whenever someone dies, about where they should be buried.<sup>3</sup> Occasionally, two sides of the family may even come to blows over which of them shall

<sup>3</sup> Examples are discussed in Waterson (1995b).

claim the honour of burial, for the ancestors in the tomb are regarded as a source of good fortune (*dalle'-dalleran*), especially if they themselves were rich or important persons. At first, I thought that perhaps the concern with placement of the dead might represent a desire to maximize the accumulation of ancestors as a way of posthumously expanding the boundaries of the *rapu*, the group of a *tongkonan's* descendants. This is exactly what happens, for example, among the Merina of Madagascar, another Austronesian-speaking people with a bilateral kinship system whose culture is marked by Indonesian influences. The choice of a tomb is of tremendous importance here, too, only the decision has to be made earlier, since individuals must join an association to help pay for its upkeep. Tombs are grandiose structures, far more magnificent than the houses of the living, so the commitment is an expensive one. Bloch (1971a) describes how the localized kin group, or *deme*, among the Merina achieves its ideal form only within the tomb, where relatives cannot mar its unity by quarrelling. But Toraja denied any conscious concern to enlarge the kin group associated with the house in this way – which fits, in fact, with the extreme fluidity of *rapu* boundaries among the living. The intensity of emotions aroused by these questions has rather to do with the complex of ideas regarding the reciprocal responsibilities between the living and the dead: the living tend the remains of their ancestors, periodically re-wrapping the bones and making offerings at the tomb, while the ancestors for their part are supposed to benefit the living. This is why such great importance is attached to preserving the bones of the dead, for without doing so, one cannot secure blessings from them.

We see, therefore, that people's allegiances to each other in the Toraja kinship system involve not only their bonds to houses, viewed as origin-sites, but also a web of ties with land, graves, and ancestors, which situate individuals in relation to place and to each other. These powerfully emotive bonds give rise to feelings of family honour (*longko'*) which are perceived to be uniquely Toraja; they are often distinguished as such by being termed *longko' Toraya*. Toraja tend to compare *longko'* with the Bugis and Makassar concept of *siri'*, which Millar (1989:225) has defined as 'a strong sense of honour that is particularly important vis-à-vis kinship ties'. They may even borrow the word *siri'* to talk about it, but it is clear from what is said that *longko'* differs significantly from *siri'*. *Longko'* can refer as much to feelings of shame in relation to other family members as to feelings between families. Among the Bugis, *siri'* will be provoked when someone else makes a public attack on an individual's honour. But for the Toraja, feelings of shame (*kalongkoran*) are equally elicited by a sense of one's failure to do the right thing, especially if one then incurs the scorn of other family members. When I asked people what circumstances were likely to give rise to feelings of *longko'*, they emphasized failures of responsibility – failure to rebuild an origin house, to pay an inherited funeral



debt, or to show sufficient concern over the placement of the dead.<sup>4</sup>

One question which is not entirely easy to answer is to what extent, in the past, commoners' ties to their local aristocratic *tongkonan* may have had importance relative to their ties to their own houses. The impressive ceremonies of the 'eastern' sphere, connected with fertility-enhancement, always focus on a leading noble house which holds the key ritual offices involved, but require the cooperation and labour of the whole community. Likewise, the large-scale mortuary celebrations staged for high-ranking individuals would be impossible without the labour contributions of the whole community. Villagers make up a noble's entourage when he attends a death feast; they carry the pigs and other contributions, and expect to receive meat for their trouble. Although the severest penalties (of death or banishment) were enforced in the past against unions between high-ranking women and low-ranking men, no such rules applied to men, and many noblemen married or had unofficial liaisons with commoner or even slave women, giving rise to people of mixed rank who could trace a tie with a ruling *tongkonan*. Some even claim that the *tana' bassi*, or lower nobility, came into being as the result of marriages between nobles and commoners. Evidence from the more hierarchical central and southern areas is conflicting on the question of whether the offspring of such marriages were obliged to follow the rank of the mother, or were deemed to belong to an intermediate rank (Nooy-Palm 1979:48). In Saluputti, I was told that the latter was the case. According to one acquaintance, if such a person were to be ordered about, he might retort, 'Please cut me in half! Half of me may be a slave, but the other half has the right to sit here with you!' At any rate, it is safe to assume that a certain number of people of lower rank would be able to trace ties with the ruling *tongkonan* in most areas, and that this would tend to strengthen their allegiance to this house as well as to their own origin houses. Where chiefs exercised their powers very arbitrarily over the people and their possessions, on the other hand, fear may have played a part in binding people to the ruling house. But so long as empty land was available to be brought under cultivation, the possibility for people to move away from exploitative chiefs must have remained an option. This indeed is said to be how Saluputti came to be settled in the first place, and why its nobles call themselves Ma'dika ('Free' or 'Independent').

<sup>4</sup> It fits with the different focus of priorities in these two societies that, whereas Bugis weddings provide the quintessential occasions for the display of 'self-esteem' (Bugis use the Indonesian term *harga diri*, which Millar suggests is even more crucial than *siri* for an understanding of status distinctions), Toraja *longko'* centers on the two contexts of the house, and of mortuary celebrations.

*Metaphors of origin: the trunk and the tip*

Austronesian societies recurrently make use of a particular idiom to talk about origins, using reflexes of a term that means 'base' or 'trunk' of a tree, by extension also 'source', 'origin', 'beginning' or 'cause'. This term is paired with one that means 'tip' or 'shoot', such that the growth of kin groups, or the founding of houses, are thought of in terms of the growth of a tree. Descending generations, or newly founded houses, branch off as so many 'tips' from their original 'trunk'.<sup>5</sup> The imagery of 'trunk' and 'tip' thus works not just to describe spatial relationships (as in rules for the correct placement of house timbers) but as a means of describing a diachronic relationship, of talking about time.<sup>6</sup> The botanical metaphor of continuity and growth also implies a relationship of precedence, and recognition of the 'source' will often be given formal expression in rituals. In Toraja, the word used for the trunk or base is most commonly *oto'* or *garonto'*, while the tip is *lolok*.<sup>7</sup>

Toraja sometimes contrast founding and branch houses as 'trunk' and 'tip' (*oto'nallolokna*) or less commonly as 'trunk' and 'branch' (*garonto'naltangkena*); sometimes they are termed 'mother' and 'child' (*indo'nalanakna*), or the original founding house may be termed *ongi'na* (*ongi'*: 'stem', as in the stem of a fruit; *na*: possessive, 'its'.) When demonstrating this idea, one person picked up a mangosteen, another a coconut, pointing out how 'the whole fruit grows from the stem'. This latter term is without a pair to indicate the branch house. When people recount their genealogies, they begin, as we have seen, with a founding couple. They go on to tell who were their children, whom they married, and where they moved to in order to found new 'branch' houses of their own. The most detailed accounts also include details of named supernatural heirloom valuables that were taken along by each descendant as their inheritance. At the same time as details of their genealogies sometimes become forgotten, Toraja preserve very precise recall of their links to houses, and of these houses' links to each other; as I have suggested, one could sketch out a genealogy of houses underpinning the entire kinship system and the

<sup>5</sup> Terms for 'trunk' are frequently cognate with Proto-Austronesian *\*puhun* or *\*puqun* (Wurm and Wilson 1975:13, 225). See Lewis (1988) on 'trunk' and 'tip' metaphors among the Ata Tana Ai (Flores); Traube (1986, 1989) on the Mambai of East Timor; and Fox (1995, 1996) for detailed comparative discussion of the occurrence of these ideas in other Austronesian societies, including the Atoni, the Balinese, and the Oceanic peoples of Palau, Anuta and Tikopia. Fox (1995:37) points out that the Toraja term *rapu*, which is used to refer to a group of house descendants as well as to the branching base of a bamboo culm, finds a parallel in some Northern Philippine societies where a term constructable as *\*rapu* is used to mean 'origin', 'base', 'source'.

<sup>6</sup> Compare Traube (1989).

<sup>7</sup> To do something completely (for instance, to carry out a sequence of rituals, as for house building) can also be described as movement from trunk to tip: *dipasundun rekke lolokna*, 'completed right up to the tip'.



genealogies of humans themselves. But just as human genealogies are full of variations and may be used to support contested claims to precedence in the present, so too the genealogies of houses represent a useable past, which may be brought into service in support of current interests.

As the fortunes of their descendants rise and fall, houses may gain prestige by being repeatedly renewed over time, as well as by being the site of rituals. A three-dimensional carved buffalo head (*kabongo'*), often with real horns, indicates that the highest ranking level of funeral has been celebrated; a long-necked bird (*katik*), sometimes described as a cock but more correctly representing a hornbill, is a sign that the great *ma'buu'* rite has been held.<sup>8</sup> Other decorative elements, such as the *tuang-tuang* (sections of fine bamboos hung on long strings, which are only used at highest-ranking funerals) are hung around the rice barn. Becoming part of the built structure, these items communicate part of the house's history and augment its prestige. But houses may also be struck by disasters such as fire, or fall into disrepair; the fortunes of an older house may be eclipsed by a branch house whose members have prospered. So each house comes to have a life history of its own, one that is intertwined with the lives of its human inhabitants, but which can outlast all of them. Comparative ethnography shows us that this growing together of houses and their human inhabitants is a distinctive characteristic of many Austronesian societies, where the house, identified initially with the conjugal couple who establish their own hearth, has integrated into it both the placenta of those born there, and the spiritual presence of those who have become ancestors, until it comes to encompass both endings and beginnings, and the lives not only of present, but also past and future members.<sup>9</sup> Enduring beyond its individual members and their enterprises, it offers them a sort of immortality which would otherwise escape them.

### *The 'life' of the house*

The idea of the house as having a life of its own is more than just a metaphor for the Toraja, as for other Southeast Asian peoples. To say that it is 'alive' is to grant the house its own subjectivity, and make of it a communicable-with entity. The interaction between humans and houses must then be regulated to ensure a harmonious balance between their respective vitalities. These ideas are reflected in conceptions of the house as body, and the need for the proper performance of rituals associated with it.

<sup>8</sup> See Waterson (1989). Waterson (1988) treats the meanings of house carving motifs in detail.

<sup>9</sup> See Waterson (2003) for a fuller comparative discussion.



An old *tongkonan* in Buri', Talion, displaying a wealth of buffalo horns from heads presented to the house at past ceremonies, 1996

When a child is born, the father buries the afterbirth on the east side of the house. As in many other Austronesian societies, the placenta is regarded as a sort of twin (a perception which is in fact genetically correct). Over time, the house thus becomes the place where 'many placentae are buried' (*buda lamunan lolo*), and should therefore, so I was told, never be moved from its original site.<sup>10</sup> As we have seen, some house sites, even when vacant, may be remembered for centuries. To say that a person 'knows where their placentae are buried' (*untandai lamunan lolona*) is a way of saying that they know their links to ancestral *tongkonan*, and will therefore be able to keep up these links properly, for instance by contributing if any of these houses is being rebuilt. Nowadays, lamented Tato' Dena', many people do not know where their placentae are buried, causing ties to houses to be lost; people 'lose their way', and thus 'history is broken'.<sup>11</sup> The act of burying the placental twin binds the newborn person to their house of birth, for it is said that no matter how far they may wander, they will always eventually want to return to that place. The sense of belonging to the house group and having its interests at heart is reflected, too, when it is said of someone who talks indiscreetly and can't keep family secrets that 'they must have forgotten to bury his placenta!'

But the house is not only important as the site of births. Pak Kila' put it this way: 'The house is like our mother, because we are born there and die there, and seventy per cent of our activities are carried on there.' For this reason, he added, one should never do wrong in the house. Ne' Barokko, an elderly man from Nanggala, echoed these thoughts: 'In Toraja, the house is the centre of everything, because everything important is done there – it's where we conceive our children, where we eat our food, it's where we think, it's where we celebrate rituals.' Pak Kondo of Maulu in Saluputti likewise expressed a maternal image of the house: 'The house is the mother (starting-point, origin) of our search for a livelihood and of the birth of children' (*iatu banua, indo'na dakkaran kande sia dadian bati*'). The image of the house as mother is carried over in the common saying that the house is to the rice barn as mother to father, or wife to husband. House (*banua*) and barn (*alang*) make a pair, the one facing north, and the other in front of it, with its door facing south. A house without a barn is incomplete, and may be said to be lacking a spouse (*tae' balinna*). In a marriage, the woman is in fact often directly associated with the house because it is built on her family land, the majority of marriages being uxori-local. In case of divorce, she retains the house, while the husband may be permitted to take the rice barn as his share. Unlike a house, there is no inhibition against moving a barn to another site. One person commented

<sup>10</sup> According to Isak Tandirerung, people in the Saluputti area are more emphatic about the importance of not moving houses than in other areas such as Rantepao.

<sup>11</sup> Here he used Indonesian, saying *putus sejarah*.

that the house and barn were 'married' to each other, and would be split up again if a couple separated because they had no children; then the barn would become the husband's share. The house as mother, however, is said to take precedence over rice barns, which are compared to her children. One should always build the house first, before the rice barn. 'The house holds the barn in its lap' (*banua ria alang*) poetically expresses the protective image of a mother-child pair, a pair which is certainly not oppositional, nor even exactly complementary, but rather organically related. The coexistence of these different images, with their varied nuances, may be seen as typical of symbolism in many South-East Asian societies, and cautions us against a too simplistic arrangement of structural oppositions. One can also conclude that an association exists between the ideas 'mother' and 'trunk, origin'.<sup>12</sup> *Indo'* can also mean 'leader', and is used, regardless of their actual gender, as a title given to several ritual functionaries; an example is the *Indo'* Padang or 'Leader of the Land', who coordinates the rites associated with the agricultural cycle.<sup>13</sup>

When we look at the structure of the house, we find that anthropomorphic imagery, though not as elaborately or as systematically applied to the house as in some Indonesian communities, is certainly present.<sup>14</sup> The gable triangle (*para*) is often referred to as the house's 'face' (*lindo banua*), and the pair of sunburst designs at the top of the triangle are compared to eyes. In northern parts of Toraja (for example around Palawa), houses often have the sunburst designs repeated in the bottom corners of the triangle, and I was told that these are like breasts. Another anthropomorphized building element is the *a'riri posi'* or 'navel post' which is a feature only of very high ranking *tongkonan*, for which the most complete set of rituals has been performed. Such a house is sometimes termed *banua diposi'* or 'house with a navel'. The post is not essential structurally, for in fact it is inserted after the house has already been built; but its symbolic significance is considerable. It rests on a flat stone and is jointed into one of the main floor beams; it aligns with a central pillar inside the house which becomes the focus of the most important fertility-enhancing ritual, the *ma'buu'* (see Chapter XV). In Saluputti, the post is personified as either 'male' or 'female', depending on whether the main founding ancestor of the house was a man or a woman. (Although the house is always founded by a married couple, the primary founder will be regarded as the one on whose family land the house is built.) Occasionally, the sex of the post is used to symbolize a 'paired' relationship between two related ori-

<sup>12</sup> The same association is made explicitly in some other Southeast Asian societies. The Temiar of Malaysia are one example (Geoffrey Benjamin, personal communication).

<sup>13</sup> These rites are discussed in Chapter XV.

<sup>14</sup> See Hicks (1976:56); Kana (1980:228); and Forth (1981:29) for some especially elaborate examples of anthropomorphism in house structures in other Indonesian societies.

gin houses, one having a 'female' post and the other a 'male' one. *Tongkonan Talonge'* in Uluvalu has a 'female' *a'riri' posi'* carved with three-dimensional breasts; this house is also unique, so far as I know, in having a similar pair of breasts projecting from the façade. When the timber for the navel post is cut, it must be carried from the forest with its 'head' end always held up higher than its 'trunk' end. A special ritual is held for its installation, at which it must be appropriately dressed in either a male or a female sarong and headcloth.

Tato' Dena' explained that the navel post is like the 'heart' of the house (*ate banua*; *ate*: literally 'liver'), and that its installation ritual is designed to 'bring it to life' so that, like the house itself, it will have *sumanga'*. *Sumanga'* (a cognate of Malay *semangat*) is an element of vitality or 'soul', which in the animist belief systems of Southeast Asia is considered to be shared by everything, including what westerners would regard as inanimate objects.<sup>15</sup> Toraja also use the term *deata* more or less interchangeably to describe this vitality. At the installation ceremony, Tato' Dena' would perform a chant summoning the deities and the ancestors, and telling the history of how the first house was built in the sky, Tangdilino's founding of the first earthly *tongkonan* at Banua Puan, and the stories of the other original houses that could move by themselves, as recounted in Chapter VII. Once again, then, we find that the occasion for telling these marvellous tales of the past is a ritual in which the telling reaffirms the status of a noble house, of which the *a'riri' posi'* itself is a sign.<sup>16</sup> Since the house has a life of its own, if it is ever pulled down, it must be symbolically 'stabbed' first before being dismantled. Not to do so would show a lack of respect for the life of the house, personified in ritual poetry as a guardian spirit (*deata sikambi' bangunan banua*). The two senses of *deata*, as vitality, or as personified spirit, are here in effect indistinguishable. In a more general way, we can say that it is the process of construction itself, coupled with the execution of the associated rituals, which 'brings the house to life' and endows it with a power of its own. The symbolic stabbing, while it marks the end of that particular manifestation of the house, is not actually a death of the house per se, since the demolition is usually occasioned by a plan for rebuilding. Perhaps the spirit of the old house must be released so that it can later be reincorporated in the new one.

The personification of the house as body has implications for its construction. Faults in the construction process would endanger the integrity of this body and thus place the inhabitants at risk. It appears to be universal in Indonesian societies that rules must be followed about the placement of the

<sup>15</sup> *Sumanga'* is discussed more fully in Waterson (2003).

<sup>16</sup> Since this chant has the power to summon the deities and ancestors, he was unwilling to do more than give a brief outline of it, out of context. It would be dangerous to call them if you are not making offerings.

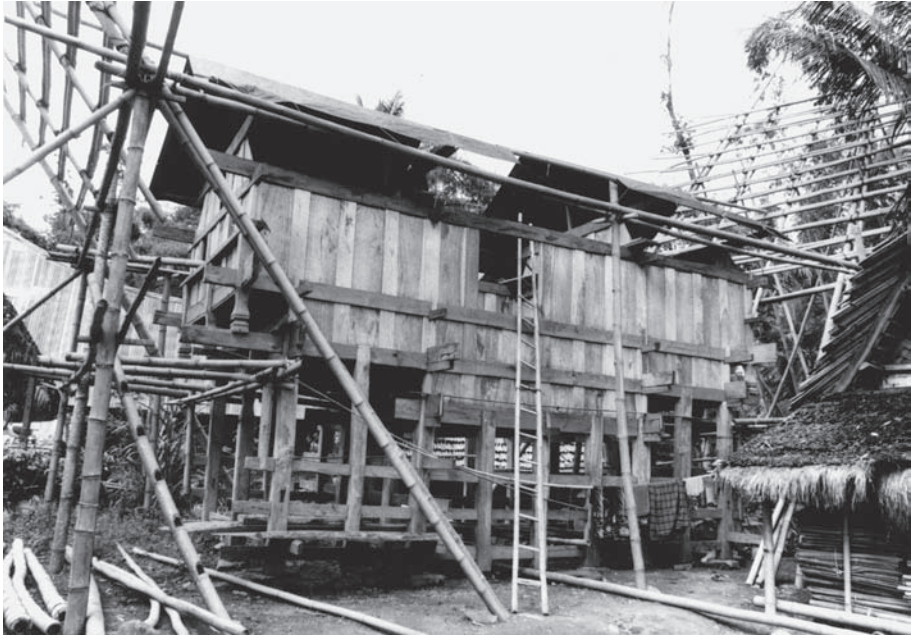
'trunks' and 'tips' of the timbers used in house building. Posts must invariably be 'planted' with their root ends down, so that the wood is aligned in the same direction that it was when growing in the tree. The ordering of beams is not a neutral matter either, though precise rules vary in different cultures. In Toraja, house beams must be placed so that two 'trunk' ends meet in the southwest corner and two 'tips' in the northeast corner. The east is the direction associated with life and the rising sun, as well as with the deities (*deata*), north with the creator deity Puang Matua. South and west by contrast have associations with death and the ancestors. Ambe' Tasik, a carpenter from Ullin in Saluputti district, explained that the 'growing' end of the tree must face the direction of life because humans themselves must seek life and orient themselves toward it. The house as a whole also has a 'trunk' and 'tip'. The rear or south end of the house is the 'trunk'; the south room or *sumbung* is the place where house heirlooms and valuables are customarily stored in baskets or boxes, and where the householders sleep. The middle room, *sali*, is for general use (and formerly contained the hearth, situated on the eastern side, the side associated with life and with the deities), while children and guests would sleep in the northernmost room, the *tangdo'*, at the 'tip' end of the house.<sup>17</sup> If posts or beams are inverted or incorrectly placed, this is likely to cause sickness, misfortune or even death. These rules suggest that the house is imagined not just in terms of a human body, but also of a reconstituted tree, whose life continues in a new form: the original and wild vitality of the tree must be properly channeled and domesticated, as house timbers, for the house to have a beneficial effect on its occupants.<sup>18</sup> Nowadays a lot of the wood used in house construction comes from commercial lumber yards in Palopo, so I wondered if it was always easy to tell which was the 'trunk' end of the timbers, but carpenters assured me that you could tell by weighing it: the 'trunk' end will be denser and heavier.

Ambe' Tasik explained how wood for a barn cannot be taken at the same time as that for a house, and must not come from the same tree. Rules about the placement of house members form part of the 'ordering of the house' (*susunan banua*). The house 'grows' as you build it up, as a tree grows tall, and so the timbers must be arranged that way too. The living always lie down to sleep facing east to west, but at a certain point in the funeral rites, a dead person is turned so that their head is to the south. Most people explain that this is because they must journey to the south in order to reach the afterlife, Puya, but

<sup>17</sup> Volkman (1985:47) reports being told by a *to minaa* of Sesean that the 'roots' of the house must be 'fertilised' by the presence of heirloom cloths and swords in the *sumbung*, so that the 'branches and leaves' (the front of the house with its ornate façade) will be beautiful.

<sup>18</sup> For comparative examples, see Gibbs (1987:79) on the Malays, and Teljeur (1990:65, 83) on the Gimán of Halmahera.





House under construction, Sa'tandung, Malimbong, 1996

Ambe' Tasik pointed out that they are at this moment being turned toward the 'trunk' end of the house, thus reversing the direction of life and growing things. Some rules of orientation, on the other hand, seem to have a purely practical basis. Firewood should be put in the fire with its trunk end first, but people say this is because the wood at that end is drier and burns better. Speaking of the construction of the *tongkonan* roof with its extraordinary extended eaves, Ambe' Tasik explained that the members from which these extensions are built upward and outward from the ridge beam must be arranged with their 'trunk' ends pointing out, because that end is denser and stronger.

Other errors may also endanger the future occupants of a house. He described how, when his family origin house was being rebuilt, his father looked at the house posts after they had been erected and decided they were too tall. He then ordered the carpenters to cut off the tops. After that, Ambe' Tasik's elder brother declared, 'I refuse to live here! Can a person walk with his head cut off?' He moved elsewhere, but the father took up residence in the newly completed house. However, he was constantly sick, until at last he too felt obliged to move, after which the house stood empty for thirty years. Another prohibition, or *pemali*, is on making the central room (*sali*) of a three-room house smaller than the others. Such a house is said to be *ri'pi'*, or 'small



A recently rebuilt *tongkonan* in Menduruk showing the dramatically projecting eaves typical of newer constructions, and a style of carving influenced by carpenters from Rantepao, 1999

in the middle', and those who live in it will always be ill or have bad luck. In Kesu' it is said that a door post must not run straight up to the roof, but must terminate at the overhead lintel. Otherwise it would be like a person with their arm stuck up in the air, with the lintel like an obstruction in the armpit, preventing free movement of the arm; again, bad results can be predicted for the occupants. Even Christians, I was told, dare not break these rules. However, they are most likely to be activated as explanations when things go wrong. Then people will question whether faults in construction might be responsible for their ill fortune, and take steps to correct things.

Over time, the power of the house accumulates as more life is lived in it and its association with the protective presence of the ancestors becomes stronger. In the end its timbers themselves come to share in this power, a perception which has both positive and negative aspects. In some areas it is customary, if a house is being rebuilt, to re-use some, or even just one, of the old timbers 'so that the embrace of the ancestors may remain strong' (*na matotok pangria to dolona*), and the continuity of well-being assured. On the other hand, some carpenters are wary of working with such old timbers, fearing that they may be too powerful and dislike being moved. In 1994, I was told about the rebuilding of a house in Kata, a neighbouring hamlet of Buttang. The owners planned to re-use some of the timbers from the old house, but the carpenter fell suddenly ill and died while he was still working on the house. His death was attributed to the powers of the old wood.

### *The house and the rapu*

The word *tongkonan* is derived from the verb *tongkon*, 'to sit' or 'to attend'; it is the place where members meet to discuss family affairs, attend ceremonies, or arrange for the upkeep of the house itself. In principle, everyone is connected to origin houses, whatever their rank – as Malle' of Malimbong put it, 'even the birds have their *tongkonan*'. But I also found that the word is commonly used in a more restricted sense, to refer only to the finely carved houses with their impressive curved roofs which in pre-colonial times had represented the political power of the nobility. It was sometimes claimed that the number of *tongkonan*, in this sense of ruling aristocratic houses, must have become fixed at some time in the past, and that there could be no new ones today. In Saluputti, people were sometimes offended if I referred to ordinary houses by the term *tongkonan*. Origin houses in the most general sense, regardless of rank, are most often called *banua pa'rapuan*, 'house of the *pa'rapuan*'. Those who trace descent from a common pair of ancestors are called the *rapu* or *pa'rapuan*. Although the primary meaning of *rapu* refers to the kinship grouping, Toraja frequently draw comparisons between the

group of descendants and a culm of bamboo (*tallang*), whose many, rapidly-growing stems sprout from a single clump. *Rapu tallang* denotes both a bamboo culm and an ideally large family group, multiplying and expanding like the bamboo. From the same root comes an adjective, *marapuan*, meaning 'having a great many descendants'. In Saluputti, the term *rapu* is used more commonly than *pa'rapuan*, though they are regarded as synonymous; *rapu* refers rather generally to kin. Depending on context, it may sometimes be used to refer to all the descendants of a *tongkonan*, sometimes to a group of siblings and their descendants. In other districts such as Kesu', the *rapu* was described as a branch of the *pa'rapuan*, though how these branches are defined depends entirely on context. In daily life, *rapu* are not much talked of and are of little relevance. They do not, for instance, form the basis for agricultural work groups, which are generally formed among neighbours. In a general way, the term *rapunta* ('[a member of] our *rapu*') may be used synonymously with *solata* (literally, 'one of us'), to indicate relatives within one's immediate circle, up to second or third cousins (though these terms can easily be extended to include more distant relatives, a tendency that will be further examined in the following chapter). Migrant Toraja, people pointed out, will tend to seek out members of the *rapu* to stay with, but this is really to say no more than that people look for kin of any description when they are in a strange place, and one man who had returned home after working for an oil company in Kalimantan described how any Toraja would call each other *solata* in that context.

Nooy-Palm (1979:22) has labeled the *pa'rapuan* 'a cognatic descent group or ramage', calling the *rapu* a 'sub-ramage'. Although the term 'ramage' was coined by Firth to describe kinship groupings in Tikopia, it is interesting to note that this was how he chose to translate the Tikopia term *paito*; but what *paito* literally means is 'house'. In the light of a new recognition of the potentials for analysis presented by the house as a social institution, we might well now wish that he had remained true to Tikopian terminology. In Tikopia, however, membership in either the mother's or the father's *paito* is restricted by criteria such as residence, so that while the system is clearly flexible it tends to produce a marked patrilineal bias. This does not accord with my experience of the Toraja system, which shows every evidence of a thorough-going bilaterality. I therefore find the term 'ramage' to be misleading, for it implies a more bounded and lineal grouping than is really the case.

*Rapu* in fact are contingent groups of no fixed composition or leadership. They are activated only on specific occasions: the arrangement of ceremonies, inheritance, or the rebuilding of a house. If it is a matter of inheritance, it must be decided who has the right to a share of property (and the consequent duty of making buffalo sacrifices during the deceased person's mortuary rites). When the decision is taken to rebuild an origin house, the descendants will

select one particular married couple at some point in their genealogy, and then all the children of that ancestral couple will be treated as heads of *rapu*. If one of these individuals has married twice, this will create two *rapu*, the descendants of each marriage being considered separately. The costs will then be divided between the descendants of each of these. For the rebuilding of large and important aristocratic houses, a point some generations back in the genealogy may be selected, in which case there may be hundreds of descendants from whom contributions can be collected. For smaller *banua pa'rapuan*, a group of siblings may manage a rebuilding project among themselves, treating themselves as heads of *rapu* and sharing the costs, with the help of contributions from their adult children. If there are too few siblings to make this feasible, they may go back a further generation in the genealogy and take their grandparents as a starting-point for the *rapu*, in order to draw in more distant cousins. On a future occasion, a different ancestral couple may be selected, changing the composition of the *rapu*. When Pattan, the *tongkonan layuk* of Uluvalu, was renewed in the early 1980s, a point five generations back in the genealogy of this house was selected. The complete genealogy has a depth of twenty-four generations, beginning with a grandson of the mythical Tamboro Langi'. The couple selected in this case, Napa' and Mandoa, were inhabiting the *tongkonan* at the time when the Dutch entered Toraja in 1906. Napa', an only child, was selected by the Dutch as *parengnge'* (chief) of Uluvalu, though her husband Mandoa, who was older than she and a cousin, carried out most of the functions of this office. The five children of Napa' and Mandoa were thus singled out as heads of *rapu*, and all their descendants were requested to help with the rebuilding. The complete genealogy shows a certain amount of 'shedding' or forgetting of the descendants of those who did not remain resident in the house, but clearly this process takes several generations to occur. Tracing just the direct line of *tongkonan* residents, who would have acted as family heads and political leaders, we find a total of nine women and thirteen men. The majority of these (seventeen out of twenty-two) were first-born children. Although this bias was not noticeable in other genealogies that I collected, my informant, Y.B. Tandirerung, suggested that age had given them some advantage over their siblings in establishing themselves in this role.

Ta'do, in Talion, is a house which has more recently achieved the status of *tongkonan* among its descendants, having been founded by the grandparents of the present occupant. This house was also rebuilt in the early 1980s. Indo' Rembon, who resides there, belongs to a sibling group comprising seven sisters and a brother, of whom she is the second youngest. It was she, however, who was responsible for the plan and who, over the course of repeated family meetings, succeeded in overcoming the initial reluctance of her siblings to undertake the expense of rebuilding. In this instance, the sibling group



treated themselves as heads of *rapu*, for all now have numerous children and grandchildren of their own. The carpenters were paid eight buffaloes for the construction of this house. In principle, costs are divided equally between the *rapu*, but considerable adjustments may be made to allow for the different numbers of people in each *rapu* and their relative ability to contribute. In this case, contributions were not demanded from the children of the eldest sister, already deceased. None were sufficiently well-off, and some were too young, to be able to contribute significantly. Since Indo' Rembon's family were the ones who would have the benefit of actually living in the house, it was agreed that she and her children would pay four buffaloes out of the total eight. She also paid for the materials. Sale of the wood from the old house brought two buffaloes, one of which was also put toward the cost. The remaining three buffaloes were paid by the other *rapu*, each of the other six surviving siblings paying half a buffalo each. Returning for a visit in 1982, I was able to witness the transformation of the small, old *tongkonan* in which I had often stayed previously into a fashionable modern house, a hybrid structure consisting of a spacious, square first storey in 'Bugis' style with large doors and louvred-glass windows, topped by a second storey shaped like the traditional *tongkonan*, with carved exterior, curved roof ridge and projecting eaves. At the rear, a concrete-floored kitchen, bathroom and toilet had been built on. Returning in 1994, I found two fine new rice barns had been built beside the house and preparations were in hand to hold a ritual to celebrate the completion of construction. We can trace here something of the process by which a house comes to attain the status of origin house for its descendants.

The pattern whereby the resident pays a larger share of the costs is common, especially for houses of moderate wealth or importance. It can also happen that virtually all the costs are met by a descendant who no longer lives in Tana Toraja at all, but who chooses this means of converting new wealth into status at home. That this is something still widely admired and expected in Tana Toraja is evidenced by the amount of rebuilding that is continually in process. Remoter members of the *pa'rapuan* may take less interest in the construction, but all have the right to attend the ensuing house ceremony (*mangrara banua*), publicly affirming their membership of the house by the gift of a sacrificial pig. Unlike funerals, where pigs and buffaloes are typically presented to the hosts by their affines, at the house ceremony the emphasis is on pigs in particular, and it is descendants of the house who bring them. In the case of very important *tongkonan*, to which many branch houses claim a link, the *rapu* groups attending the ceremony will be numerous; at least a hundred such groups attended the celebration of the rebuilding of *tongkonan* Nonongan, for instance, in 1983.

From the above description it will have become clear that there are many possibilities for the definition of *rapu*. There is no neat correlation between



any one house and a *rapu*, for the descendants of one *tongkonan* can be divided into many *rapu* at will. Conversely, a *rapu*, if defined as starting from a distant ancestor, might encompass several branch *tongkonan* of the original house. Any individual within the *rapu* as thus defined would belong to some but not all of those houses, since branch houses do not trace lateral ties with each other unless through intermarriage. On the other hand, it is also possible to 'enter a house' (*mentama tongkonan*), more than once, in other words, one may be able to trace a tie several times over with a single house if there has been repeated intermarriage between its descendants. This was the case at Pattan, whose genealogy features a number of cousin marriages, preferred in the past partly due to a desire to consolidate property within the family, and partly due to isolation. If the reader perhaps finds this system frustrating in its lack of clearly defined boundaries, it is interesting to note that Toraja themselves choose to see this precisely as a strength and not a weakness of their arrangements. One friend, recently involved in the reconstruction of a *tongkonan* in Kole, Malimbong, whose costs had been equally divided between ten *rapu*, commented that the bilateral tracing of ties to houses was the great advantage that Toraja had over peoples with unilineal systems, like the patrilineal Batak or the matrilineal Minangkabau of Sumatra. Toraja, he pointed out, could draw on so many people to help, including both the mother's and the father's side of the family; not only that, but spouses will also be sure to help each other out. This multiple membership in different houses is a distinctive feature of a highly flexible, and hence remarkably durable, system. That the house itself, as a physical structure, should be such a dramatic and unique feat of engineering makes it an obvious source of cultural pride and a convenient icon of ethnic identity. Where indigenous architectures in many parts of the Indonesian archipelago have proved to be perilously vulnerable to the forces of modernity, the renewal of Toraja *tongkonan* remains at present a vigorous tradition.

### *Hopes and dreams*

Once an origin house has been rebuilt, an inaugural ceremony (*mangrara banua*) must be held. *Mangrara* means literally 'to anoint with blood', the sacrifices made at the rite ensuring blessings for the house and its inhabitants. Since the house embodies and protects the lives of its descendants, and indeed as I have argued, will endure beyond them and thus offers them a kind of immortality, it is only natural that this ceremony should belong to the Rites of East, whose purpose is to celebrate life and fertility. These themes are expressed in it in a rather interesting way. In fact the house ceremony remains at present the one Rite of the East that is frequently staged. Like the funeral, it



A stack (*lappo'*) of recently harvested rice sheaves drying at the edge of the ricefield – an image of bounty that enters into *to minaa* Buttu's ritual verses for the blessing of a house, Tallung Lipu, 1994

has been adapted by Christians, who now substitute Christian prayers for the making of offerings and the traditional chants of the *to minaa*; it thus seems likely to survive, albeit in changed form, where the other rites of this category are being celebrated less and less frequently, and may well soon cease to be performed at all.

Like most other rites, this one has several levels, depending on the rank of the owners and the style of the house itself. Tato' Dena' listed six of them, from the humblest bamboo hut, said to represent the earliest effort at architecture and picturesquely termed *lantang to lumio* (literally 'a traveller's shelter'), to the *tongkonan layuk* or 'great origin house', those houses that were once the centres of power in a community and the dwelling places of ruling nobles. The consecration of each demands a slightly different chant, though he was not prepared to recite any of them in their entirety, outside of the proper context, since it would be dangerous to summon the deities and ancestors for nothing. He said that a newly married couple, according to tradition, ought to start their married life in a very simple house, and work up to the more elaborate house types (as far as their rank permitted) over time. In this way, the construction of a more solid house comes to embody the consolidation of the marriage over time. Each level involves a longer list of offerings to be made during the stages of construction, as well as on the final days of celebration. For the lower levels, mostly chickens are offered, but the offerings for the *tongkonan layuk* must be all of pigs, a minimum total of twelve. The top three levels also enjoy the privilege of beating the drum (*ma'gandang*), which for the *tongkonan layuk* will be beaten most frequently. It is not my intention to describe all these in detail, since an account has already been provided by Nooy-Palm (1979:246-52), while the part of the proceedings called *ma'bubung*, celebrating completion of the roof, has been described in Waterson (1990:127-9). What I want to do here is to draw attention to the expression of hopes for good fortune embodied in aspects of the rite, since this is a theme intrinsic to Rites of the East, which will emerge again as being of special significance in the greatest of all these rituals, the *ma'bua'*, described in Chapter XV.

The chant of consecration for the house, as outlined by Tato' Dena', first summons the deities (*deata*) and then the ancestors (*to dolo*) to be present. All the deities, from the three levels of the cosmos – the sky, the earth and under the earth – and from all points of the compass, as well as from the 'centre of the earth' (*tangana padang*) are called; likewise all the ancestors, from the first founders of the house until the most recently deceased. They are informed that the *aluk banua*, the rite for the house, is about to be performed. Then comes a part called *ma'sarrin* (literally, 'to sweep'), a cleansing of the community in which forgiveness is asked for any faults or breaches of the *aluk* which might cause misfortune to befall the participants or the members of



At the *ma'bua' pare* ritual, participating household heads offer cones of sticky rice, also called *lappo'* in imitation of rice stacks, at the centre of the ceremonial field, Kasimpo, Ma'kale, 1979



the house. Possible offences are listed, and then 'swept to the edge of the sky' (*disarrin lako randanna langi*), where they are poetically described as reaching a place on the horizon where rain can be seen falling from far away, in the uninhabited reaches of land beyond human habitation, where they will be spilt like rice into the navel of the earth, and thrown away into a bottomless abyss. The next part of the chant is named *ma'kadang tua*, 'to hook good fortune', as mangoes are plucked from high branches with a long hooked pole.<sup>19</sup> This, Tato' Dena' elaborated, was a form of *pelambean*, 'expectation' (of blessing and long life), in which a request is made to Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the heavens, in case anyone has had an ominous dream, that he should change it to have an auspicious meaning instead of a bad one. This process of finding alternative, auspicious meanings for dreams of apparently unfavourable content is called *ma'tetean bori* ('to mark out a boundary'). The chant continues with the consecration of a pig, which is reminded of its duty to do as its ancestors have always done, by allowing itself to be offered. The pig is then stabbed (*dito'bok*). As well as being a part of the chant, a real session of dream-interpretation will later be presided over by the *to minaa*, in which people will recount bad dreams and he will give them all positive meanings. I draw attention to this because *ma'tetean bori* is also a feature of the *ma'bua* rite, and seems to be a particular device used in both these important rites as a means to avert bad fortune. It is a ritual technique to ensure that the expressed desires (*pelambean*) for health, prosperity and fertility, which are the goal of all Rites of the East, shall come to pass.

Another *to minaa*, Ne' Buttu of Simbulan in Ulusalu, recited for me a prayer called *passonde-sonde*, which is uttered at the conclusion of the *ma'tetean bori* (Appendix A). By means of this prayer, members of the house and community are 'cooled' (*dipasakke*). In it, the house members are described as entering deep sleep together, in the darkest part of the night. The sleepers swim in an abundant sea (*tasik mapulu*), which in dream-imagery represents a fertile rice field full of water weeds and plants. They will dream of rows of standing stones on the sea shore, which represent the tall stacks of newly-harvested rice, called *patuku* or *lampo* (*lappo* in the dialect of Saluputti) which are made by the reapers on the rice field banks at harvest time:<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The house carving design called *pa'kadang* has a similar meaning.

<sup>20</sup> The poetic image of stones by the sea fascinated and puzzled me, until Tato' Dena' explained to me that menhirs or standing stones were meant. In a way this is curious, since these are in waking life so specifically associated with the *rante* or funeral ground, where they are erected as memorials to the aristocratic dead. But in the dream-imagery of the poem, we find a reversal of association, so that they now stand for the rice-stacks of a bountiful harvest, the ultimate image of plenty and well being.

<i>Batu ma'dandanan dio biring tasik</i>	Stones in a row at the edge of the sea
<i>Tindona patuku ma'dandan</i>	To dream of them means you will have rows of rice-stacks [beside the rice field]
<i>Sola lappo' sielongan</i>	And heaps of newly harvested rice all in a row

The prayer expresses the wish for an auspicious dream that will come to pass, bringing bounty to the house and its descendants. Exactly this imagery is repeated in the *ma'bua' pare*, acted out there in the making of tall cones of sticky rice, called *lappo'* because they too are intended to represent the hope of tall rice-stacks at harvest time. These are arranged in a long row on a special structure, a decorated bamboo platform called *panglamporan*, extending in a ring around the central mound of the ceremonial ground, which itself is termed the 'seed-bad' (*pa'mukkur*). The imagery of abundant harvests thus lies at the heart of the Rites of the East, and finds its expression here in the evocation of a dream of prosperity to be shared by all the descendants of the house.



## CHAPTER X

# Blood and bone

Recognition of kinship rests upon notions of shared substance, which are differently formulated from society to society. In this chapter, I show how Toraja conceptions of inherited substance are articulated with house membership, rights of inheritance, and the ceremonial obligations which both of these involve. The images used to speak of these things are revealing of how relationships and responsibilities are thought of, and hence of 'kinship' as an ideology shaping the social world within which people act.

Anthropological analyses of kinship have traditionally taken the system of terminology as a starting point. But the terminology of a cognatic system like that of the Toraja appears to be so simple that it can at best give only a very hazy impression of how kinship actually functions in everyday life. In practice, we find that how terms are actually used often bears little relation to genealogical reality. Rather than constructing formal models derived from terminology, then, I am concerned with what Bourdieu (1977:37) has called 'practical' as opposed to 'official' kinship. Kinship provides a set of ideas that carry moral force and which are put to tactical use in daily life (Bloch 1971b). Pursuing a similarly processual line of analysis, Benjamin (2004) proposes that kinship systems be thought of as providing distinctive modes of consciousness, which mediate people's actions in the world and shape group strategies and identities in subtle yet far-reaching ways. It has been repeatedly pointed out, too, that 'kinship', often essentialised in anthropology as the foundation of social organization, is often difficult to separate from other forms of relatedness, an argument recently re-explored by Carsten (2000). If control over land or other assets such as titles is important, economic considerations may powerfully influence an individual's strategies where kin and marriage relations are concerned. The non-genealogical extension of kin terms in the Toraja context does not function to assign people to particular categories, but rather is intended to convey a certain quality of behaviour; it is used with what Pitt-Rivers (1968:408) has called 'figurative' rather than 'fictive' intent. Rather than viewing 'kinship' as a bounded domain, a more processual approach to the actual uses of kin terms makes it easier to perceive where 'kinship' merges into other modes of thinking – those to do with precedence, rank or gender, for instance.

Approaches to Indonesian kinship systems have changed and developed radically since the early 1990s. Viewed in terms of an earlier concern with descent as an organizing principle, the societies that have bilateral systems (for example Malays, Javanese, and many Borneo and Sulawesi groups) were negatively judged in terms of absences, such as the lack of descent groups, while the systems of Sumatra and eastern Indonesia appeared to be riddled with inconsistencies because of the many different ways of tracing allegiances which give rise to 'descent groups' of highly irregular composition. In the effort to typologise, it has been problematic even to know how to label some of these societies; some Sumatran systems, in particular, have been subject to multiple and conflicting interpretations. Watson (1991), arguing the need for greater intellectual agility on the part of anthropologists, shows how Kerinci kinship can be interpreted as simultaneously cognatic and matrilineal, and warns against the predetermined and limited perspectives we may impose on ourselves in our enquiries when we apply labels and then work from them. However, as Reuter (1992:490) points out, he does not actually break away from these categories altogether, nor does he get as far as specifying the common features which might underlie such divergent categorizations and help us to make further sense of them. In my own work I have argued that what is needed is to return the focus to indigenous principles, themes and priorities. This offers us the opportunity to make sense of the apparent inconsistencies of these systems, and to see parallels even in systems whose surface features appear highly divergent. Reuter's reanalysis of Sumatran systems is a useful example of how profitable such an approach can be. Instead of seeing Sumatra as 'a fragmented image in the distorting mirrors of conventional kinship theory' (Reuter 1992:518), he is able to draw attention to many recurrent themes that show obvious parallels with eastern Indonesian alliance systems. These include a deep concern with origins, traced along 'pathways', the idea of a 'flow of life' interpreted sometimes into a historical sequence of marriages, and sometimes a historical route of migration and settlement, the use of such pathways and sequences to make claims of precedence, the contestation of these claims by means of alternative narratives, and the basing of status claims on closeness to a 'source'. He also notes the ubiquitous use of botanical idioms to represent kin relations, especially the diachronic relations between 'trunk' and 'tip', founder and branch settlements or houses, and the similarly prominent concern with topogeny or place names, intertwining with and sometimes replacing a concern with genealogy. His analysis argues strongly for a move away from an obsession with formal models (which have usually been presented in a synchronic, ahistorical manner) to a view of kinship as a historical succession of events, creating lines of precedence. The parallels with eastern Indonesia may not surprise us; what is far more remarkable is the ease with which one could extend his argument to show

how many of these themes are equally significant in a system like the Toraja one, which on the surface appears radically different. Underlying principles, then, create unifying threads between Indonesian kinship systems, while enabling the generation of many variant patterns.<sup>1</sup> In Sumatran systems, for instance, a unilineal principle is modified by the possibility of exercising alternative options in type of marriage, residence, and resulting allegiances to houses and groups of kin; in a bilateral system like the Toraja, the options are kept open to begin with. Where a patrilineal principle predominates, for instance, (as among the Batak and Besemah) one can prevent the dying out of a house in the absence of male descendants by having recourse to an in-marriage son-in-law; in a system like the Toraja one, the bilateral tracing of descent makes it practically impossible for a house to be left without descendants. The strength of this fresh approach to Indonesian kinship systems lies in its fuller engagement with indigenous concepts, making for a more accurate depiction of how they function, and are seen to function by the peoples themselves. One might perhaps fear that this concentration on indigenous categories could hinder generalization by leading us to become lost in the particularities of each case, but in fact, it is precisely this that, by revealing the underlying contours of shared themes and principles, is making it possible to move toward a new synthesis.

Whereas an older approach to kinship led anthropologists to see cognatic systems as uncomfortably 'amorphous', and to search in vain for group boundaries in the face of the unrestricted tracing of descent, I want specifically to argue that many of the apparent 'problems' of this type of system disappear once we see the house as the real focus of kinship organization. The idea of 'house societies', or more literally 'societies with houses' (*sociétés à maison*), was originally proposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1983, 1987) in his discussion of the kinship systems of the North-West Coast of North America, which had troubled an earlier generation of anthropologists by their apparently promiscuous application of contradictory principles. The implications of Lévi-Strauss' argument for Indonesian kinship systems in general, and the Toraja in particular, is a question which I have explored in detail in earlier work (Waterson 1986, 1990, 1995a, 1995b, 1997, 2003), and space prevents me from rehearsing the comparative arguments here; my intention is rather to convey how Toraja think about kinship substance and relationships. Let it suffice briefly to summarise Lévi-Strauss' insights. He proposed that societies where the house was the main focus of kinship organization might be found over a wide temporal and geographical span (including island South-East

<sup>1</sup> Fox (1985) already took an important step in this direction by showing how a variety of regional developments in kinship systems could be generated by means of fairly minor modifications in the same basic set of original Proto-Austronesian kin terms.

Asia, Melanesia and Polynesia as well as feudal Europe and Japan). Houses in such societies typically share a set of features: they are named; they are the possessors of both material and immaterial wealth (such as land, titles, heirlooms or ritual prerogatives); they must be perpetuated over time and not allowed to disappear, at least from memory; they may be elaborately decorated; and they are the sites for ceremonial performances. People trace their descent from house founders, but often in very irregular pathways utilizing both male and female ancestors. The continuity of the house and the transmission of its valuables is 'considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity and, most often, of both' (Lévi-Strauss 1983:174). In considering the potentials of the 'house society' concept for an understanding of Indonesian systems, I have argued that we must always take into account how far the 'house' is a salient category for people themselves. Slow as I was to arrive at this realization in my own fieldwork, once I did so, the interpretation of Toraja kinship as a house-focused system was irresistible. The tendency of Toraja to phrase relationships in terms of 'house' metaphors is particularly noticeable. It will be seen how kinship is always being put to use to trace connections with houses; conversely, connections through houses come to stand in for genealogical ties which have been forgotten.

#### *The inheritance of kinship substance*

When Toraja speak about kinship substance, they most often use the term *rara buku* ('blood [and] bone'). It is this shared substance that binds kin together, and many expressions exist to remind people that the bonds of blood and bone should never be denied, nor be allowed to break or wear out. On the contrary, they should preferably be reinforced through periodic marriages between suitably 'distant' cousins, which at the same time renew the connections between related houses of origin.

It accords with the bilateralism of Toraja kinship principles that *rara buku* was emphatically stated by all my informants to be indivisible and inherited equally, in an undifferentiated manner, from both mother and father. This point is of significance because, as has been shown by Lévi-Strauss (1969: 393-405), Leach (1961), Fox (1971a:245) and others, in a number of Asian societies bone and blood are symbolically differentiated as 'male' and 'female' substance respectively, bone being said to be inherited from the father at conception and blood or flesh from the mother. Lévi-Strauss proposed that these ideas appear in marked association with systems of generalized exchange, in which kin groups associated as bride-givers and bride-receivers only supply one of these substances to any particular partner group. In such cases

bone is commonly associated with the desired permanence of descent lines traced through males, while women exchanged in marriage provide the soft and perishable parts of the body. The creation of kinship substance may be as much a cultural as a natural process: Fox (1971a:245) notes that in Roti, bone is associated with the formation of social identity through the passing on of a genealogical name by the father, which depends on the payment of bridewealth just as much as on procreation itself; in the Trobriands, the perpetuation of matrilineal lines involves as much cultural as biological work on the part of women (Weiner 1978). The contrast between blood and bone is drawn in order to make symbolic statements about degrees of incorporation of the child into specific kin groups, or to express distinctions between concepts of incorporation and alliance. Of most immediate concern to us here are the numerous instances in eastern Indonesia in which an ideology of asymmetrical alliance occurs in conjunction with the concept of blood and bone as gendered substances, where the 'flow of life' (Fox 1980) is in essence the flow of female blood between houses, as women commonly move at marriage to produce new life for their husbands' houses.<sup>2</sup> Since no such groupings of bride-givers and bride-receivers are to be found in Toraja, it would in fact be surprising if blood and bone were sharply differentiated. We have seen already how individuals maintain multiple allegiances to different houses and at different moments may see themselves as part of different groupings of house descendants, while the membership groupings of particular houses also overlap each other.

Tato' Dena' gave the following account of conception and the development of the child in the womb, which clearly demonstrates the idea of men and women as basically similar beings, contributing equal amounts of equivalent substance to the formation of the foetus:

About this matter of the blood and bone: [at conception] the *elo'* (literally, 'spittle'; here used as a euphemism for 'sexual fluids') of our mother and father mingles together – because we begin as water (*uai*). And then we become solid (*makko*); we become complete, with all our fingers and toes (*sanda rangka'*), and we have breath/vitality (*ta kepenawa*). That is, we are completely formed, we *pandiu* (start to move in the womb so that the mother can feel it).

Although the father makes an initial contribution to the formation of bones in the foetus, the child ultimately derives more bone from the mother, because everything she eats and drinks in pregnancy continues to add to its substance. She eats cartilage (*buku mangura*) and hard things, so that the child will have

<sup>2</sup> Whether women actually move to the husband's house in practice may depend on the amount of bridewealth paid by the husband's family.

strong bones. However, the child will only be 'solid' if the father also assists its growth by having repeated intercourse with the mother and sleeping with her 'to keep her warm', like a hen sitting on her eggs. He must also avoid upsetting the mother or causing her grief (*saki penaa*), otherwise the child may be 'incomplete' (*tangganna*) or 'soft', that is, deformed (*longgo*). Both parents must also avoid laughing at deformed people, neither should they have sexual relations with anyone except the spouse, metaphorically described as 'crossing the irrigation ditch' (*ullamban kalo*). This close cultivation of the marital relationship, and its interweaving with the well-being of the child, suggests something of the intimate identification of parents and children which Benjamin (1994) also describes for the Temiar of peninsular Malaysia. The father is expected to be present at the birth of his child, often holding the mother from behind to support her while she squats in labour. It is his job to bury the placenta beside the house, and to take the birth cloths to the river to wash them. These are tasks which in some societies would be regarded as intensely polluting to men; the absence of any ideas of pollution associated with women's reproductive processes is indicative of the general muting of gender differences in Toraja society, about which I shall say more later. The bond between parents and child is further accentuated by teknonymy; if the first child is called Tanan, for instance, its parents will thereafter be known as Indo' Tanan ('mother of Tanan') and Ambe' Tanan ('father of Tanan'). When I questioned people about the possibility of seeing 'blood' and 'bone' as distinctively 'female' and 'male' substances, this was firmly denied; the reactions I received ranged from incomprehension to downright hilarity: 'Imagine, if your mother were all blood and your father were nothing but bones!'<sup>3</sup> All my Toraja acquaintances were agreed in asserting the indivisibility of *rara buku* as kinship substance.

Interestingly, this idea is carried over, I believe, in attitudes to the preservation of corpses. Just like many other Indonesian peoples, Toraja practise lengthy, two-stage funerals and attach great importance to the preservation of ancestral bones, but their practices differ from those of Borneo peoples classically described by Hertz (1960) in one interesting respect. In Borneo, the conversion of the dead into ancestors requires the literal separation of bone and flesh, for Hertz noted the importance attached to cleaning the bones of any

<sup>3</sup> I stress this point because Tsintjilonis (1999), on the basis of fieldwork done in the easterly district of Buntao', claims that people there do draw such a distinction. After widespread and repeated inquires I have been unable to receive any confirmation of this idea elsewhere in Toraja. In fact it was categorically denied, and most of my informants expressed disbelief at the possibility that any Toraja region could differ so fundamentally in its ideas. I remain puzzled by Tsintjilonis's data since it seems to stand in sharp contradiction to other principles of Toraja kinship.



soft parts, prior to wrapping them for secondary rites. This final separation of soft from hard body parts marks the completion of the process by which the newly dead (sometimes thought of as dangerous to the living) are transformed into beneficent ancestors. Though Toraja have traditionally shared the idea that the preservation of the bones, and their periodic rewrapping, is essential if one is to tap the powers of the ancestors, no attempt is made to clean the bones and thus separate them from remaining traces of flesh. This stands in marked contrast also to many of the examples discussed by Bloch and Parry (1982), where the gendered associations of 'bone' and 'flesh' recur. On one occasion in Malimbong, a neighbour had opened his family tomb to make repairs, because rain water had been leaking inside and damaging the wrappings of the corpses. He took the opportunity to rewrap the remains of each of the ancestors, which were laid out on a rock, including a certain amount of black substance along with the bones of each. He pointed out to me in a cheerful and familiar way his mother, recognizable by one of her bracelets; though the sight was a strange one to me, it reflects a down-to-earth attitude combined with a feeling of comfortable intimacy with the dead which I find to be characteristically Toraja. Each ancestor was to be rewrapped in a small mattress, then bound with cloths, so that the end result would resemble the bolster-like wrappings of the dead at the time of their funerals. Far from manifesting any desire to separate bones and flesh, then, there seemed, on the contrary, to be a concern to keep them together and to prevent any visible diminution of the ancestors' remaining substance. I see this as a further reflection of the idea of *rara buku* as unified kinship substance in life.

*The centrality of siblingship in the conceptualization of kin relations*

Like the Malays (Carsten 1997:109), Toraja consider other substances to be kinship-creating, too, notably breast-milk. A child who has been fostered and breast-fed (*disarak susu*) by a woman not her mother becomes like a sibling to her foster-mother's children, so that they cannot marry. They are 'siblings in the milk' (*to sisiunu' dio susu*), or 'paired by the milk' (*to dipasibali susu*). Siblingship has been described as the key relationship in the bilateral kinship systems of Southeast Asia, exceeding in organizational importance that between parent and child. McKinley (1981:344) defines Malay kinship as essentially structured from 'sibling sets', which provide powerful lateral connections between people, although if looked at in terms of descent the social organization 'seems rather amorphous'. Carsten (1997:108) similarly defines siblingship as the 'core relation' among the Malays of Langkawi. McKinley argues that anthropologists, in their insistence on using descent as an analytical category, for long overlooked the importance of indigenous ideas of siblingship, which

are actually their most distinctive feature. In such a system there are basically two categories, 'siblings' (kin) and strangers; in practical use the impulse is to include as many of one's relatives as possible within the sphere of 'siblings', to downplay precise degrees of difference (as between 'close' and 'distant' cousins) by calling them all 'siblings', and for even spouses to minimize the affinal quality of the relation between them by having the wife affectionately call her husband 'elder brother' while he calls her 'younger sister'.<sup>4</sup> It is also typical for genealogical memory to be rather shallow, so that precise genealogical links between those who recognize each other as 'siblings' are forgotten. Rather than looking up towards apical ancestors, a downward focus on children, accentuated by teknonymy, accentuates the rapidity with which affines become kin. As soon as a marriage produces children, in-laws become united by their shared interest in them, since the children have rights of inheritance from both sides of the family. In Philippine bilateral kindreds Yengoyan notes that, just as among the Iban, 'affinal kin in one generation become cognatic kin in the next' (Yengoyan 1973:169). Errington (1987) proposes that the same structure of 'generational layers' of sibling sets is typical of the bilateral kinship systems of western Indonesia generally. This results in a horizontal type of organization rather than one focused on vertical, descent-based groupings. In the more hierarchical of these societies, different rules may pertain for lower- and higher-ranking persons: the rules actively prevent commoners from marrying very close kin, while first-cousin marriages are a preferred form among the aristocracy, who desire to conserve both status and property. This is the case in Luwu', as in some parts of Toraja. Where conservation of rank is an overriding concern, aristocracies everywhere are faced with a choice between two opposing strategies: they can either consolidate by marrying a very close relative, or else they may have to search far away for a marriage partner drawn from the highest ranks of a neighbouring society – hence the historical pattern of intermarriage between royalties of different kingdoms, whether in Europe or South Sulawesi. Of course such marriages also play an essential role in the formation of political alliances. Errington (1987:424-8) discusses in some detail the marriage strategies of the Luwu' nobility, and specifically the political motivations for aristocrats to control the marriages of followers:

[T]he high core wants to ensure that its followers will not marry too close to each other in order to prevent the formation of large *rapu* ('clumps') of densely interconnected siblings. Such a clump of solidary relatives might challenge the central high core itself. At the same time, it does not want its followers to marry people outside the core's *kapolo*, for the children might be outside the high core's authority.

<sup>4</sup> See Haas (1969) and Banks (1974) for Thai, Burmese, Vietnamese and Malay examples.

The solution is to arrange matches between third or fourth cousins for these people, while the highest ranking nobles themselves may marry first cousins, or attempt to marry further into the centre defined by the ruler and his court. Ruling nobles in Toraja did not have the same degree of control over networks of followers and lesser relations, but it is doubtless significant that it was in the more hierarchical central and southern areas that they had adopted the practice of marrying first cousins, while at the same time prohibiting commoners from doing the same. Was this explicitly to prevent the strengthening of kinship groupings that might rise to threaten them, or to hinder the consolidation of property among their inferiors?

Errington (1987:429) draws attention to the theme, prominent in Luwu' as in Balinese myths, of an incestuous union between siblings, or better still twins, as representing an ideal of closeness – one which however is disallowed, or triggers catastrophic results. It follows that 'the spouse is mythically and ritually a substitute for the sibling', from whom one must part because of the incest taboo (Errington 1989:237). In Java, twins of opposite sex are called 'God-given spouses' (Robson 1987:516). Toraja also say that they are 'married in the womb'. We have already encountered this mythical theme in Toraja, in the story of Sawerigading and his sister. I was told it had happened once at Buntu Pune' in Kesu' that a pair of opposite-sex twins were really married to each other on the grounds that Puang Matua had already married them in the womb; but according to the account I was given (which I am unable to confirm), their offspring were abnormal.<sup>5</sup> The motif casts male and female not as radically different kinds of being, but as parts of the same primordial unity, who seek to reunite with each other – a theme widely echoed in Southeast Asian cosmologies. It also represents vividly the notion of siblingship as the ideal relation. This is reflected in real life in the reluctance to define others as non-kin, and in the underplaying of the affinal relation. This contrasts with those societies of eastern Indonesia where asymmetrical alliance is practised, and the relations between bride-givers and bride-receivers are correspondingly central and clearly defined.

In practical use, sibling terms can convey a variety of information. The possibility for simultaneous expression of both affection and a degree of age-related hierarchy, where terms distinguish between older and younger, is one noted for the Malays but underplayed or ignored in Toraja, where distinctions on the basis of either age or gender are generally muted. Figuratively speaking, sibling terms stress an ideal closeness of relationship and the sort of cooperation and affection expected within it. *Mata malotong na mata mabusa*

<sup>5</sup> The person who told me this came from a more northerly area, where even first cousin marriages are strongly disapproved of. His report clearly reflects the ambivalence that surrounds this theme.

*tae' na bisa dipasisala* ('the black [iris] and the white of the eye cannot be separated') expresses this ideal of sibling solidarity. However, closeness can also mean competition and rivalry, and hence, sibling relationships are always likely to have an ambiguous quality about them. The desire to include large numbers of people in the 'sibling' category is a way of emphasizing the positive moral qualities of the relationship; but Toraja are perfectly well aware that real siblings are likely to feel competitive, rarely work together, and may fight over issues of inheritance. *Sisarak tau do ampang* – 'people part from each other on the threshold' – is a saying, typically and appropriately cast in a 'house' idiom, which signifies the reality that siblings have their own fortunes to seek, and that if they become the founders of new houses, only their direct lineal descendants will have rights in these.<sup>6</sup>

In Toraja, cousins are included in the category of 'siblings' (*siunu'* or *siulu'*), or of *solata*, 'one of us'. Within Toraja, *solata* refers to one's relatives, as opposed to 'others' (*to senga'*); outside of Toraja, any fellow-Torajan automatically becomes *solata*. It is possible to distinguish full siblings by the use of another term, common especially in the Sangalla' region. This is *sile'to*, from *le'to*, 'to split' (as, for example, firewood); *sile'to* has the sense of two halves split from a single whole.<sup>7</sup> In Saluputti, *sirondong*, meaning 'close together', is more often used for full siblings, freeing *siunu'* to be used as a term for cousins or relatives in general. Even so, first cousins were often called *sirondong* as well. Rather than having fixed meanings, these terms seem to have constantly shifting referents. The effect is that precise degrees of collateral relationship are masked, in favour of creating an ideally seamless 'web of kinship', in which as many people as possible can be included in an undifferentiated way. Should one mistakenly suggest to a person that his kin tie is more distant than it really is, he might reproach one with the words: *muserekki raraku*, 'you are tearing my blood', implying that a split is being made in something which should be continuous. There is a word for cousins (*sampu*), who can also be distinguished by degree as first, second, third etcetera (*sampu pissan*, *penduan*, *pentallun*), but in practice there is an aversion to using these terms.

<sup>6</sup> Compare Banks (1974:62) on Malay efforts to avoid putting too much pressure on the ideally intimate relations between kin, and Li (1989:8, 81) on the expectations among Singapore Malays that kinship sentiment cannot be taken for granted, and that siblings will pursue separate futures.

<sup>7</sup> Tammu and Van der Veen (1972:309) give the expressions *sirondong lan mai tambuk* ('together in the womb') and *sile'to loloku* ('split from my [that is, from the same] umbilical cord') (1972:489). The latter echoes Malay ideas that the placenta is somehow mystically the same one for all the children of a single mother (McKinley 1981:372; compare Volkman 1985:50). Other terms for siblingship which refer to the umbilical chord are *renden lolo* ('led by the [same] umbilical chord', as a buffalo is led by a rope) and *polo lolo*, which again implies the idea of sections 'cut from [the same] umbilical chord'.

To inquire, as I did, about precise degrees of cousinship was considered disagreeable and rude.<sup>8</sup>

My inquiries were prompted by curiosity about how many people had actually married cousins. The general rule prohibits marriage with close cousins, up to and including third cousins. The prohibition could be circumvented by making a propitiatory offering, but in most parts of Toraja I found that violations of this rule, particularly by first cousins, still provoked strong feelings. It was only the nobility of the most hierarchical areas, Kesu' and the Tallu Lembangna, who had made themselves an exception to this rule. Here, the marriage of first cousins is a strategy which has for long been followed as a means of preventing the dispersal of property. 'Distant' cousins (*sampu mambela*), on the other hand, are very much preferred as spouses. But, given the general haziness of genealogical memory, I was puzzled as to how people could know who such distant cousins were. There is no term to distinguish marriageable from unmarriageable cousins, any more than there is for cross or parallel cousins; on the contrary, they were usually being classed with siblings anyway. Most people said that their parents told them who their cousins were, especially when they met at funerals or other ceremonies. But still, precise genealogical ties are rarely recalled. In my household survey of five neighbouring villages in *desa* Malimbong, I nonetheless found a high percentage of these preferred marriages. Out of a total of 61 marriages, only 5 (8%) were between third cousins or closer; 29 (48%) were between people describing themselves as 'distant' (fourth cousins or beyond); while 27 (44%) were not related. In only one of the five marriages between 'close' cousins was the relationship closer than that of third cousins – in this case the couple were second cousins, though the husband (anxious, apparently, to downplay a too close relation) initially claimed that they were third cousins. Only four out of the 29 who were 'distantly' related could actually specify the degree of cousinship between them, still less trace the genealogical links between them. Instead, they said that they were 'siblings within the house' (*siunu' lan tongkonan*), or that 'their *tongkonan* joined' (*sikande tongkonan*), and all could name the houses that they had in common. It is houses that are remembered and serve to anchor relationships, filling the gaps left by lapses in genealogical memory even when a precise kin tie can no longer be traced. Once I had learned to ask about houses, people were no longer offended by my questions, but were happy to explain their relations in the way that they saw as appropriate.

<sup>8</sup> A similar attitude is recorded by Banks (1974:63) for the Malays of Kedah, by Kemp (1983:86) for central Thailand, and by Bloch (1971b:81) for the Merina of Madagascar. In all these examples, kin terms are often extended to those with whom exact links may be unknown, and any denial of kinship is felt to be implicitly rude and hostile.

*Fractions of kinship substance*

A most distinctive way of talking about kinship in Toraja is to treat descending generations as fractions of an original whole. Just as in the myth of Londong di Rura, Puang Matua split the betel nut into fractions to indicate different degrees of lateral relationship, so descending generations may also be talked about as fractions. Children are thus referred to as *sangtanga* or 'a half', grandchildren as *sangtepo* or 'a quarter', great-grandchildren *sangleso* or *sangdaluk*, 'an eighth'. Thus the expression *sangtepo sangdaluk*, 'grandchildren and great-grandchildren', has the general sense of 'one's descendants'. What we have here is an ego-centred way of talking about kinship as divisible fractions of inherited substance. It is not only the *rara buku* itself that is inherited thus, but also shared rights and responsibilities in origin houses, and potentially in inheritance. Everybody has *a'pa' tepona, karua lesona*, 'four quarters and eight eighths', in both ascending generations (one's grandparents and great-grandparents) and descending generations (one's grandchildren and great-grandchildren).<sup>9</sup> One can begin to see why one Toraja man proposed that kinship could be thought of as a 'square', in which one could trace four ascending and descending generations from Ego, and four degrees of 'siblingship' laterally, from full sibs to third cousins. Of course this is not exactly the extent of ties in practice, for we have seen that lateral acknowledgement of more distant cousins is a desired feature (and ties with them may in practice be close, if for instance they live close by), while people often cannot name any ancestors beyond their grandparents and but rarely live to see their great-great-grandchildren. Still, I am struck by how closely this imagery aligns with the diagram of the Malay kindred produced by McKinley (1981:347), which also shows a set of nesting squares depicting the kindred as built up from sets of past sibling ties. This essentially ego-centred and symmetrical image lies at the core of Toraja kinship ideas, even though other images have their uses in particular contexts, whether it be the upward-looking genealogical concern with ancestors, or the downward-looking emphasis produced by teknonymy and the rules of inheritance.

Tato' Dena' used the same imagery of fractions of substance when I asked him how many *tongkonan* a person has. His explanation also shed light on the degree of responsibility one has to a house, depending on the closeness of the relationship. The relationship to one's parents' and grandparents' houses of origin will be the closest, and these are thought of respectively as 'a half' (*dipiak tallang*, literally, 'split in half like a bamboo') and 'a quarter' (*ditepo*

<sup>9</sup> Compare Watson's (1991:69) description of the stress on cognatic modes of reckoning in south Kerinci, which people express in terms of their descent from 'four grandparents and eight great-grandparents'.



Diagram 1. Toraja kinship terminology

Generation	
+5	<i>nene' todoan</i> (great-great-great-grandparent; <i>todo</i> = 'to touch')
+4	<i>nene' salembé'</i> (greatgreat-grandparent; <i>salembé'</i> = (1) 'to trip' (2) 'ankle')
+3	<i>nene' guntu'</i> (great-grandparent; <i>guntu'</i> = 'knee')
+2	<i>nene'</i> ( <i>nene' mammi'</i> ) (grandparent; <i>mammi'</i> = 'delicious')
+1	<i>ambe'</i> (father) <i>pa'amberan (ambe' ure)</i> (uncle)
	<i>indo'</i> (mother) <i>pa'indoran (indo' ure)</i> (aunt)
(EGO) 0	<i>kaka'</i> (older sibling) <i>sampu pissan</i> (first cousin)
	<i>adi'</i> (younger sibling) <i>sampu penduan</i> (second cousin)
	<i>sampu pentallun</i> (third cousin), etcetera
	<i>siunu', siulu', sile'to</i> (siblings)
-1	<i>anak</i> (child) <i>pa'anakan (anak ure)</i> (nephew, niece)
-2	<i>ampo (ampo mammi')</i> (grandchild)
-3	<i>ampo guntu'</i> (great-grandchild)
-4	<i>ampo salembé'</i> (great-great-grandchild)
-5	<i>ampo todoan</i> (great-great-great-grandchild)

Additional terms: *sangrapu* ('of one *rapu'*) } = kin

*solata* ('one of us')

*rampean* = affines

*to matusa* = parents-in-law

*menintu* = daughter-in-law

*ipa'* = brother/sister-in-law

*sanglalan* ('one path') = Husband's brother's wife (HBW); wife's  
sister's husband (WZH)

*baisen* = parent of child's spouse (term used by parents-in-law to  
address each other)

*anak poro'* = stepchild

*ambe' poro'* = stepfather

*indo' poro'* = stepmother

*muane (ambe' anakku)* = husband ('father of my children')

*baine (indo' anakku)* = wife ('mother of my children')

The terms *muane* and *baine* mean literally, 'man' and 'woman', and although they can also be used for the spouse, the latter, more indirect terms are considered more polite since they focus attention upon the parental role rather than the sexual relation between spouses.

*a'pa'*); One has only an eighth (*dilesa karua*) of substance and corresponding responsibility toward the *tongkonan* of one's great-grandparents, though one is likely to attend their house ceremonies; and one sixteenth (*didaluk sangpu-loannan*) of a connection to the houses of one's great-great-grandparents. To these houses one is unlikely to maintain a close relationship unless one happens to be living in one of them. If it is a very important origin house, people are more likely still to be able to trace such a tie; if a lesser one, they may no

longer have knowledge of these houses. Hypothetically, one might even be able to trace one thirty-second of a relationship (*dibidang tallupulodua*) to the houses of one's great-great-grandparents. This is not to mention the origin houses of one's spouse, to which in practice one will also be making ceremonial contributions.

Diagram 1 illustrates the features of Toraja kinship terminology. The terminology is basically generational, with no distinction made between cross and parallel cousins. There is a strong tendency to extend immediate kin terms – father, mother, grandparent, sibling, child, grandchild – to all relatives as well as to unrelated people in the appropriate generation, merging everyone of the appropriate status into a single category, or at most, two categories distinguished only by gender. Although the terms for siblings, as in other Indonesian languages, differentiate older/younger siblings (*kaka'/'adi'*) rather than by gender, there is notably less stress on birth order and sibling hierarchy than is typical among the Malays (Carsten 1997:85-7). In fact, people tend to stress that older and younger siblings are 'the same'. Even the placenta, as mystical sibling, is not described as a 'younger' sibling, as among the Malays (Carsten 1997:83), or an 'older' one, as among the Makassar (Gibson 1995:136), but only as *siulu'*, or as being 'born at the same time' (*sangbara'/'pada dadinna*) as the child. It is noticeable that the terms for the more distant ascending and descending generations employ the organic, symmetrical imagery of the joints of the body as a measure of distance.

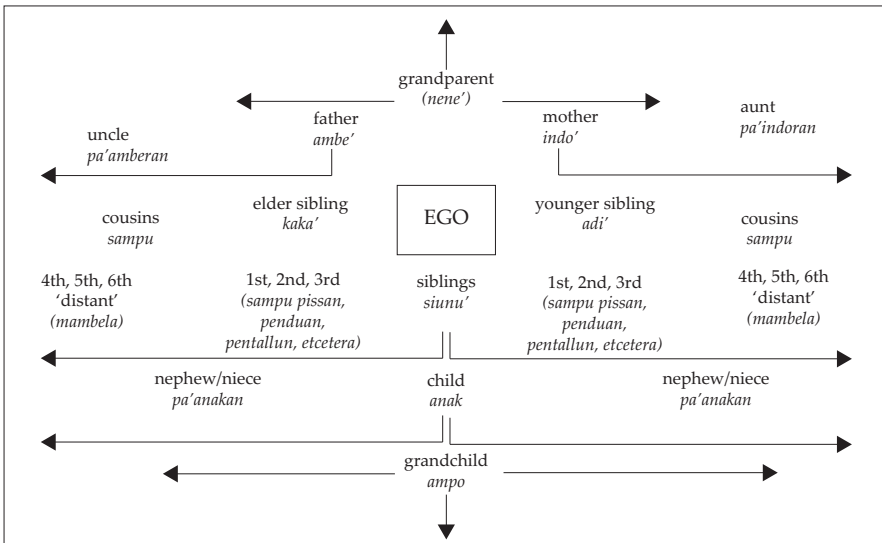


Diagram 2. The extension of kin terms

Tracing kinship in terms of fractions of shared substance is a technique that can be used by extension to express rights in houses or property. Heritable rights and duties are divisible over generations in just the same way as *rara buku* is. Rights can also be doubled: for instance, if cousins from the same *tongkonan* marry, their children have rights 'twice', that is, through each of them, in that house. If they want to they may pay a double share of the expense when the house is being rebuilt – a move which would have the effect of tightening their link to that *tongkonan*, and increasing their prestige and influence within the *pa'rapuan*.

In the context of inheritance, we encounter a distinctive pair of terms, *sarume* and *solong*, which can be used deliberately to draw a distinction between 'immediate' and 'distant' relatives. Once again the imagery is botanical. *Solong* means the tough outer leaf which surrounds the young areca nut. As the nut ripens the *solong* falls off and the delicate inner leaf, the *sarume*, is seen. When a person dies, his or her children and grandchildren are termed *sarume*, and have the right to inherit property, while more distant relatives, the dead person's siblings and their children, are called *solong*. If a person dies childless, then his or her siblings and their children are treated as *sarume* and have the right to compete, by their funeral sacrifices, for the inheritance, while more distant kin still become the *solong*. Even more than the word *rapu*, these terms, which contingently emphasize boundaries and differences within the kinship grouping, are strictly context-bound.

A similar principle determines rights in *tongkonan*. Suppose, for example, that in a group of four siblings, one becomes wealthy and builds a fine house. Only his or her own children and grandchildren will consider the house 'theirs'. The other siblings and their children have no duty to contribute to its maintenance, nor do they have the right to attend its ceremonies. Shares of meat at ceremonies would not be expected to pass laterally from their houses to his. But if a descendant of one of our four siblings were to marry a descendant of the house founder, then a tie is created, for the children of this marriage will automatically acquire rights in the houses of both their parents. Since there is such a strong preference for cousin marriages, this in fact happens quite frequently. This sort of marriage is called *sule langan banua*, 'to return to the house' ('house' here having the sense of *tongkonan*). Other 'house' idioms recur in talking of matches between cousins. Casual sexual relations are strongly disapproved of in this context. One must not 'go in at the back of the house' (*umpalao pollo' banua*) or 'go through the window' (*unnola pentiroan*), like a lover visiting secretly at night. Instead one must make a formal proposal, or 'erect a stairway' (*umpatendenni eran*), as a go-between, who comes bearing betel nut to initiate a marriage proposal, comes up the front steps of the house.

*From siblings to affines, and back again*

When kinship terms like *siunu'* are used inclusively, they carry the moral force of a desire to include as many people as possible within the ideally seamless web of kinship. But there are times when this principle is put to the test, for inevitably there are moments when distinctions do have to be drawn. Some of these moments have to do with deciding rights in houses and land. Others have to do with the question of affinity. When a marriage proposal is received from a cousin, people are forced to stop emphasizing their siblingship and redefine themselves as potential affines. But this punctuation of the ideal continuity of *siunu'* relations is only brief. Once the marriage has taken place, the couple is said to have 'returned to the house', and their consanguineal tie within the shared house of origin is re-emphasized, strengthened now by the new bond of marriage. Even a marriage between very distant cousins makes the link very close again; this is called 'renewing the blood and bones' (*umbakarui rara na buku*), or 'uniting the blood, uniting the bones' (*umpamesa' rara, umpamesa' buku*). Y.B. Tandirerung, remarking on the propensity of noble families to favour very close marriages, even between first or second cousins, for the sake of consolidating property, described the offerings made to appease the deities in such cases as 'tying together the blood and bones' (*unnuppu' rara, unnuppu' buku*). When this rite is performed, two priests (*to minaa*) perform a chant and make the couple swear an oath not to take the marriage lightly. As mentioned above, the aristocracy, having given themselves this latitude, appear to have had an interest in ensuring that their example was not followed by commoners; according to Tandirerung, drowning or exile were the penalties, in the past, for any commoners who married relatives closer than a third cousin – as severe as the penalties for a woman marrying someone of a lower rank. Some people still expressed strong feelings about first cousin marriage as a transgression inviting supernatural retribution. For Pak Kila', such a relationship was unnatural not least because it would turn siblings into parents-in-law (*baisen*), the closest of relationships into something more distant. 'How can siblings become *baisen*?' he exclaimed, 'What will they call each other? What will they say to each other?' This would seem to be a movement in the wrong direction, against the normal progression that transforms affines into kin. That transformation is expressed in another saying, in which the emphasis lies on the uniting of a couple through their children, who share their substance and who inherit rights and land from both of them. *To sianak tae' na ma'din dipasisarak* ('people who have had children together cannot be separated') does not mean that a couple cannot divorce, but that the rights of their children cannot be denied. Indo' Rapu', a woman from Ma'kale, cited this saying in discussing the possibility of a marriage between ranks. The children of such a union, she commented, could not be denied the right

to be buried in the family tomb (*liang*) of the higher-ranking parent. Note the identification here between 'blood and bone' and its entailments of rank and inheritance; shared substance means shared rights as well.

Once cousins are wed, there is a particular concern about the possibly disruptive consequences of a divorce, when hurt pride, it is feared, might cause a distressing rupture in the newly strengthened kin tie. This is expressed as a fear that the blood and bones might be divided (*dipasisala*), smashed (*poka*) or destroyed (*disanggang*). This may even be used as an excuse politely to turn down a marriage proposal from a relative. Then people may say: 'Don't let us allow the blood and bones to be broken' (*Da' la poka rara, la poka buku*). They might also turn away such a proposal by saying obliquely that 'siblingship wins out over marriage' (*patalo kasiunuran na iatu kasibalian*). This is indeed what must happen if a marriage between cousins does fail; then the relationship must be once again rethought, and must return to being one of siblingship as it was in the beginning, if the offended feelings of the two families are not to cause a serious rift between them. Then people must 'take each other as siblings [once again]' (*siala siunu*). In the overall picture of Toraja kinship, then, the dominant theme is the ties between those who share the substance of 'blood and bone'. Inevitably, this continuity is punctuated periodically by those brief moments when affinal ties must be stressed. The clear idea that marriage should be exogamous (beyond the range of 'close' cousins) coexists with the deliberate blurring of degrees of cousinhood, and the absence of any clearly defined groups of the 'marriageable' and the 'unmarriageable'. In this sense Toraja ideas contrast most markedly with the ideologies of eastern Indonesian asymmetrical marriage systems.

Talk of relationships constantly refers back to the focus of links between houses, and in practice, ties are acted out through the maintaining of ceremonial obligations to houses. There are, as Toraja put it, two ways in which one may be linked with houses – either by blood or marriage. One is referred to as 'crossing the bridge of blood' (*ma'tetean rara*) and the other as the 'bridge of the birth of children' (*tete ma'dadian bati*). Affines in general are termed *rampean* (*rampe*: 'side', 'party'; roughly, 'those of the [other] side'). Links formed by marriage, tenuous at first, grow stronger once children are born, because the children automatically inherit rights in the houses of both parents. Then husband and wife will be drawn into closer relations with each other's houses of origin. When two people marry, they are said to exchange parents (*sisulle to matua*). The expression *basse situka*, 'exchanged promises' (*basse* can also mean a sacred oath), signifies both the gaining of an extra set of parents, and the adoption of ceremonial responsibilities toward one's affinal relations. It is, in fact, in the context of ceremonial exchanges that these relationships are largely expressed. Great stress is laid on the ideal of balancing one's attentions to father's and mother's side, and of duties to affines with the mainte-

nance of ties to one's own houses. These ties are not just taken for granted, but require to be publicly upheld and demonstrated through participation in rituals, and the giving and receiving of pigs and buffaloes which these involve. Failure to attend ceremonies will cause the blood and bone to snap (*ka'tu*) like a broken thread, or to be worn out (*malusa*), like an old cloth which after too many washings tears easily. Ceremonial participation must therefore be seen as not merely a reflection of already existing relations, but as part of their very substance. They are not only a means to make visible statements about relationships, but help to constitute those relationships and keep them alive. For affines, ceremonial duties are even more crucial to the relationship, for it is they in particular who are required to demonstrate sympathy at funerals by the presentation of sacrificial livestock. Most of the huge numbers of guests at funerals are there because they are related affinally to the hosts. Their spouses' siblings, in particular, bring large groups of their own villagers with them. Each gift of a pig or buffalo by an affine to a relative of the deceased becomes a debt which he or she must eventually repay with an equivalent animal at some later ceremony. Thus an endless series of pairs of credits and debts is created.

A person's interest in the houses of a spouse is also demonstrated in the effort which is often put in to repairing or renewing a house. Given the marked preference for uxorilocality in Toraja, it will often happen that a man puts his energies into rebuilding a house that belongs to his wife. If he and his wife are actually resident in the house, it is in their interest to do so. Of the 61 couples in my household survey, 45 (74%) resided in the wife's house, or a house belonging to her family, not necessarily in her village of birth; 16 (26%) lived in the husband's house or a house of his family. A man will also contribute toward the rebuilding of his own family's *tongkonan*, though if he is non-resident, his share of the expenses may be correspondingly smaller. Once the marriage has children, the interest in a spouse's origin houses becomes permanent. A childless person retains no interest in the houses of a spouse after divorce or death, whereas those who have children may continue to attend each other's ceremonies, because of their children, even after a separation.

An image of symmetrical and reciprocal relations between in-laws is enhanced by the singling out of two relationships which are given special terms. The parents of spouses call each other *baisen*, a term which corresponds to Malay and Javanese *bisan* or *besan*.<sup>10</sup> A couple's parents ought to be friendly, and may develop exchange relations with each other. They are linked, initially, by an event which will take place in the future: the birth of

<sup>10</sup> Carsten 1991, 1997:220; Robson 1987:514. The same relation in Bali is termed *warang* (H. and C. Geertz 1975:171); Kemp (1983:86) also notes the existence of a term for the relation between parents-in-law in central Thai terminologies.



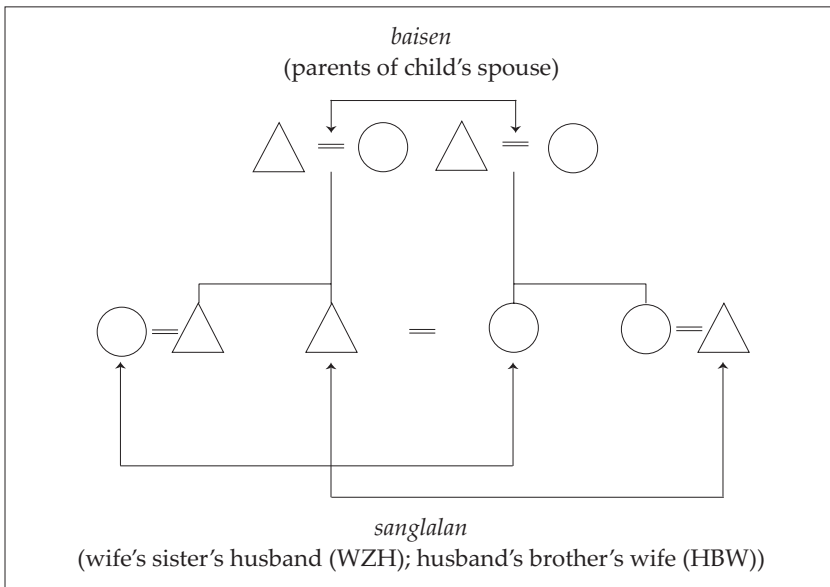


Diagram 3. Reciprocal ties between affines

children, who will eventually inherit from both of them. As with teknonymy, there is here a downward-looking attitude to descent rather than one which is ancestor-focused. This mutual interest in their grandchildren, over time, really may give rise to a close relationship, whose typical expression is the initiating of a ceremonial exchange; one friend explained how, since the birth of his grandchildren, his relations with his *baisen* had become warmer: they had brought a pig to his house ceremony, and later, he had reciprocated by taking one to theirs. Others noted that, in the case of a marriage between people of different ranks, the lower-status parents-in-law were likely to be more diligent in bringing pigs to the ceremonies of the higher-ranking, resulting in a flow of wealth toward the wealthy. A second affinal relationship which has a special designation is that of a person to the WZH or HBW (see Diagram 3). This is called *sanglalan* or 'one path'.<sup>11</sup> The closeness of this relationship is left very much up to the individuals themselves, but again, the tendency is to express it in the form of ceremonial attendances and obligations. Where

<sup>11</sup> A special term for this relationship is also found in Malay, where the spouse's sibling's spouse is termed *biras* (Carsten 1997:238); in Javanese the term is *pripean* (Robson 1987:514). Among Langkawi Malays, the relation is likely to become especially intimate between female co-parents-in-law, who are often closely involved in the rearing of their grandchildren.

one party is wealthier or more influential than the other, the *sanglalan* tie may even be cultivated as a useful connection by both sides, the lower status party being especially diligent in lending his attendance at ceremonies. As with the rest of the kinship terminology, *baisen* and *sanglalan* do not define any group or category of affines; what they express is a symmetrical and reciprocal relation whose focus is a married couple (and their children). Ultimately, what links the *sanglalan* is probably the same as the mutual interest between *baisen*, namely, a concern with inheritance: their marriages give them access to land which may be inherited by their spouses and eventually passed to their children.

Affines, all the same, cannot remain affines for very long, given that with the birth of children, who inherit rights on both sides of the family, affinal ties become transmuted back into bonds of 'blood and bone'. Significantly, the shift is expressed yet again through the ceremonial context. At funerals, pigs presented by fellow-members of the *pa'rapuan* are called *petuwaran*, a 'pouring out' of their feelings for the deceased, with whom they share the ties of 'blood and bone'. They are not regarded crudely as debts, although in the long run they should be repaid. Affinal prestations to the hosts, on the other hand, are called *pamulle*. A gift in the *pamulle* category is more directly calculated as a debt, and requires a reciprocal transaction; it must be repaid by an animal of equivalent size at a future rite held by the giver. Rather than a long chain of credits and debts, then, a sequence of paired transactions may follow each other over time, with the next gift initiating a new pair of events. But depending on the intensity of relations, and the chance occurrence of funerals providing suitable occasions for repayment, the time lag between prestation and counter-prestition can be quite long, with the result that children generally inherit a certain number of unpaid debts from their parents. When I questioned people closely about the point at which affinal relations can be said to be converted back into ties of 'blood and bone', they explained that for the children of a marriage, a debt pair must be paid off first, before *pamulle* relations are converted back into *petuwaran*. Once again, then, the substance of relations is seen to be bound up in the economic transactions that are an integral part of ceremonial life.

As we have seen, the expressed preference for marriage with 'distant' cousins is matched in my data by a clear statistical preference. Of course, within the radius of the local community, where people have a large number of kin, the chances of marrying someone who is related are rather high. Parents make sure to introduce children to their cousins at ceremonies, so that they know who they are, but it can also happen that two people discover an attraction first, and then search out the links between them, finding that they are related. There are, however, some clearly stated strategic reasons for this preference, which chiefly have to do with the ceremonial commitments that

are created between affines. First, people say if the potential spouse is related, one can more easily find out about the person and his family, or one already knows them. But more importantly, when a marriage takes place within the *pa'rapuan*, competition in the creation of ceremonial debts and credits will be minimized. Especially in Salputti, people emphasize the fact that within the *pa'rapuan*, 'we don't calculate', or 'we don't force each other' (*tae' tasitukka'*). They feel united by their shared blood ties and common interests, and will not be too exacting on one another. One will refrain, for instance, from showing too much concern about the exact size of a pig or buffalo being repaid, or putting pressure on others for rapid repayment of debts; and if someone really cannot find a pig for a ceremony, but comes 'only to sit' (*no'ko' bang*), just 'holding their armpits' (*ma'koko kalepak*), or arrives 'bringing only their buttocks' (*sae bang umbaa pollo'na*), relatives will be understanding and will not shame them. Between two unrelated families, on the other hand, competition can be very intense, the more so if they come from different areas, and the resulting expenditure is likely to be correspondingly burdensome. Those who have married into a family from a different region of Toraja may often be heard to complain about the demanding, arrogant attitudes of their in-laws, and the risk of one family shaming the other in public is a source of anxiety. Many people today feel pressed by the question of how to curb ritual expenditure. Those with limited resources would often prefer to be able to spend what they have on educating their children, giving them a chance to improve their circumstances. Large families put pressure on ever dwindling shares of rice land, making it impossible for all children to make a living from farming, so most families today hope to have at least one migrant member whose remittances will help to make ends meet at home. In some regions, especially in the north where the steep slopes of Mount Sesean limit the amount of cultivable land, nearly all young people have left their villages (Volkman 1985:134).

If there are political and economic reasons why people should traditionally have preferred to marry neither too close, nor too far away, today another option presents itself. This is to marry someone from outside Toraja altogether. In the past, as we have seen, travel was difficult and dangerous; within the modern nation state, the possibilities for movement are numerous, and the chances of meeting people of other ethnicities correspondingly higher. Several people pointed out to me the manifest advantages of this strategy. An educated spouse with good job prospects in another part of the archipelago means enhanced living standards and a wider network of contacts outside of Tana Toraja itself. Today here, as elsewhere, the educated prefer each other as spouses. One man even suggested that the old restrictions on marriage between ranks, which prohibited a woman from marrying down, had been replaced by a new, educational hierarchy. Like the slaves of

the past, the illiterate were on the bottom rung of this ladder, while university graduates formed the new *élite*. The suddenness of social changes related to increased mobility was very noticeable in some genealogies that I collected; people whose parents had been among the first in their communities to travel and work outside of Toraja during the colonial period, had themselves almost all married non-Toraja, often people met while studying in other parts of Indonesia. Members of other ethnic groups sometimes express reservations about marrying a Toraja: by doing so, one becomes involved in ceremonial life and then will never be out of debt. But for Toraja, acquiring non-Toraja affines can be the most effective means to reduce one's exposure in the ritual economy, for they will not be participating in the system from which it is otherwise so difficult to extricate oneself. This willingness to accept complete outsiders as suitable, even especially desirable, marriage partners, shows the strategic 'inclusiveness' of kinship ideology being put to use in new ways to meet the changed circumstances of modern times. At the same time, as Kalimantan has become a favoured destination for young Toraja migrants of both sexes since the 1990s, an increasing number of them have met and married Toraja partners there. In this case, the parents may well express pleasure that their child has found a partner from the homeland, albeit from a different district; the fact that they are living so far away may mitigate the threat of affinal competition, since their ritual participation will in any case be curtailed by the expense of returning home.

**PART THREE**  
**Village life**





## CHAPTER XI

# Women and men

Relationships between women and men were the major focus of my initial field research, but it was a topic that I found to be especially elusive. The analysis of gender relations is forever unfinished business. In one sense, the subject is never closed because history is unfinished, and so the contexts in which we look at gender must be always changing. Feminist ethnography over the past twenty-five years has made a close and uncompromising engagement with the specificities of the particular social contexts in which women and men live their lives. Out of such fine-grained analyses, challenges have arisen to every attempt at a universal explanation of gender and its inequalities; the terms of the debate, and all of their hidden assumptions – about nature, culture, the public and the domestic, even notions of identity and the self – have been subjected to rigorous scrutiny, until now, even the idea that there could be such unitary categories as ‘man’ and ‘woman’ is seen to be naive. Current studies, instead, emphasize the multiplicity of roles, qualities and identities that persons may hold, not all of them gendered; the shifting and contextual character of gender constructs; the interplay of social positions, in which gender as a status marker may be over-ridden by other factors such as class, rank or ethnic divisions; and the variations in experience of femininities and masculinities (no longer to be thought of in the singular) that result.<sup>1</sup> Distinguishing ‘gender’ from the persons of women, La Fontaine (1992:104) concludes: ‘Gender does not adequately describe the complexity of women’s roles and social actions, as we all know’. Or, as Howell (1996a:254) puts it, writing of the ambiguities of gender among the Lio of Flores: ‘It is no longer valid to assume that there is one single model of gender in any one society and that the job of the anthropologist is to elicit it.’

<sup>1</sup> See for example MacCormack and Strathern (1980); Strathern (1984, 1988); Davis, Leijenaar and Oldersma (1991); Ardener (1992); Moore (1994); Charles and Hughes-Freeland (1996), for expansions of these positions. A growing parallel literature sets out to complicate pictures of masculinity (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Connell 1995).

*On multiplicity and ambiguity in gender analysis*

Studying gender in South-East Asia has presented its own special challenges to theory, precisely because it is not always given much social attention. Whereas some societies have obsessively elaborated gender differences as a basis for unequal social organization, and insist on the essential, intrinsic natures of 'male' and 'female', one finds many South-East Asian examples where gender categories appear symbolically underplayed and unmarked. The Toraja provide a notable example of such muting of gender differences. Yet, at the same time, there are undeniable, if subtle, asymmetries in the roles and statuses of men and women, often particularly noticeable in their differential exercise of political power, and their control of formal language such as oratory and ritual poetry. To borrow a phrase from Gregory Bateson, it appears that in these cultures, gender is not necessarily 'the difference that makes a difference'.<sup>2</sup> Atkinson and Errington (1990) produced a pivotal collection of papers, significantly pointing in this direction, and attempting to move beyond a superficial assessment of women's 'high status' in the Southeast Asian region. Errington (1990:4) remarks in her introduction to these papers that up to that point few authors had gone further than to note the relative economic equality of men and women, and the paucity of symbolic expressions of gender difference. Was there not more to be said? The very subtlety of gender distinctions makes them all the harder to study, and their articulation with other dimensions of social organization has frequently been passed over; might this lack of social visibility be partly due to a difficulty of recognition on the part of the outside observer? And what if indigenous concepts of 'power' and 'status' themselves were to differ widely from those of the anthropologist? What seems clear is that in many South-East Asian societies, men and women are thought of as fundamentally similar, rather than intrinsically and irremediably different, types of persons, and the differences between them are not posited as based in their essential 'natures' as gendered beings. If there are roles that women rarely achieve in many Indonesian societies, it is not because these are prohibited to them; actors may attribute the differences to chance, or to an individual's possession or lack of spiritual qualities (without particular reference to gender), even if from the outsider's point of view there may appear to be structural factors that in practice hamper women from assuming these roles.

Moreover, shifting contexts play a crucial role in determining ways of acting and being. There would appear to be at least some social contexts in which gender is irrelevant or of no consequence. In eastern Indonesia, one does indeed find societies with considerable elaboration of male/female symbolism, but the

<sup>2</sup> One can turn this around, of course, and posit that in gender relations, difference is produced by the suppression of similarities (compare Rubin 1975:180).

stress is typically on the complementary pairing of these elements to create the harmonious fusion that ensures efficacy. In Bali, not only human beings, but a variety of other items including pigs, drums and slit-gongs need to be paired in order to function properly, though for ritual purposes the male/female counterparts need not necessarily be husband and wife (Hobart 1995:134). Howell (1996a) shows how among the northern Lio of Flores, in ritual contexts, 'male' or 'female' qualities may sometimes be represented by a person of the opposite sex, and 'need not be expressed in the bodies of actual men and women'. Such ceremonial contexts contrast here with those of daily life in which men do men's things and women do women's things. In Indonesia's bilateral kinship systems, and even in some which are not, as in Bali – see Errington (1990:2) – gender symbolism is largely notable by its absence, and here, too, the sexes may in certain contexts be substitutable for each other (Hobart 1995:139). Rank may over-ride gender as a status principle; being naturalised as it often is in discourse as a product of 'birth', it can be made to seem an even more immutable source of difference than gender, where gendered differences may be so contextually defined. Throughout the archipelago, gender roles tend to encompass a relatively flexible range of possible ways of being, with a widespread tolerance for cross-dressing 'third' genders, whose members have not infrequently played significant ritual roles as shamans or ritual specialists.

A good example of the concern with rank is provided by the Bugis. The Bugis are like the Toraja in having a bilateral kinship system, yet differ markedly in the relative separation of men and women in social life. A complex of honour and shame (*siri*) in the past required an unmarried woman to guard herself from chance contact with men outside the family, and her male relatives to defend family honour by attempting to kill both her and the man if such contact occurred. As Millar (1983:478) describes it (and certainly by comparison with the Toraja), in Bugis society 'the gender system is highly elaborated and formal yet not a master organizational principle', being here subsumed within a more dominant concern with hierarchy and social position (*harga diri*). Moreover she notes 'the complete absence of the notion that gender behaviour is dictated by biological propensities' (Millar 1983:488), the existence of a well tolerated third gender category of male transvestites (*calabai*), and the responsibilities women are expected to take in daily decision-making in the household. Men act as public spokespersons for the family, but they first of all listen to women, who have access to crucial information concerning everybody else's social statuses through their constant participation in gossip networks, and who 'usually have well-considered opinions on the social effects of various alternative choices'.<sup>3</sup> Women apparently do not view the fact that they serve

<sup>3</sup> Millar 1983:489. A comparison might be drawn here with the roles of women and men in Minangkabau society, where the women, as powerful owners of inherited lands and houses,

food to men as indicative of subservient status; both sexes tend to stress the opinion that men and women both have things they are particularly good at, that both are equally important, and their cooperation essential.

Various collections of studies (Van Bemmelen et al. 1992; Karim 1995a; Ong and Peletz 1995; Sears 1996) have continued to complicate the regional picture of gender relations by further documenting their fluidity, contextuality and indeterminacy. They probe difficult areas that pose a challenge to a too unproblematic assessment of women's status in South-East Asian societies, but they still present us with a dissolution of gender polarities that sharply contrasts with the kind of gender stereotypes that persist at the everyday level in Euro-American and some other cultures in the face of feminist deconstruction.<sup>4</sup> Some of these writers also show how contradictory images of gender may coexist within a single society; or how folk models of equality may at times conflict with the actualities of power relations in the context of the modern state, whose ideological positions may in some respects offer women much less room for manoeuvre than indigenous social systems do (Karim 1995b:60; Sullivan 1994). In New Order Indonesia, women were primarily idealized as wives and mothers, and the wives of military personnel and civil servants were pressed into membership of parallel wives' organizations, effectively depoliticising them and pre-empting possibilities for women to organize themselves as they chose. As a foil to this, there lurked in the background the demonised and unmentionable image of Gerwani, the left-wing women's organization which was unfairly discredited and blacklisted in the aftermath of the 1965 counter-coup which brought Suharto to power (Tiwon 1996). Suryakusuma (1996) shows how intrusively the New Order attempted to regulate the marital lives of civil servants through bureaucratic controls, producing a quite distinctive sexual culture in this section of the population, marked by its patriarchal double standards, masculine self-indulgence and hypocrisy. Although the military and bureaucratic structures of the New Order extended throughout Indonesian society, from the centre down to the most local levels, I speculate that the gender ideology they produced may have had more oppressive effects on women in urban contexts, especially in Java, than in more marginal regions like Tana Toraja, where it was less likely to displace the already existing gender imageries of local societies.<sup>5</sup>

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allow men the public leadership roles in representing clans and lineages, but where men are unlikely to act without the approval of mothers, sisters or wives (Tanner 1982).

<sup>4</sup> See for example Hughes-Freeland's (1995) penetrating analysis of female and male dance styles in Yogyakarta as expressions of energy and inner spirit, which defies stereotypical notions of masculine superiority assumed by some other writers on Java.

<sup>5</sup> The debate about gender in Java is as vexed as anywhere in the archipelago, perhaps more so, since the undoubted subtlety of indigenous gender philosophies is complicated by the potential contradictions between Indic and Islamic modes of thought (Freeland 1995:199), as well as

By contrast, some of the most recent writing on women in Indonesia (Robinson and Bessell 2002; Satriyo 2003) has been concerned to explore how far the new politics of devolution, at that point under Megawati as a female (though not noticeably feminist) President, might offer new opportunities or hindrances to women. Ordinary people's new awareness of their right to participate in the political process is a potentially very positive factor, and in some areas (less so in Tana Toraja) there has been an explosive growth in the number of NGOs, including women's organizations. But women are still chronically under-represented in Indonesian politics generally. In some regencies the impetus to reinstate *adat* structures or enforce conservative religious rulings without first entertaining any popular debate has been disadvantageous to women (Satriyo 2003:222). So far as *adat* is concerned, this should not pose any threat in Tana Toraja, where I could discover no point of *adat* law which discriminates against women. But women remain as under-represented in local politics in Tana Toraja as elsewhere – a fact which, given the degree of equality that typifies other aspects of gender relationships, presents itself as a puzzle.

#### *Gender as an unmarked category in Tana Toraja*

The studies discussed above all help to provide a context within which to situate a discussion of the underplayed, and at times ambiguous, character of gender relations among the Toraja. We have already seen that the bilateral tracing of descent grants children of both sexes equal inheritance rights. No strong preference is expressed for girl or boy children, but both are valued. *Adat* law does not discriminate between the genders, save that, after a divorce, a woman is more likely to win custody of her children.<sup>6</sup> Residence after marriage is most often uxorilocal, which means that a woman is often the house owner, since the house is built on her family land. If there is a divorce, the husband must leave, though he may receive the rice barn as compensation. Minimal ceremony attends a marriage, and divorce is unproblematic, though either party may be subject to a fine to be paid in buffaloes (the *kapa'*), fixed at the time of the wedding, if they are held responsible for the failure of the

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by marked differences of class (the writings of national heroine Kartini providing a well-known illustration of the traditionally restricted lifestyle of upper class women; see Tiwon 1996), and the contrasting lifestyles of rural and urban populations. Added to this is the greater accessibility and therefore influence of the mass media here than in more marginal regions of Indonesia; here as elsewhere in the world, TV and women's magazines portray images of femininity that may be more disabling than those of indigenous local cultures.

<sup>6</sup> This tendency is modified by the fact that, from a rather young age, the children themselves would be free to exercise their own choices about where they want to live.



Sebo', accompanied by her youngest son Peppry, working one of her hillside gardens, 2002

marriage, for example by adultery. If a couple cannot get on together, people may simply accept that they are not not meant for each other (*tangsidalleran*, 'they do not share the same destiny').

On balance women do more work than men, since they play an active part in rice cultivation, especially the planting and harvesting, as well as cultivating vegetable gardens, rearing pigs, child care, preparing food, and fetching water. Men do ploughing and heavier work on the land, and must provide their wives with firewood. There is a complementarity in the provision of wood and water for the household; *nale'tokan kayu*, 'he splits wood for her', or *naalan kayu* ('he fetches wood for her') are expressions meaning that a couple is regarded as married, even if they have not had any marriage ceremony (as opposed to merely having an affair), because the man is seen to be contributing to the household. After the harvest, the woman takes charge of the rice barn and manages the household's food resources; only she enters the barn and a husband who interferes in her responsibilities will be mocked as *muane daru'*, a term which has strongly negative connotations of being bossy and stingy.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This female management of food resources and their distribution is characteristic of a number of other Malay and Indonesian societies (Karim 1995b:50 note 7). Toraja particularly condemn a man who, through meanness, tries to prevent his wife from sharing things or show-





During the busy ploughing and planting season, Indo' and Ambe' Bolle' and their neighbour take a break to eat lunch beside the rice field, 2002

Women's capacity as mothers is honoured in the ruling which says that a wife should have slightly more buffaloes sacrificed at her funeral than her husband. *Dadi ki' lan lino, baine umpodadiki'* ('when we come into the world, it is women who give birth to us'), one man explained to me in explanation of this ruling. *Napasolo'ki' indo'ta*, 'our mother carried us in the womb', is another phrase used to express this debt owed to the mother. The father, it is said, 'only looks for food', but the mother carries us, gives birth to us, and nourishes us. With regard to women's rights of inheritance, a slightly more ambiguous statement was made by one acquaintance, who said: 'If there are only two children, and three rice fields, the sister should get two and the brother one, because we feel compassion/affection for her, since she can't search for her own livelihood in the same way as a man.'<sup>8</sup>

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ing hospitality to others, or who intervenes in decisions about household budgeting. It does not mean doing women's work as such, though, such as cooking or sewing, which men sometimes do to help out. Technically, I was told that a woman could be termed *baine daru'* if she tried to interfere in men's tasks, such as ploughing, but this seems unlikely. Both conditions may be said to be rare, though I did encounter one case of a woman who sought a divorce from such a man. He ended up living with his sister, and seemed to stand little chance of remarriage, since women laughed at him and said: *Minda la umpomuane tu?* ('Who would take him as a husband?').

<sup>8</sup> Sanday (1990:148-9) reports of Minangkabau men that they sometimes justify the matriline-

In some societies, rituals of the life cycle, particularly initiation and marriage, provide dramatic opportunities for acting out and inscribing on the bodies of the participants the differences between male and female. Such rites are virtually non-existent in Toraja. The only exception is mortuary ritual, which is enormously elaborated, but along lines of social rank, not gender. Otherwise, life crisis ceremonies are few. A small rite (called *ma'ku'ku'*) used to be held for a child when its hair and nails were first cut, usually at about a year old. Noble families would mark this occasion by killing a pig, and commoners a chicken, and the child would be named at this time. Only a token piece of hair may be removed, but after this, small children of both sexes may have their hair shaved. Traditionally, a small tuft called the *patondon*, left at the front of the head, indicated that the child was of noble birth. There are no public initiation rites, though boys approaching puberty may make a personal decision that they are ready for supercision of the penis (*ma'tille*) (in which a longitudinal cut is made on the top of the foreskin), which is done privately by an experienced older person, usually at the river bank where the cold water helps to reduce pain.<sup>9</sup> After this a boy will not go around naked any more, as small boys often do.<sup>10</sup> Nor does any rite accompany the onset of menstruation, which is a strikingly unmarked category in Toraja. Until recently, marriage rites never involved more than the sacrifice of a single pig. The groom would come in the evening with a small party to the bride's house, where both of them would sit and listen to good advice dispensed by the elders of the community. This has changed under the influence of Christianity, and Christian weddings now can be quite expensive, as will be further discussed in Chapter XII.

A most striking aspect of the underplaying of gender differences is the lack of any concept of female pollution, so characteristic of Indian, Chinese, and Judaeo-Christian civilizational complexes, not to mention Melanesia. It simply is an unmarked category in Toraja. Women expressed no great concern for secrecy about menstruation and said they were unconcerned if blood might show on their clothes. I could not learn of any rule against intercourse

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eal system as being designed to protect women because they are weaker, and yet, as in nature, the female is the one who gives birth. 'Just as the weak becomes the strong in nature, we must make the weaker the stronger in human life'.

<sup>9</sup> Hollan and Wellenkamp (1996) mention tooth filing (*ma'kiri'*) for both sexes, and also scarification of the forearm with burning embers (*ma'baruk*), practised by boys, apparently under the influence of peer pressure rather than any formal organization by adults. These practices have died out, and neither of them were ever mentioned to me by people in the area where I lived.

<sup>10</sup> Some men used to have a wood or bone penis pin (called *takki'* or *talede*) with knobs on the ends inserted in a hole pierced at an angle starting behind the glans and going down through the penis. It was claimed to give great pleasure to women. By the 1970s I was told only a few very elderly men still had one. Penis inserts were formerly quite widespread in Southeast Asia (Brown et al. 1988).

during a woman's period, or any idea of menstruation as posing a threat to men's spiritual or mental health.<sup>11</sup> Neither is there any restriction placed on women after childbirth, or any rite of reincorporation into society after the event, such as is typical in societies where childbirth is marked as a polluting event. The father's involvement at the birth, already noted in Chapter X, is indicative of this absence of ideas about pollution; his responsibility of burying the placenta is a task that would be considered seriously endangering to a man in most New Guinea societies, or other cultures where images of defilement surround women's reproductive abilities.

These abilities, then, are not devalued, as in the world religions, where they are deemed to render women inherently less 'spiritual' than men. Neither do men arrogate to themselves, as in some Melanesian societies, the cultural power to ensure fertility in secret rituals in which women cooperate only by agreeing to be excluded. Women take part in all Toraja rituals; in fact their participation is a necessity. The aim of a large part of the Toraja ritual cycle (the so-called 'Rites of the East' or of the 'Smoke of the Rising [Sun]') is the enhancement of fertility and prosperity. Women play particularly significant roles in rites of this kind, including in the past a kind of priestess called the *to burake tattiku'*, who functioned in the great *ma'bua'* ritual (Waterson 1984; Nooy-Palm 1986). This role has almost died out because the ceremony is now rarely performed; the same is true of the formerly high-ranking transvestite priest called *to burake tambolang*, whose person in uniting male and female elements was particularly well fitted for communication with the deities (*deata*).<sup>12</sup> As elsewhere in South-East Asia, the symbolic emphasis in ritual is on the maintenance or restoration of cosmic harmony, and where this is gendered, it demands the bringing together in balance of male and female elements, a creative fusion that guarantees well-being. Several other ritual roles must be performed by a husband and wife pair, as I shall discuss below.

<sup>11</sup> Hollan and Wellenkamp (1996:117) report from the northerly region of Toraja where they did fieldwork: 'While the Toraja have few clear notions of menstrual pollution [...] there is a widespread belief that sexual intercourse during menstruation may cause the man or the woman or both to become ill.' I did not encounter any such idea, however, so I assume there is some regional variation here. For another South-East Asian society where menstruation is 'unmarked', see Appell (1988) on the Rungus of Borneo. The absence of the topic from the index of various ethnographies on Indonesian societies, or its discussion only in terms of the positive values associated with fertility, is indicative of the relative lack of emphasis which I believe is typical in this area. Notable exceptions are Bali, where Indian influence means that women may not enter Hindu temples while menstruating, and Maluku, where distinctly Melanesian cultural influences can be detected.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Coville, however (personal communication) did encounter surviving *to burake* in the remote northwesterly district of Tana Toraja where she did fieldwork in the early 1980s. See also Nooy-Palm (1979:282-9). I discuss the *ma'bua'* as I witnessed it in Chapter XV. Buijs (2003) describes the even more striking and prominent roles formerly played by women in the rituals of the Mamasa Toraja.

We have already seen how the lack of symbolic differentiation between genders is carried through in Toraja ideas about the indivisibility of kinship substance, and the undifferentiated contributions which the two sexes are believed to make to the conception of a child. In tracing descent, this lack of differentiation between genders can also be seen very clearly. Genealogising is an activity which tends to take different forms in different kinship systems. In a patrilineal system, female ancestors may disappear from memory because only male names are remembered and recounted. Toraja presents a different kind of difficulty for the anthropologist. When people recount or write down their genealogies, these always start with a founding couple who established a particular origin house (*tongkonan*). But, lower down the generations, they often do not recall the sex of some individuals (something it is frequently impossible to tell from the name itself), or, if written, the names are unaccompanied by any distinguishing symbols. Instead of one gender being remembered at the expense of the other, gender is simply forgotten, which can only mean that it is not seen as relevant or important. And indeed, this accords with the equal emphasis placed on tracing links through male and female kin, and the equal rights of inheritance enjoyed by both men and women.

#### *Pairing and balance in marital relationships*

Marriage as an economic partnership requires the spouses to exert themselves to attend ceremonies, or help in house construction, more or less equally on both sides of the family. They also share responsibility for meeting ceremonial debts which they may both have inherited from their parents. In practice, since men are often living with their wives, they may quite frequently be helping in the renewal of one of her origin houses. This makes sense particularly if they are resident in it. And a husband, women told me, will be the first source of support if the wife must arrange to make funeral sacrifices at the death of her parents. This can be of crucial importance in southern and central districts of Toraja, where a competitive system of sacrificing is followed, such that the share of inheritance finally claimed by each child of the deceased is calculated according to the relative size of their funeral contributions. A woman in this system must stand up for herself against siblings who may be aggressively competitive, but she can count on her husband's support. This is logical for him too if there is land at stake. In the absence of a husband, other relatives may also help her if necessary.

A major goal of marital cooperation is to meet ceremonial obligations. Funerals (discussed at length in Chapters XVII and XVIII), are among the most frequent and important of these occasions. Every adult is to greater or lesser degrees bound up in relationships of credit and debt incurred by the

giving of pigs and buffaloes as funeral sacrifices. The responsibility to make such gifts to affines is especially strong. Men in particular use the funeral ground as an arena to build local reputations for 'boldness' in presenting buffaloes and pigs for slaughter, though women also may give livestock on their own account.<sup>13</sup> Generally, however, husband and wife work as a team to meet their ritual responsibilities to relatives on both sides. The role of women in feeding pigs is very essential here; one woman friend in her sixties confided to me that she had never in her entire married life been able to sell a single pig (to meet other needs such as paying for children's education), because as soon as one was large enough to sell, it was always needed for some ceremony or other. One is prompted here to consider a comparison with other prestige economies which rest heavily upon pig-rearing, as for instance in New Guinea. Much has been written about those economies as ones in which women play essential roles as producers, yet men hog the limelight as distributors of the wealth they create. Is this the case in Toraja also? It seems less clearly so, partly because of the balance of attentions paid to wife's and husband's relatives. If the husband's name is more likely to appear on the official lists now recorded at the entrance to the funeral ground, where slaughter tax must be paid, still, it will be well known to those present whether it is his affines or his wife's who are the recipients. And it is arguably to houses and their kinship groupings (particularly those of high rank) that honours ultimately accrue in this system, rather than to men as a class.

In daily life, too, mutual cooperation tends to be stressed. A spouse may be affectionately referred to as *sangayoka* or *bali tedong*, both expressions in which one characterises oneself as one of a pair of buffaloes pulling a plough together. Unless they exert themselves equally, the ploughing will not go smoothly. Spouses should support each other or 'pick each other up' when difficulties arise (*pada siakkaran*). When I asked women what qualities made for a good marriage, a typical response was: 'A good man helps his wife and doesn't gamble too much. And a good wife helps her husband.' Most commonly mentioned as a desirable trait was that a man should not be bad-tempered (*to sengke-sengkean*). In fact, domestic violence would seem to be rare, not least because if a man is living in his wife's village, her parents or other relatives will soon intervene to prevent it, and will probably press her to divorce him. This impression is borne out by Hollan and Wellenkamp (1996:110):

Indo'na Sapan also claims that women will divorce husbands who physically abuse them: 'If a husband likes to hit [his wife], the wife will become sick at heart.

<sup>13</sup> Hollan and Wellenkamp (1996:166), for instance, mention a divorced woman who was proud of her success in upholding ties with important families through her own ceremonial giving of livestock.

[She will think,] 'I don't want this. I want to be free [...]. People must get divorced [after such incidents] [...]. Women will run from a man like that. Who would want to be hit like that? Even our parents don't hit us like that! Besides, husbands [who don't hit] are easy to find.

They add that men are also likely to be intolerant of bad temper in their wives. Furthermore, they found that Toraja generally place a high cultural value on emotional equanimity, and believe that emotional discord can lead to ill health and misfortune (Hollan 1988; Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994:72).

The low level of violence in relations between men and women deserves some further comment. In many other societies, including Europe and the Americas, domestic violence is commonplace, even if disapproved of, and in urban industrial societies we all have to live with the awareness that a few men are pathologically violent toward women. Feminists have commented searchingly on the continuum of soft to violent pornography in Western societies, and the repetitive representation of women as victims in movie thrillers, considered as entertainment. Even if we don't experience violence directly in our personal lives, we do have to incorporate these images into our total picture of how the genders relate. Reviewing the Euro-American sociological literature on masculinity and male dominance (which generally lacks a cross-cultural emphasis even where it is sensitive to history), it seems that authors cannot escape from the apparent inevitability of men's oppression of women. Strathern (1988) has shown that notions of men and women as active/dominant versus passive/submissive are so deeply embedded in Euro-American societies that we risk being trapped by our own language, which makes it difficult even to express alternative perspectives clearly. Works exploring the possible evolutionary or psychoanalytical bases for such a setup (with titles like *Demonic males* (Wrangham and Peterson 1996) and *Why men hate women* (Jukes 1993)) may provide temptingly universalizing theses to explain it – though they seem singularly unhelpful in making sense of the Toraja picture. Ethnography from other parts of the world also provides examples of cultures in which men's violence toward women is taken for granted, in a way that draws a stark contrast with the tone of Toraja relationships. P. Harvey (1994) for instance describes high levels of marital violence in the Peruvian Andes as something that women tend to accept as inevitable, and it is very difficult for them to challenge the legitimacy of a husband's right to beat them. Instead, as good Catholics, they are encouraged to draw religious solace from identifying their own sorrows with those of the Virgin Mary. One woman described her marriage as very happy, even though she and her husband fought constantly, apparently because he beat her marginally less severely than her father had (P. Harvey 1994:77). Where parents make a habit of beating their children, violence is already a part of the pattern of kin relations even before marriage. 'Children', writes P. Harvey (1994:70), 'are [...] brought up in an



atmosphere of imposed hierarchy where respect is demonstrated by their parents' ability to beat them'. By contrast, Toraja parents rarely hit their children; hence the significance of Indo'na Sapan's remarks, quoted above, to the effect that a spouse can hardly get away with abuse where even parents do not exercise a violent authority.<sup>14</sup> Since women are property owners and can count on family support, there is nothing to prevent them maintaining their own livelihoods in case of a divorce, and most divorced people will remarry sooner or later.

In the indigenous religion of Alukta, noble houses in a community were the ones which held certain ritual offices, particularly relating to stages of the agricultural cycle and to some of the fertility-oriented 'Rites of the East'. The title belongs to the house, and whoever is resident in it would carry out the duties associated with it. An important title was that of Indo' Padang ('Leader [literally, 'Mother'] of the Land'), who led the performance of agricultural rituals and always made the first offerings of the season in a particular, sacred rice field. Most often a man would be named to me as holder of this title of 'Mother', but some women stated emphatically that it was really the woman and her husband who were the holders, since as with other such titles, while the man takes charge of the slaughter of livestock for offerings, and the division of meat, the woman always cooks rice (the other essential element of the offerings) and ceremonially serves it with a wooden spoon for the offerings (*ma'sanduk*). In my Buttang family it was the wife, Indo' Teken, who was the resident descendant of the house, her husband having come from a neighbouring village. She was therefore the official holder of the title of Indo' Kalo' ('Leader of Irrigation Channels'), but she needed her husband to kill the pig that had to be offered beside a stream at the time when the rice was beginning to ripen (*ma'bulung pare*). A distinctive feature of the Indo' Padang's responsibilities is that he was not supposed to travel far from home while the rice was ripening, and if he did, he had to take some uncooked rice from his own field with him, instead of eating other peoples'. The woman of the house holding the title in neighbouring Pasang village, however, explained to me that this duty fell more upon her than on her husband; she stressed that this task was best executed by the woman, who is the one who in her close association with the house exemplifies the quality of staying put (*mari'pi*), which here has a ritual significance. Amid the emphasis on balance and pairing, her comments hint at an element of difference between men and women, a difference which I shall now examine more closely.

<sup>14</sup> Compare Benjamin (1994) on non-violence in Temiar relationships. Temiar parents feel so spiritually engaged in a dialectical relationship with their children that even to smack them is believed to pose a serious danger to the spiritual health of the child.

*Mobility and stability: elements of difference in the characterisation of gender*

When people talk about the characters of men and women, they sometimes classify men into three 'types', according to the degree of their interest in gambling. Gambling is sometimes described as an aristocratic pastime; we have already examined its disruptive effects on Toraja society at the close of the nineteenth century. However, the place of cockfighting (always accompanied by gambling) in some important ritual contexts strongly indicates that gambling has a longer history in Toraja than present-day detractors are prepared to admit. Today it is associated with masculinity in a very general sense, though isolated instances of women gamblers may be mentioned. Strenuous efforts were made to enforce the government prohibition against all gambling during the 1980s and 1990s, but there has been a marked relaxation of this position since 1998, leading to an immediate resurgence of cockfighting and to jokes that for Toraja, in the absence of much other noticeable reform, Reformasi (the mood of political and democratic reform which was much talked of in the first years of the post-Suharto era) has meant chiefly a *reformasi saung* ('a reformation of cockfighting').

Of the three types of men, the first is the *pattangga'*, who, although he may be a farmer in name, makes gambling his profession. Second is the *passolle'*, who, while he may take gambling rather less seriously, prefers idleness to industry. The *passolle'* is a dandy whose other characteristics typically include a love of drinking, wandering and womanising. He may claim magic powers, as a sign of which he grows his hair long or wears a small scarf or towel knotted round his head like a bandana. Thirdly, the large majority of men may be said to fall into the category of the *to bassa'* (literally, 'busy') – the farmer who works hard and for whom gambling is only an occasional pleasure. There is no comparable classification of women into types depending on their attitudes to work and leisure. Indeed, women have less free time in any case. Still, at different times in their lives they may be more or less tied by household responsibilities; I once heard young women in conversation draw a contrast between married women who were like the *serre' datu*, a 'house cat' which always stays inside and never touches the ground, and their own relative freedom of movement while unmarried, as *tedong lamba'*, or 'feral buffaloes', which are left to wander the hillsides. Women cannot really roam as much as men do, but certainly in the past, premarital relationships were rather uninhibited, girls and boys often going about in groups to meet each other.

In a way, the three 'types' of men may be viewed in terms of their commitment to their wives. Women, with their interests in land and houses, appear as the more stable elements of society. They have much to lose from a gambling man, since a major cause of land changing hands is in pawn as a result of gambling debts. Some men are not above pawning the land of a wife

or female relative on the sly. A man who gambles is always wandering about instead of staying at home to work the land, visiting other people's homes and staying up all night to play cards or dice. Thus he has many opportunities for making the acquaintance of different women, which is the reason gambling and womanising are often said to go together.

The characterisation of men as mobile and women as fixed is one that is widespread in Indonesian societies, but its resonances are not necessarily the same as those we may bring with us from other cultures. Association with the house, that focal institution of most Indonesian kinship systems which is regarded as the source of life and nurturance, is not the same thing as a confinement to 'domesticity', and is hardly to be denigrated. Women's movements are not restricted in daily life, save that they should be seen to travel around only with good reason and not aimlessly, which men can get away with. Women travel frequently and without interference to work in distant hillside gardens, to trade in the markets, to visit relatives or attend rituals, for example. Immobility, as we have seen, may be associated with ritual power – in fact examples abound in other Indonesian societies of the association of this feature with power, both ritual and political (Waterson 1990:191-6). The most remarkable ritual instance of women's 'staying put' is the seclusion of a group of young women for an entire year leading up to the culminating performance of the *ma'buu' pare*, the greatest of the Rites of the East, associated with rice and fertility, also known as *ma'buu' baine* or 'women's *ma'buu'*. This rite is described in detail in Chapter XV.

One other reason for wandering may be the development of a calling as a healer (*to ma'dampu*), usually after a period of 'craziness' in which the individual wanders off alone up mountains, having visions and receiving powers from the deities of nature (*deata*). Both women and men may have such experiences. One woman in Buttang, whose grandfather had been a well-known healer, had herself also been a healer; but she told me she had given it up, although she still worked as a midwife. 'I'm a woman, and couldn't cope with it' (*Baine ki', na tangdiupu'*) was her explanation, but my initial assumption that she referred to some intrinsic weakness of women was mistaken. She meant that it was just too awkward to have to travel around to visit the sick when people called for her services, when she also had a house to run, children to look after and pigs to feed. Other women healers I met operated very locally, but some who were men might indeed travel far and wide, until they got too old to. This is a good example of the sort of pattern which Errington (1990:57-8) sees as typical of island South East Asia, where assumptions about differences between people (in this case, men and women) tend to rest less on anatomy and more on the kinds of activities which people engage in.

Given the secure and strong position that women occupy in economic, kinship and ritual terms in this society, it remains a problem to explain

why they should play so little part in politics and rarely speak authoritatively in public. Once again, Toraja commentary on this issue reveals some ambiguities. When pressed to explain this fact, people often formulate their comments in a way that amounts to saying: 'women and men are equal, but actually men are dominant', or conversely, 'men are superior, but actually men and women are equals'. Maleness is explicitly associated with eloquence or authoritativeness of speech in the phrase *ma'kada muane* (literally, 'to speak like a man'), but that is a quality that both men or women may possess; it can mean simply to be decisive or stand up for oneself. The ability to speak with style is also described as an attribute of high-ranking individuals. At the time of my first fieldwork, I several times had the opportunity to meet an elderly aristocrat, Bine' of Tombang in Menduruk, who was well known for her authoritative manner of speaking and was often called to participate in local village councils (*kombongan*) called to settle disputes. She was a great source of information about local history and older customs. She was something of an exception; there is no denying that such public roles are more commonly taken by men. On the other hand, since she had the capability and the inclination, as well as the inherited rank, to perform this role effectively, nobody thought it unsuitable for her to do so. Again, there are several examples of women who acted as village or district leaders in the pre-colonial or colonial times, because of their high status and, often, the absence of appropriate male family members. In the district of Nanggala in more recent decades, it was a female member of the ruling aristocratic family who was for long the dominant figure, being known to all by the respectful title of *silndo'* ('Mother').

The general absence of women in government positions such as village or district heads is, however, still very marked today. In 1983, I met one of three women who had recently been appointed as Kepala Desa, and since the 1990s have heard of a few others. All, to my knowledge, come from aristocratic families. Whether the absence of women in local government reflects their own reluctance, or simply the attitude of central government, is open to question. Some informants commented that they had heard women much more commonly held such positions in Java, but Sullivan (1994) paints a similar picture of the political sidelining of women in her study of a Yogyakarta neighbourhood. Sullivan concluded that the dominant nationalist ideologies of the New Order offered relatively little scope for women, whose potential contributions to development were liable to remain underutilized.<sup>15</sup> As already

<sup>15</sup> Compare the comments of Saraswati Sunindyo (1993) on women in New Order ideology. Such contradictions concerning the relative prominence of men and women surface even in the strongly matrilineal and matrifocal context of Minangkabau society, where Sanday (1990:142) found that 'exclusion of women from intellectual and government activities in the capital [Padang] was reminiscent of Western practices'. Members of an all-male seminar 'defended their exclusion of women on the ground that the traditional system of roles includes one defined as

mentioned, in Tana Toraja, as all over Indonesia during this period, the New Order Government systematically enlisted the wives of civil servants and army officers into parallel, subsidiary, wives' organizations, instead of their own autonomous ones, and into organizations with a decidedly domestic orientation – notably since 1974, the PKK (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga or 'Guidance for Family Welfare' Programme), which had local cells nationwide.<sup>16</sup> The PKK too was tightly linked to the bureaucratic hierarchy; in Tana Toraja, it was headed by the Bupati's wife. Within the terms set by this organization, women were likely to find themselves forced into the role of the 'modern housewife' idealized by the middle classes, a role whose specifications can turn out to be far more rigid than those offered by traditional options, especially in the less well-off strata of Indonesian societies.

Dutch institution-building ensured a relatively high standard of education in Tana Toraja, and compared to other regions, comparatively large numbers of Toraja today have tertiary qualifications. Toraja, by contrast with some other peoples of Indonesia, have never shown any prejudice against the education of women; however, once again, women do face practical pressures to marry relatively young, and devote themselves to their children, which hinder their gaining higher degrees in the same numbers that men have. One can only speculate about the possible effects on local societies of the images of women provided by women's magazines and television, as people become better-off and have access to more commercial, globalized forms of cultural expression. One other area of ideological change deserves mention here, and that is the shift, made almost complete over the past few decades, from the world view of the indigenous religion to that of a Calvinist version of Christianity. Whereas the former offered interesting ritual roles to women, the latter hardly does so. New attitudes of derogation may even creep in, the Middle Eastern heritage of the monotheisms providing a marked contrast to indigenous ideas: one woman friend, in a discussion of menstruation, told me that some Christians say a woman should not take part in Church ceremonies during her period, because it is 'dirty' (she used the Indonesian word, *kotor*). In short, when I first became acquainted with Toraja society, it seemed highly doubtful whether any of the more modernizing influences then observable offered more emancipating opportunities to women than they enjoyed already – rather the reverse. This was certainly paradoxical, considering that

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"intellectual" that is assigned exclusively to men'. One suspects that here too, the dominant ideology imposed more limits on women than the local indigenous one, which does allow moral and jural authority to women in village affairs.

<sup>16</sup> Since the end of the New Order, the organization has been significantly renamed *Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, or 'Empowerment of Family Welfare'; in some areas it has become more or less defunct while in others it continues along much the same lines as before.

there is really nothing in indigenous social organization that would prevent women from exerting more political influence than they do at present. The great question is how far the changed political climate in post-Suharto Indonesia will open up new opportunities for women's political participation in the twenty-first century, and how women will choose to take advantage of them. It is too early to offer an answer to that question.



## CHAPTER XII

# Planting a hearth

When a couple marry, they set up their own household, its independence marked by the establishment of their own hearth. To marry is termed *men-dapo*, 'to make a hearth', and marriage is also referred to as the 'planting' of a hearth (*tananan dapo*), in an idiom whose botanical overtones contain an implied image of growth. The hearth itself takes a form instantly recognizable all over Southeast Asia: a heavy wooden box filled with earth, on which are set (or 'planted') three hearthstones, termed *titanan tallu*). Suspended above is a bamboo rack (*palanduan*) where firewood and dried ears of maize are stored. The hearth as a central image of the marriage process, with its overlapping connotations of household, reproduction and nurturance, has powerful resonances in many Austronesian societies.<sup>1</sup> In Toraja, too, the hearth is at the heart of both the house and the marriage.

The marriage ceremony itself was traditionally a very muted and small scale affair; it is even possible for a couple to commence living together with only the most minimal ritual recognition of their union, before having a marriage ceremony years later. As Pak Sarira of Ulusalu explained, a marriage should be allowed to grow from small beginnings, and must not 'grow like the banana flower' (*lobo' puso*) which starts out large and then shrinks as the fruits develop. Partly no doubt because no great exchanges of wealth are involved, divorce is relatively easy and most people will marry again sooner or later. If there is a divorce, property brought in to the marriage by either partner reverts to them, while any property accumulated during it will be divided in half between them. The modest scale of weddings has changed dramatically over the last two decades, however. Christian marriages have now become elaborate occasions for conspicuous display, especially for town dwellers. In this chapter, I examine courtship, engagement and marriage

<sup>1</sup> Compare for example the discussions by Janowski (1995); Bloch (1995); Carsten (1997). Physically, however, very few Toraja houses still have the hearth in its traditional location, on the east side of the central room. The Dutch encouraged people to reduce smoke inside the house by moving the kitchen to a separate building or lean-to, though this is often still on the east side of the house.



This old *tongkonan* at Sassa' (Ma'kale), photographed in 1994, was one of very few remaining which still had its hearth in the traditional location, on the east side of the central room. To marry is to 'plant a hearth'.

rites, and the possible conflicts that can occur where marriage takes place across rank boundaries or between families of different areas.

### *Courtship and engagement*

Among young people, premarital sexual relations were rather free in the past, so long as one avoided sleeping with close cousins, those who were also not eligible as marriage partners. The occasions which traditionally provided opportunities for boys and girls to meet each other were those when people congregate in large numbers, on market days, or at funerals, which are the most frequent ritual occasions. When guests arrive at a funeral, they are met by a procession of men and women, generally close relatives of the deceased, who bring them betel-nut and tobacco as a gesture of welcome. Young girls generally make up most of the procession, and they use this chance to steal glances at the guests. Later, when darkness falls and the night-long funeral dance begins, there are plenty of opportunities for young people to slip away and meet each other unobserved in the bamboo groves, or in nearby houses whose owners are temporarily away at the dance. Even when there is no ceremony to provide an excuse for a meeting, boys try to visit girls at night. There is an established tradition of night visiting by men to their sweethearts, though this is supposed to be strictly secret. The lover enters the house by stealth, through a window or a hole in the floor of the room where the girl is sleeping, while the rest of the household is asleep, and he leaves again before dawn. The parents may turn a blind eye to the affair, as long as it is conducted discreetly, even if they are aware of what is going on. They may hope that the two will eventually marry. In the past, many aristocratic men carried on liaisons with lower-ranking mistresses in this way. An intimacy of this sort is called 'chewing betel in secret' (*ma'pangan buni*). This involves a certain amount of risk. On one occasion a Buttang woman came and stood outside a neighbour's house, shouting invective at the family, whose son she believed had been in her house the previous night making love to her daughter. She was ambitious for her daughter and was anxious to make sure that she finished school and should not have to drop out as a result of an unwanted pregnancy – a new factor that makes some girls (or their parents) more careful nowadays than they used to be. She knew someone had been in the house, but was not sure exactly who it was; and to add insult to injury, she added, he had also stolen limes from her lime tree! The boy's mother related all this later to my family, who offered various theories as to who might have been the culprit. The son of our next door neighbour had been observed sleeping late that morning; perhaps he was the guilty one.

It was common, therefore, and to a lesser degree still is, for young people

to have several, often short-lived, affairs before settling down with one person and marrying them. Hollan and Wellenkamp (1996:75-87) give detailed accounts of the courtship period of acquaintances from whom they collected life histories. Their informants, reminiscing about their youth, described how boys would go around in groups, meeting with groups of girls at night to sing together by the river, or making use of field huts to make love to their sweethearts. No great emphasis was laid on the need for virginity at marriage, though some of my acquaintances (like Hollan's and Wellenkamp's) maintained that in the old days, even though young people played around, the girls would not get pregnant. However, if a pregnancy did result, the parents might try to force a marriage. Christianity has doubtless been the biggest contributor to a change in morality so that now, more shame attaches to the idea of premarital sex. On the other hand, older people of my acquaintance sometimes complained that they had less control over their children and their choice of marriage partners now than in the past, and that girls were less shy than they used to be. As one elderly grandmother described it, 'In the old days, a girl would hide in the kitchen if a boy came visiting. But nowadays, boys say: 'We don't have to go out looking for girls any more – we just wait until they come to us.' Now, young people have plenty of chances to meet each other in school, and may marry while still in their teens.

Toraja have a traditional form of verse called *londe*, four-line poems with a generally allusive content, similar to Indonesian and Malay *pantun*. The subject-matter of these poems is often romantic, and they can be sung back and forth between young people, the answering verse often forming a humorous response to the first one. It is noticeable that many of them express the need to keep a romance secret, while others concern the pain of a parting forced by parents who have another match arranged. The celebration in poetry of romantic love as doomed is a feature unlikely to arise except where arranged marriage is the norm; but my impression is that this was much more a concern for those of high rank than for others. Parental opposition may arise to a match because of differences in rank, because the couple are too closely related, or for some other reason. But they may be wary of the possibility that, if crossed in love, young people may do something tragic.<sup>2</sup> It happened during my fieldwork in 1979 that in the neighbouring village of Sawangan, a young girl and boy committed suicide by hanging themselves together from the branch of a tree near their homes. They had fallen in love while still at school, and she was expecting a baby. But between the fathers of their two families there was

<sup>2</sup> This possibility, and the occurrence of what Hollan has termed 'indignant suicide' for other reasons, are also discussed by Hollan and Wellenkamp (1996:101, 1994:190-1). I was told of one other instance where a woman had killed herself by jumping down a high waterfall because she suspected her husband of having affairs with other women.

a long-standing quarrel, and they had opposed the match. The fathers were both in Ujung Pandang when the news reached them. Ironically, they had happened to travel down to the city on the same bus, and on the way had made up their quarrel; on arrival they had even stayed in the same house together. The funerals were held on consecutive days, in a very subdued atmosphere. A Buttang man was an uncle of the boy, and had to be present to receive pigs from some of the guests who came. Going to the village in the evening, with a group of others, they kept losing their way and finding themselves back at the tree where the two had hanged themselves, until they had to call out to people in the houses on the hill above them to come with torches and show them the way, because the ghosts were leading them astray. According to some, the girl's pregnancy rendered the 'indignant suicide' more dangerous, since in general only the spirits of those who die in childbirth or while carrying a child are likely to come back and haunt people.

Apart from the restriction on marriage to close cousins, there are few prohibitions on potential marriage partners. There is no objection to marriages across generations, which do occur occasionally. There is, however, a rule affecting repeated marriages between two families. There is no objection to a man marrying his wife's sister as a second wife, though I heard of only one or two instances where this had occurred. One man had married four sisters, one after the other. But if the brothers and sisters of two different families wish to marry each other, they should be all brothers on one side, and all sisters on the other. This is called *ma'tibang rinding*, or 'walls facing each other'; the marriages are all 'in one direction', and the image is one of order. If however, a brother and sister of one family should wish to marry a sister and brother of another family, this is called *sisula' sirrin*, or 'ants moving hither and thither'. The image implies disorder, and such a marriage is regarded as *pemali* (prohibited). No clear reason was given to me for this restriction. Buijs (2003:118), however, notes that among the neighbouring Mamasa Toraja, an identical prohibition is strictly observed, and marriages in the wrong direction are there called *sisura* ('to stab each other with a bamboo'). His acquaintances explicitly associated it with the idea of a 'flow of life' in the sense often encountered in Eastern Indonesian societies, where asymmetrical marriage rules prohibit bride-givers from becoming bride-receivers, and reversing an already established flow of women between houses. It is curious that this theme should apparently find an echo even in the strongly bilateral kinship system of the Toraja, where the bride-giver/bride-receiver relationship receives no kind of formal recognition. Buijs follows Schefold (2001) in proposing that the theme of flows or 'streams of blessing' (affinal, ancestral or autochthonous) is part of a wider Austronesian pattern whose variations<sup>3</sup> can be traced throughout the archipelago.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> H. and C. Geertz (1975:58) also note the existence of this prohibition in Bali, where kinship



It was widely claimed that marriage age was later in the past: men often did not marry till they were thirty, and women till they were twenty or twenty-five. The reasons given for this were that people were expected to be more mature before they could marry: a man had to be able to support his wife, and perhaps also prove himself as a warrior, in days when inter-village warfare was common. But now, marriage age in the villages is often younger and a woman of twenty-five or so was declared to be 'too old' to be still a desirable match. The three or four women I knew who were in this situation had apparently had unfortunate affairs when younger, ones which had failed to lead to marriage either because they had been jilted, or because of parental opposition on grounds of status differences or some other factor. Sometimes other men then tried to take advantage of them, visiting them at night but evading marriage. It must be said, then, that in spite of the tolerant attitudes to premarital sexuality which were formerly typical, a certain double standard exists and public opinion still tends to penalize the woman more than the man when affairs go wrong. Even so, most of these women did marry eventually. Although some shame attaches to the birth of a child out of wedlock, even this will not necessarily spoil a woman's marriage chances in the long run. Once married, it seems that if a divorce should happen, women experience little difficulty in remarrying; in fact it is rare for any adult to stay single for very long.

In the past it was not uncommon for aristocratic families to betroth their children in childhood, the aim in most cases being to secure a marriage with a cousin in order to keep family property together. Such betrothals were known by various terms: *dipasikampa* ('made to wait for each other'), *dipasissime* (literal meaning unclear), or *dipasitandai bitti* ('marked out for each other while small'). These betrothals usually took place while the children were five years old or more, though they themselves would not be told of it until they reached puberty or began to show an interest in the opposite sex. Then they would be informed of the arrangement in order to discourage them from forming another attachment. A feature of these betrothals was that the parents of each child would put aside some property for them, either rice land or buffaloes, 'so that when they marry they will already be provided for'. The betrothal was referred to as *eanan dipasibalii* – 'a marrying together of property' – because of this. Should the couple at a later date divorce, this conjugal fund would be divided, and each would take back the part belong-

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is patrilineal, with a declared preference for marriage with the father's brother's daughter (FBD). Hobart (1995:134) notes that in practice, the percentage of father's brother's daughter marriages is low, their frequency varying greatly from community to community; marriages to the father's sister's daughter (FZD), on the other hand, do occur, being justified by other arguments in spite of the notional prohibition on reversing the flow of women (1995:136).



ing to them, any increase (for example, in the form of buffalo calves) being divided between them. Undue pressure however would not be brought to bear on the children if they both on reaching marriageable age raised objection to the match. It might be called off with no fine exacted by either side, as there may be in a normal engagement, since the parents felt that they could not be forced into the marriage if they were both set against it. If, on the other hand, only one side broke the agreement, they might have to pay a fine of half a buffalo. I was told that betrothals of this sort had begun to die out in Dutch times, and by the 1970s they no longer existed.<sup>4</sup>

Traditionally the initiative in proposing a marriage came from the boy's family, though status considerations might occasionally override this; it could happen that an aristocratic family fallen on hard times might take the initiative in arranging a match for their daughter with a wealthy family of lower status. Generally the boy's family sent a delegation (*to messua*) to the parents of the girl. The group was usually composed of male friends or close relatives of the groom, preferably cousins. A very close relative would be ashamed, if met with a refusal. They would bring *pangan* (areca nut, betel leaves, lime and tobacco) to offer to the parents of the girl. This gesture (known in Indonesian as *meminang*, from *pinang*: 'betel nut') is a manner of proposal common to many societies of the archipelago. In other parts of Indonesia, however, it has a more formal aspect; it is often accompanied by money and other presents, and the parents must return it within three days if the offer is refused. Acceptance of the betel nut therefore places the family under a definite obligation. In Toraja this was only the case in the three southern domains, the Tallu Lembangna. In other parts the bringing of betel played a less precisely defined part in the proceedings; in the old days, after all, when everyone chewed betel, this was an accompaniment to most conversations, and it was a sign of politeness to offer one's betel bag. But what the delegation really brought was their words; the discussions were always lengthy, with much beating about the bush, before the real reason for the visit would be delicately touched upon. This might take a whole day. The parents, too, would never show unseemly haste to accept an offer, but give their answer only after a few days, when they had consulted their daughter to find out her opinion on the matter.

A proposal may come from a boy who already knows the girl and has an understanding with her, or he may be a stranger to her, someone who has merely seen and admired her from a distance; or again, the initiative may be coming from his parents rather than from himself. Indo' Rembon, an older woman who became a close friend, told me how her marriage had been arranged by her parents:

<sup>4</sup> I came across only one instance of a child betrothal; the circumstances were unusual, and it was eventually broken off (see Waterson 1995b:201).

I didn't know my husband when I got married. It was our parents who forced us. I was afraid to disobey my father. I was about the same age as my youngest daughter is now – about fifteen or sixteen – and he must have been eighteen or nineteen. He worked in Ujung Pandang, but his parents lived here and they told him to come and propose. Even by the day of the wedding, I'd never even set eyes on him. I peeped round the corner of the rice barn, trying to figure out which one he could be, because he came with a big group of his relatives, all men. (*Was it difficult at first being married like that?*) – Oh, of course, it was very difficult. I felt it was very hard. I thought, 'How can we be man and wife?'

In Indo' Rembon's case, in spite of this inauspicious beginning, and the considerable hardships entailed by the fact that her husband had turned out to be a gambler, the marriage had lasted. At the time of my first fieldwork in the 1970s, most women I talked to did not seem to think there was any great problem in marrying someone you don't know; for many, warm and affectionate relations do soon develop, and if they do not, divorce is always a possibility. Given the lack of sexual segregation and the generally relaxed tone of interactions in Toraja life, if the two young spouses like each other, it will not take long for initial reserve to be lost. This contrasts rather strongly with the situation described by Chabot (1996:219-24) for Makassar, where unmarried girls are kept more strictly apart from men. Here the barrier of inhibition to be overcome is potentially so strong that all sorts of little rituals and games are acted out immediately after the wedding ceremony, which are designed to break down reserve and ensure that the couple will be 'good together', in other words, that sexual relations will be established. In spite of all this it appears that in a significant number of cases, either the bride or groom obstinately refuses intercourse (Chabot 1996:226). Sometimes this is because the marriage was arranged against their will and they still hope to be united with someone else. Only after at least a year, when their older kinsfolk have had recourse to more rituals and have given up all hope of making the couple 'good together', will such a marriage be dissolved, if negotiations are already under way for a second match. I never heard of such a situation being a cause for divorce in Toraja, except once, when the husband proved too old to 'provide for' his wife sexually (both had been married several times before); this provided grounds for her to obtain a divorce.

While I lived in Buttang in 1978, a neighbour's daughter, aged about sixteen or seventeen, received a proposal from a youth who was working as a labourer on a road which was being widened near the village. She herself had never even spoken to him, but the family discovered enough about his background to know that he was not of very high status, and the proposal was turned down. Sebo', the youngest daughter in my Buttang household, had been living with her grandparents in a hamlet higher up the mountain slope until a few years previously, when her parents had decided to bring her back

home. They needed help at home, and perhaps another intention was to keep her under closer supervision during her teenage years. She received one proposal from a distant cousin, but he was rejected as a known gambler. When I first lived with the family, they were in no hurry to find her a husband, for she was by then the only daughter left at home, and did most of the daily work of running the household. About three years later, she received a proposal from another distant cousin, and this one was accepted. She was then about twenty, and he was thirty. He had been married once before, while still very young, and had two children. Shortly after the marriage, she talked about the proposal, the wedding and her feelings about the match:

He is from a noble family in Menduruk and has rice land there. He is my *siunu'* ('sibling', here having the sense of cousin) – I don't know the exact relation, but our houses are linked (*sikande tongkonan*). That's why mother and father pressed me to accept him. I refused at first but all my immediate family (*sirondong*) approved of him so I was forced to accept. But now I'm glad. I was a bit anxious at first. I had never met him at the time of the wedding. I had seen him, but only from a distance, and hadn't ever spoken to him. His uncle came to the wedding [his father is already deceased]; he was the only older person, the rest were all young men, friends of his, about twenty of them. We killed five chickens and a small pig [...]. He didn't say anything to me on the wedding night. I didn't say anything either. But now we can talk easily to each other. We're not shy any more.

It is possible, though unusual, for a boy to come himself to ask for a girl's hand, but in this case he must be very indirect and be careful to speak with the mother, not the father, who would be offended at so apparently casual an approach. The mother will be sure to inquire closely as to whether he has his parents' consent, since it might otherwise lead to embarrassment for the girl's family if they were to agree to the match. If the suitor is a relative of the girl, then it is not uncommon for the initial approach to be made by the boy's mother. She visits the mother of the girl, and in a joking manner proposes the idea to her: 'Let's arrange a match between our children!' – to which the girl's mother might reply: 'Oh, yes! Why not! Better that we should arrange things ourselves than have to go to another family!' Later, she will discuss the matter with her husband, and if both are in favour, the daughter's opinion will then be sought. When a woman thus acts as go-between to the girl's mother it is called *pada kada bisik* ('they whisper together'). The mothers in this way test the ground, avoiding the possible humiliation of sending a formal delegation which might be met with a refusal. Once the matter is agreed, a delegation of men may or may not be sent. There is a feeling that it would be more humiliating to be refused by one's relatives than by another family altogether; hence the care taken to find out first. This echoes the feeling, already discussed in Chapter X, that a divorce between spouses who are kin would also be extra

likely to cause bad feelings between the respective families. If the couple ran into marital difficulties, their families might put pressure on them not to divorce, and if they failed, would say, 'they just destroyed our blood and bones' (*ussolangi manua rara buku*).

Generally speaking, the higher the girl's rank the more formal a proposal is likely to be, while among commoners there may be less concern for formalities. A less conventional way of becoming engaged to a girl is to go openly to her house and stay the night. If the parents allow the boy thus to sleep with their daughter, in the morning they will consider him to be engaged to her. Should he then fail in his duty, he will be liable to a fine, the same as if he had broken a more formal engagement. This is distinct from the night visiting of a lover, which is supposed to be strictly secret. If it is a second marriage, no go-between is required, for then the man will approach the woman directly, and she will make up her own mind. They may start an affair first, or else the man may come, perhaps accompanied by a friend, to propose. He might call several times before getting a direct refusal from the woman; or else she might be coy the first few times, before finally accepting.

Since the time of my first fieldwork, much has changed with regard to marriage practices, and arranged marriage has gone rapidly out of fashion. In 2002, while staying with Sebo', now known by her teknonym Indo' Bolle', and her husband Rerung (Ambe' Bolle'), I ventured to ask them if they had any plans to arrange a marriage in due course for their 17-year-old daughter, or would they let her choose her own partner? Indo' Bolle' assured me that nobody arranges marriages for their children any more, because the children don't want it. I pointed out that her own arranged marriage had turned out happily enough, to which she agreed. But the climate of ideas has changed, and parents have relinquished their control over their children's choice of marriage partners. After completing secondary school, her daughter chose to continue her education by training as a midwife, and is not in any hurry to settle down.

A similar shift has taken place in so many parts of the world in the course of the twentieth century that it should cause no great surprise; it can be easily linked to the influences of education (not least the simple physical fact that school attendance creates greater opportunities for people to meet each other), and the changing image of the self associated with the forces of modernity. Perhaps the more puzzling question is why people should have bothered to arrange marriages previously? After all, the preservation of group boundaries is usually an over-riding concern where this is the pattern, and Toraja kinship groupings, as we have seen, are in no sense closely bounded. Reflecting on this, people commented that land and the preservation of rank had been the key reasons for arranging marriages before. The high rate of marriages to 'distant' cousins, shown in my household census data from Malimbong, or to

even closer cousins among the aristocracy of some other districts, was motivated at least partly by the desire to prevent the dispersal of landholdings. Education tends to have the effect of turning young people off farming; but nowadays, population pressure on land is such that many of them will not be able to farm anyway. More and more, they leave for the cities or to seek their fortunes elsewhere. In the past few years, since ethnic strife in Poso has made Central Sulawesi's logging industries less of a draw for Toraja migrants, more and more have migrated to Kalimantan instead, sometimes marrying other Toraja whom they meet there. Career and income then become a more significant factor than land and rank in determining the suitability of a spouse, while the parents may be pleased enough simply that the chosen partner is Toraja, and can thus at least still be counted as *solata*, 'one of us'.

### *The marriage ritual*

The marriage rite is called *alukna rampanan kapa'* ('the way/rite of setting free the cotton'). The image conveyed is one of the independence of the new conjugal couple; people said that, just as the cotton pod when ripe separates from the stem of the plant, so when a young couple marry they become independent of their parents.<sup>5</sup> Although the word *kapa'* also refers to the fine that it is agreed will be paid by the offending partner in case of a divorce, I was told that in this context it simply meant 'cotton'. Given the absence of unilineal kinship groupings, it is no surprise that the marriage rite involves no imagery of incorporation of one spouse into the kin group of the other. Rather the emphasis is on the setting up of a new and independent conjugal unit, and while close relations with the parents and parents-in-law are important, the couple are not expected any longer to look to their parents for support, but to fend for themselves with whatever means may be placed at their disposal.

There are different levels of ceremony, delineated according to rank, but the main outline of the proceedings in each case is the same. It is rare now to see the fully traditional form of marriage; Christians generally hold a rather similar celebration, substituting prayers and worship for the traditional offerings and priestly chant. In the seven *bua'* of Malimbong, there were traditionally three levels of ceremony. *Diparampo allo* ('[the bridegroom] is brought in the morning') was the highest level, reserved for the *tana' bulaan* or aristocrats of the highest rank. Three pigs were killed, and the groom's party would come to the bride's house in the morning. *Diparampo karuen* ('[the

<sup>5</sup> Nooy-Palm (1979:34) discusses some other possible interpretations of this phrase, but I have chosen the explanation which I heard most frequently and which seems to me the most comprehensible.

bridegroom] is brought in the afternoon') was the level for the lesser nobility, the *tana' bassi*, although the *tana' bulaan* might also celebrate this way, if they wished to or could not afford the highest level. Only one pig was killed, and the groom's party arrived in the afternoon. The lowest level was called *nande bannang* (*nande*: 'food'; *bannang*: 'thread'): the ceremony, which included eating together, bound the new couple as man and wife. This was the rite observed by the commoners and slaves (the *tana' karurung* and *tana' koa-koa*). Only chickens would be killed (minimally, two), and the groom and his party would not arrive until after sunset. In addition to these there was also a form called *ditoratu* (*ratu*: 'guest'; the groom is received as a 'guest' in the bride's house): this was a form of marriage which might be observed by a couple who could not yet afford the rite called *diparampo allo*, but who wished to be married anyway. Only one pig, or chickens, are killed, and a bigger ceremony would be held at a later date, often when the couple already had children. This later ceremony was called *ullepong dapo'* ('to make the hearth complete'), and was at the same time a rite for the couple, and for the child or children of the marriage. It could be combined with the first ritual cutting of the child's hair and nails (*ma'ku'ku'*).

The existence of this latter rite reinforces the idea of the marriage, symbolized by the hearth which is the centre of the house, as a slow-growing process, embodied especially in the birth of children.<sup>6</sup> I have mentioned that, if there are no children, the house site may be moved, because of a belief in the interplay between the 'life' or vitality of the house and of its occupants. Similarly if children are sick, an explanation may be sought in terms of possible offences against the marriage rules which prohibit unions with close cousins. It is sometimes claimed that the consequences of marrying too close a relative without making the prescribed atonement offering may be sickness, or else one's children may die young or suffer from mental deficiencies. The propitiatory offering is called *ullendokan* ('to lay down a load'), or *dilussuran bai misa'* ('a pig is set free'). A small pig is held aloft and given away to anyone who cares to take it, provided it is someone from outside the family. In Buntao' I once met a woman who had married her father's father's brother's son. She was married at the age of fifteen, and at the time they held only the simplest form of the wedding ceremony. After she had already had three children, however, they had problems with the first child always falling ill, so they consulted the *to minaa* (priest) to find out what was wrong. He advised them that their marriage was too close; he told them it counted as a first

<sup>6</sup> Compare Bloch (1995) on the conceptualization of marriage among the Zafimaniry of Madagascar as a long-drawn-out process whose growth is embodied in the birth and successful nurturing of children, and paralleled by the gradual building up and 'hardening' of the structure of the house itself.





Landscape of Malimbong. The village of Buttang is concealed within the clump of bamboos in mid-ground.



Finely carved façade of a *tongkonan* at Galugu Dua, Sa'dan, 1994. The wooden buffalo head (*kabongo*) and long-necked bird, representing a hornbill (*katik*), indicate that this house has celebrated the highest ranking rituals of both the West (mortuary rites) and the East (life-enhancing rites).





Ceremony to celebrate the rebuilding of the renowned *tongkonan* Nonongan, 1983. The house front is richly decorated with precious heirloom textiles, bead ornaments (*kand-aure*), and rows of ancestral swords (*la'bo' to dolo*) fixed to the front post supporting the eaves. One group has just arrived with its sacrificial pigs and is displaying part of its genealogy to demonstrate how their house is descended from Nonongan.



House descendants dance *ma'gellu'* at a rite to celebrate the rebuilding of a *tongkonan* at Tallung Lipu, 1994. Their dress includes traditional heirloom objects indicative of noble rank – golden daggers (*gayang*) and beaded ornaments (*kandaure*).



A modern Christian wedding, held near Ma'kale, 1996. By contrast with the very simple marriage rite of earlier times, this one shows many innovations. The bride and groom, in Western dress, are sitting in state (*bersanding*) in the style of Bugis or Malay weddings, on a dais constructed in front of their family *tongkonan*, with a display of house heirlooms arranged behind them.





Group of women singers (*to ma'dondo*) performing at a *ma'buat' muane* ritual in Malimbong, 1979.





The funeral procession (*ma'palao*) includes banners (*tombi* or *laa*) indicating the rank of the funeral in terms of the number of buffaloes to be slaughtered. The various elements of the procession are also said to represent the passage of the constellations across the sky. In the background is the mythical Mount Messila. (Funeral of Sapan held at Buttang, December 1982.)



Tato' Dena' (standing, in yellow) supervises offerings made at a *merok* feast, the culmination of *pembalikan pesung* rites for Ne' Buba' Lande in Nonongan, August 2005. Ne' Buba', who died in 2000, was the last resident of *tongkonan* Nonongan to adhere to the Aluk to Dolo. Though his descendants now are Christian, his funeral rites were celebrated according to the *aluk* and at the highest possible level. The *merok* marks the transition from rites of the West to those of the East, and his own transformation as ancestor, transcending Puya (the land of the dead) to be at one with the *deata* (deities) and the stars.

cousin marriage, even though she and her husband were of different generations. The remedy was to celebrate their marriage a second time, this time at a more elaborate level, with the killing of a pig, called in that area *siparampo*. Once they had done this, the child's health improved. On another occasion, in 1979, I witnessed an *ullepong dapo'* ceremony in Malimbong which was held by a Catholic couple. A locally residing Belgian Catholic priest attended, and read prayers for the well-being of the couple and their two children.

Aspects of the traditional wedding rite were already falling into disuse in the 1970s, and during my residence in Buttang I never witnessed one in its entirety; but many people were able to give descriptions based on the frequent witnessing of weddings in the recent past. The following account is based on what they told me:

The bridegroom arrives at the bride's house accompanied by a party made up entirely of men, his relatives and fellow-villagers. This group includes five special people: one of these is called 'the one who feeds [that is, makes offerings to] the deities' (*to umpakande deata*). This may be any *ambe'* or respected elder of the groom's village who knows the manner of making offerings, not necessarily a priest (*to minaa*). He also has an assistant. Then there is 'the one who carries the frying pan' (*to umbaa pamuntu*). A small piece of a heavy iron wok is used here to signify good luck and a long life; here as in other ritual contexts, it symbolizes something enduring, because it never wears out or disintegrates completely. Next come 'the one who carries a silver coin' (*to umbaa uang*), 'the one who carries a knife' (*to umbaa piso*), and 'the one who carries beads' (*to umbaa manik*), who bears three yellow beads of the sort used for women's necklaces, which here symbolize nobility. In the Kesu' area, the groom would be accompanied by a priest (*to minaa*), if he were a man of high family, along with eleven other men, who must all have favourable-sounding names. If, for example, one's name were Podang, meaning 'crooked' (a name that might be given to a child whose birth was difficult) or Sule, meaning 'to return home', one would not be likely to be chosen for a wedding party. Someone with a name like Morai ('to want'), on the other hand, would be an excellent person to accompany the groom. In that area, too, in the past, one of the party would be a slave carrying a bundle of firewood; this represents the duties of the husband toward his wife, one of which is to provide her with fuel for the hearth.

When they reach the bride's house, the company sit outside on the rice barn, the usual place for guests to sit. Only the man who is to make the offerings, and his assistant, go up into the house, where the bride is. The bride's family bears the cost of the proceedings, and the pig to feed the guests will by now have been killed. The offerings are made on three strips of banana leaf, placed inside the lid of a basket (*tongo'*), for the deities (*deata*), and in a long-stemmed wooden bowl called *dulang* for the ancestors (*to dolo*). The offerings



are made facing east, the direction of life and of the rising sun, in the *sali* or *bondon*, the middle or front room of the house. The offerings are *ditoding*, marked with drops of pig's blood, impressed with the thumb, and then the forehead and cheeks of the bride, who remains in the house, and the groom, who is seated outside on the barn, are also spotted with the blood, to bring them good fortune. The *to minaa*, if present, would perform a chant, calling down blessings on the couple and wishing them prosperity and many children. There are a number of variations of such chants, though they are rarely performed any more; Van der Veen (1950) recorded a particularly elaborate one from Kesu', which involved two priests, one representing the bride's party and one the groom's. Then everybody eats. The most important part of the occasion is the deciding of the *kapa'*, a fine of buffaloes which must be paid by the guilty party if there is a divorce. This is the outcome of negotiations by the council of village elders or *kombongan ada'*, who mediate between the two families. The latter will, in fact, have discussed the matter beforehand and arrived at a decision, so that there remains only to make sure that both sides are satisfied with the agreement. The elders also give good advice to the new couple, concerning how to make a success of their marriage and avoid quarrels. This is also considered an essential part of the proceedings. It is the presence of the village council and the settling of the *kapa'* which are the legitimizing elements of the ritual; in Malimbong, formerly, there was a slight difference in that the *kapa'* was only decided at the time of a divorce, not at the marriage itself, but nevertheless the legalizing element there was considered to be the presence of the council and the advice they gave to the couple. No council will be prepared, later, to arbitrate in a divorce proceeding if the *kapa'* was not formally decided by themselves or a similar council in the first place. Nowadays, one must also obtain a certificate, signed by witnesses, from the Kepala Desa, for a marriage to be considered legal, and if a *kapa'* has been agreed upon, this is written into the document.

When all this has taken place, the groom's party return home, leaving him and two friends who are jokingly called 'those who put [the new couple] to bed' (*to ma'pamamma*'). They do not actually do anything, but they remain to keep the groom company, sleeping either on the barn, or in the house if there is enough room. The groom now goes up into the house, taking with him a wooden bowl of meat and rice which was earlier placed beside him on the barn. He offers the bride some meat, which, if she is not feeling too shy, she eats. From now on they sleep together as man and wife. The groom's party take home with them a share of meat and rice in a basket for the parents of the groom. After three days, the women of the groom's family form a party and come to return the basket, now filled with uncooked rice, together with a piece of frying pan and a necklace. The necklace may be just a few gold beads, or an entire necklace, which is placed around the basket. The basket

itself is wrapped in a woman's blouse, and the whole is carried slung from the shoulder in a sarong (*disembe*'), just as one carries a baby. It is in fact called a 'baby' (*pia'-pia'*), and when they arrive at the bride's house, she takes it on her knees and bathes it like a baby, asking: 'What child is this?' (*Pia apa ra to'o?*), to which the visitors reply: 'It's a boy!' (*Pia muane!*). This little performance is called 'expectation of a child' (*pelambean anak*).<sup>7</sup> Although it implies a preference for boys, I found that generally, people expressed no overt preference for children of a particular gender, but hoped to have some of each sex. Some women maintained that it was good if the first child were a boy, since 'then he will grow up quickly and help his father with the ploughing'. But traditionally, children of either sex were very much desired; in the poetic language of ritual, the often-expressed wish is for children to carry *ma'soppo ma'kepak ma'katia patomali*, 'on our shoulders, on our hips, and in each arm'.

After a few days, the couple pay a visit to the groom's house, and if they are planning to take up residence there, they will stay; otherwise, they return after a few days to the bride's house. Older people claimed that uxorilocal residence, which as we have seen is a very marked tendency, was even more strongly the norm in the past. If they are still young, a newly-wed couple may continue to live with the bride's parents, at least for a few years, until they can afford to build a house of their own. So long as they continue to share the parents' hearth, however, they are regarded as being still 'fed' or 'provided for' (*dikurinni*; *kurin* means a cooking-pot) by the parents. We return here to the primary meaning of *mendapo'* as the setting up of a hearth; we may conclude that having one's own house (hearth) is the true sign of independent adulthood, more so than going through a marriage rite, or even having children. One would be ashamed, I was told, to build a new house in advance of the marriage – a single person building a house would be mocked, and asked why he was doing so, which suggests a strong identification of the house with a conjugal couple. It can be seen that the symbolic exchanges between the families of the bride and groom are neither expensive nor elaborated. The to-ing and fro-ing between their houses, with the gifts of meat and rice, is enough to represent the new ties established between them. As we would expect, there is no emphasis on the incorporation of one spouse into the family of the other, for their duty is to maintain balanced relations with each of them. For the bride there is likely to be a minimum of upheaval, since she will generally be staying in her own village, surrounded by family and friends, at least initially.

However simple the ceremony, the most important thing about the wedding, here as elsewhere, is the fact of recognition by the community. It does

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter XV for a fuller discussion of the theme of *pelambean* in indigenous religious ideas.

happen sometimes that a man lives with a woman for a long time and comes to be considered as married to her, even without the performance of any ceremony. In this case, what defines the two as man and wife is the fact of cohabitation and the husband's being seen to make some contribution to the running of the household. 'He splits wood for her' (*nale'tokan kayu*), or 'he fetches wood for her' (*naalan kayu*) is the key phrase here, distinguishing such a relationship from that with a woman who is visited only at night, who is only a 'night-time wife' (*baine bongi*), or with whom a man 'chews betel nut in secret' (*ma'pangan buni*). Generally, however, there is pressure on the man to marry either from the parents of the woman, who want to see her position legalized, or from the villagers themselves. They feel it is wrong for a stranger to come and take up residence with a woman without some formal introduction into the community, for the men of the village are workmates, who may often have occasion to join together in some communal labour to which all who can are expected to contribute (see the discussion of the *pa'tondokan* in Chapter XIII). This pressure to legitimize a union sometimes leads men to conceal the fact of their first marriage and go through the ceremony with another woman in a different village, though this is grounds for divorce if done without the knowledge of the first wife.

I witnessed three traditional marriages in Malimbong when I lived there.<sup>8</sup> None were first marriages. One involved the remarriage of a widow, Indo' Lappa'; her new husband was a widower with one child, who turned out to be distantly related to her. A second was the remarriage of Indo' Roa', a young woman whose husband had been absent in Palu (Central Sulawesi) working for a government forestry concern for several years. He had never written or remitted any money to her since her departure, and at last news had reached her that he had taken up with another woman in Palu. She now wished to marry again. Her first husband's family had agreed to a divorce, and no *kapa'* was demanded of them. In the third case, a woman, Limbong, remained unmarried at the age of thirty or so, though after a series of unfortunate affairs, she already had three children, all by different fathers. Finally a man called Silayang came to live with her, and after a week or two was pressed by the villagers and the Kepala Desa into going through a formal marriage ceremony. The villagers objected to his taking up residence among them without any formal introduction into the community. This man was known to be a very keen gambler, who already had five wives. It was feared that the last woman with whom he had been living might demand *kapa'*, but in fact she was unable to, because she had never been officially married to him. Prior to that, he had been married to this woman's cousin; when he divorced her the family had refused to let him marry another of their number,

<sup>8</sup> I have used pseudonyms in this section, since the information is rather personal.



for they said, 'If you don't like one of us, why should you like another?' Each of these marriage ceremonies was held in the late afternoon, and followed the simple traditional form, the participants gathering on the rice barn platforms outside the house. In Limbong's case, she and her father were Christian, while Silayang was an adherent of the Aluk To Dolo; after some argument it was agreed to hold the traditional rite, but omitting the sending of a basket to the groom's family (see above); in addition, they held a Christian prayer meeting a few days later. The main event in each case was the discussion of the *kapa'*, described poetically by the participants as 'the thread which binds the planting of the hearth' (*peporinna tananan dapo'*), and 'the pillow (*penallon/allonan*) on which [the couple] will rest their heads together' (that is, a form of security, providing a basis for the marriage). Pragmatically, in each case a decision was reached to have a *kapa'* of only two buffaloes, and not the large number which had been customary for aristocrats in past times. On each occasion, in between the elegant, indirect and poetic phrases typical of public speaking, and a certain amount of good-natured and somewhat ribald joking, sound and practical advice was offered very frankly to the couple. The advice is called *pa'sambona* or *passakkena*: 'that which covers (protects) them' or 'that which makes them cool (good, healthy)'. It is also known as *pa'pakilala* ('that which is to be remembered'). Speakers from both the bride's and the groom's party take turns to offer it. Here are some examples:

(At the wedding of Indo' Lappa' and Ambe' Taruk:)

There's just one more thing I'd like to say to our friend here (that is, the groom), because he already has a child, and similarly to Indo' Lappa', since she hasn't any children. You must consider this [when you have children of your own]: don't forget they already have one brother from outside, and you are really his mother now. You must teach your children – don't teach them to get angry; teach them good behaviour. If you should ever get angry with your husband, and then you hit the child, that's what makes trouble in a marriage, if you're angry with the husband and you take it out on the children. So, that's why I said earlier today, 'You must remember Papa' Poding [a man related to them both, who therefore acted as a central witness to the proceedings; in other words, they must think of the fact that they are related]' [...] That's why I said, 'You are really their true mother now, even if their own mother is no longer with us'. And the same goes for the father: if you get angry with your wife, don't take it out on the children. You both have experience of married life already, so you can't say later, 'Oh, the village council (*kombongan*) never explained this side of it to us!' [...] You must remember Papa' Poding, who stands as witness between the two of you.

(At the wedding of Indo' Roa' and Duma':)

My advice will be short, but to the point. [...] What I want to say to you is this: once you are married, you shouldn't always be turning to your parents for help, and relying on them – for, don't forget, you are not their only child. It's enough

that you should start with a capital of twenty [fingers]: ten from the man, and ten from the woman [that is, even if they have no property to start with, they each have their two hands to work with]. It's a big responsibility setting up house, but even if you have nothing, what matters is your character and your relations with others in the community. Remember Lotong, who came here from Padang Iring bringing nothing but his ten fingers (*sae na baa rakka' sangpulonga*), but who ended up being a great man here in Malimbong.<sup>9</sup>

(At the wedding of Limbong and Silayang:)

Limbong and Silayang must treat each other's children exactly as they treat their own. Don't believe all the gossip you may hear, unless you see with your own eyes what is going on, if you really want to have a husband. Because (excuse my saying this in front of our government officials) your husband is one who is always going off at night [because he likes to gamble]. So you must take this into account before you get angry with him.

There is a saying of our ancestors: 'When your husband leaves the house, he's not your husband any more' [that is, it's not your business what he does outside the home]. You mustn't listen to gossip.

It is not just a matter of the children, but of the parents, for when we marry, we exchange parents (*ke sibali ki', sisulle to matua ki'*). And in addition, we must cooperate with our other relatives through marriage. We must treat our children, our relatives, and our parents, all equally.

I want to advise you to be tolerant of each other's religions. You must not try to force each other to change your ways. If you're lying in bed chatting, and one of you says: 'How about becoming Christian, Silayang?' or: 'What about 'feeding the ancestors' [*pa'kandean nene*, another name for the Aluk To Dolo], Limbong?' and you say 'All right! Why not?' then that's fine. But if you don't want to change, then it doesn't matter.

Silayang, you must be straightforward with Limbong. If you are going ploughing, you must tell her where you'll be. If you're 'going ploughing' in the bamboo groves [attending an illegal cockfight], you must let her know, otherwise how will she know where to bring you your lunch!

But you, Limbong, if you go to take him his lunch, and he isn't where he said he would be, then you'd better keep calm as well!

And if you ask her for money to go gambling, you'd better tell her what it's for, otherwise if you come home and say you lost a lot of money, she'll be angry with you.

One more thing – if you, Silayang, should go to Talion [his family home] and

<sup>9</sup> Lotong was the richest man in Malimbong when he died in the 1950s; his story is told in Chapter XIII.

then bring some rice back with you, don't be shy about explaining where you got it. You must tell her if it's borrowed, especially if it's from any of your relatives [...] Don't pretend that they gave it to you if it is really borrowed, for then that person might come here and say: 'Where's Silayang? I want my rice!', and Limbong won't know anything about it. Because it's that sort of thing that commonly leads to misunderstandings, and bad feelings. I'm just giving an example about rice, but it applies to anything else you might borrow.

This advice which has been given cannot be stolen. It is like a possession that will never wear out, a rice field that will never be lost in a landslide, iron that will not rust. But all our advice is of no use unless you take it to heart.

These extracts give some idea of the rather forthright nature of the advice offered to newly married couples. In all three cases, stress was laid upon the *kapa'* as the secure foundation of the marriage, at the same time as there was agreement that this principle could be upheld even if the *kapa'* was kept at a modest level of only two buffaloes. A second recurring feature was the emphasis on equal treatment for the children of different marriages. The danger of step-parents being jealous or unkind is one that constantly recurs in folk tales, and it is cited as the main reason why in a divorce it is most often the mother who is given custody of young children rather than the father. Though many children will experience their parents' remarriage at some stage in their lives, once they are past the age of ten or so they have considerable freedom to choose their own place of residence and may change it if they feel they are being badly treated. They may go and live with other relatives or even non-kin if they feel like it, and earn their keep by helping with the many household and agricultural tasks that are always waiting to be done. Other advice concerns the desire for balance in the relations with parents-in-law and other affines on each side of the marriage; the importance of working together, even with limited resources; the shared responsibility of the couple for debts as well as profits; and the expectation that they will play their part in the community by being good neighbours. At Indo' Roa's wedding, the speakers made thorough but delicately phrased enquiries to ensure that there was complete agreement about the match, especially from the bride's family. This was not only because the first husband was being divorced in his absence, but because the new husband was of mixed rank: his mother had been a slave, but his father was of the highest nobility, the *tana' bulaan*, from the *tongkonan* of Pokko' in Sawangan. The council members wanted to ensure that these circumstances should not give rise to any unpleasant misunderstanding later on. In the last case, the character of the incoming husband was frankly addressed, with some realistic advice to the wife as to what she could expect, at the same time as the husband was urged to be more responsible. People said afterwards that it was better to be outspoken about these mat-

ters, which in any case were common knowledge, since only thus could more pressure be brought to bear on the couple to make their marriage work. In spite of their best efforts, however, the advice was not particularly effective, for Silayang did not stay long in the village; shortly after the wedding, he used the pretext of going to look for work in Palu to abandon his new wife.

When I asked people what was the most essential part of the wedding rite, the part that legitimized a union, they replied that it was these speeches and not, for example, the fact of eating together or any of the other elements that go to make up the occasion. One might think that the deciding of the *kapa'* was crucial, since this is, after all, a definite sanction on the couple, and a statement of the number of buffaloes decided on is entered in the marriage certificate. I was told, however, that up until Dutch times the *kapa'* had not, at any rate in Malimbong, been decided upon at the time of the wedding, but only in the actual event of a divorce. The Dutch changed this because it was the cause of so many quarrels when a divorce did take place. Previously, therefore, the giving of advice by the *kombongan* was the important thing. It is their involvement that legitimates the marriage in the eyes of the community. Although there is considerable tolerance of irregular unions and extra-marital affairs, some council members also expressed resentment of men who 'just go about looking for wives' and making no effort to integrate themselves into the community and play a responsible part in its affairs. The *kombongan* have the right to withhold judgement about *kapa'* in a divorce unless they have been present at the wedding, and its members say that they will 'take no responsibility' for the affairs of those who do not conform to this process.

#### *Marriage and status: intermarriage between ranks*

In the past a strong prohibition was placed on a woman marrying beneath her in the rank hierarchy. Fierce sanctions are said to have been enacted against couples who broke this taboo: they might be drowned, burned, or simply driven from the village. Men, on the other hand, were free to form relations with women of any rank, and this unevenness is reflected in some customary expressions. For a man, it is said: 'he can tread/kick high or low' (*dilese madao, dilese madiong*), although if a man of the highest rank (*tana' bulaan*) married a commoner, this might be scornfully referred to as 'making a water-pipe out of gold' (*umpatendan saruran bulaan*), with the implication of wasting one's wealth on a common object (water-pipes are usually made of bamboo). Aristocrats could just as easily have affairs with slave women without marrying them. For a woman to marry beneath herself was termed 'to climb up on the wood rack' (*unteka' palanduan*); since the rack above the fireplace is always black with soot, the implication here is that the woman has dirtied herself.

One man's explanation of the phrase was that, since the woman conventionally takes the lower position in intercourse, for her to have relations with a man who is 'beneath her' in terms of rank represents an unseemly inversion, a confusion of rank and sexual statuses. Gender hierarchy is rarely given such overt expression as this, though I have argued that the attitudes expressed with regard to gender relations often show a degree of ambivalence.

Even today, the marriage of a very high ranking person with someone of slave descent is rare and often leads to a complete severance, at least for some years, of relations with the parents of the couple. As for the slaves themselves, in the old days their lords had right of disposal over them, so that if, for example, a slave wished to marry the slave of another master, he could only do so with the agreement of both of them, and the couple and their children then became subject to two masters. The owners of the slaves, and village neighbours, would provide the necessaries for the ceremony, at which only chickens, and no pig, might be killed. Similarly, divorce could only be had with the consent of the owner, although the village council would also be convened.

The case of one Malimbong family illustrates some of the attitudes involved when marriage crosses rank boundaries. This was a relatively well-off family of the nobility. One of the daughters graduated from high school, and after taking a typing course, had a secretarial job in the government offices in Ma'kale. Here she met a man of slave descent who was making a career in the Police Force. He came from another district of Saluputti, not far from Malimbong. She lived with him in Ma'kale and they had a daughter, but her father was horrified and implacably opposed their marriage, in spite of the man's excellent career prospects (he later attended an academy for local government training, became a Kepala Desa, and married the niece of a wealthy bus company owner). Some said it was the woman herself who had refused to marry him, that she was 'high and mighty', or 'didn't know her own mind'. When she left him and went back to her father's house, she had a succession of lovers, none of whom made any marriage proposal. She took over the running of her parents' land as they became elderly, her other siblings having all married or taken jobs elsewhere. She herself told me she had wanted to marry the father of her first child, but had been deterred by parental opposition. She blamed the fathers of her subsequent children for their fickle behaviour with women. She would have liked to have kept her job in town, for she was proud of her education but, she concluded, 'that was not our fortune in life'.

One of her brothers went to Ujung Pandang to study at the university and while living there, met the daughter of one of the former slave families who lived in the hamlet next to his own village. She had a job as a domestic servant with a Chinese family. Though this affair was begun casually, he ended by falling in love with her, and decided, to his father's now mounting disgust

and indignation, to marry her. The son, however, proved tougher than the daughter and went ahead with the marriage. Ignoring his father's protests, he pointed out the advantages of marrying a slave: for one thing, there was no obligation to become involved in expensive contributions to other peoples' ceremonies in order to maintain face; and for another, whenever they had a ceremony, they could expect the girl's family to come and work for them for nothing, building shelters for the guests and generally helping in all the preparations. When his grandfather died, the son had an opportunity to prove this point, for the family did indeed come and work for nothing, just as he had said. He continued to visit home, after graduating from the university and getting a job in Ujung Pandang, disregarding his father's opinions on the subject of marriage. Had his sister done the same, her life might well have been happier, for it is unlikely that the rift with the father would have been permanent. Once a couple have children, they generally bring them and place them on their grandparents' knees, and then a reconciliation is almost invariable. By the 1970s, when it had become possible to make a career in the towns, or outside of Toraja altogether, children could potentially feel less strongly bound to their parents in making such decisions; at the present time, when most parents have given up arranging marriages for their children, concerns with rank are likely to become less strict.

Even where the two families involved are of equal status, affinal relations may involve a strong element of competition to maintain face. Parents, and other members of the family, can get involved in a marriage and sometimes apply considerable pressure to break it up, if they disapprove of the partner. Questions of rank, or ceremonial relations, are often the factors putting strain on the relationship from this direction. In one instance, a man owed money to one of his gambling partners, and took one of the pigs belonging to himself and his wife to pay the debt. This annoyed his father-in-law, who came to their house, and accused him of always taking what didn't belong to him. He demanded immediate payment of a funeral debt owed by his son-in-law's family, saying he needed a large pig to take to another upcoming funeral. To demand payment directly in this way was an additional insult, since these debts are supposed merely to be remembered by the creditor, and repaid in the system of long term reciprocity at some future funeral when the debtor feels able to afford it. The unlucky son-in-law begged help from his elder brother. The latter was so incensed at the insults to his family's honour that he at once took a large pig of his own, and delivered it in person to the father-in-law. When the young man's father heard of these events, he was furious and ordered his son to have nothing more to do with his wife or her family. In this case, the woman herself did not want the marriage to end, but her father saw an excuse to meddle, since he disliked his son-in-law and wanted to get rid of him.

When a marriage takes place between two noble families of completely



different areas, status considerations may assume an even more exaggerated importance. It happened once that a noble from Malimbong wanted to send a delegation to propose to an aristocratic young woman from Rantepao. The nobles of Rantepao and Ma'kale typically lay much more stress on status and deference to rank, so that Toraja of the western areas accuse them of being boastful. People in Saluputti are proud of their more egalitarian traditions, and boasting is considered in very bad taste. Their attitude is that people should know where deference is due, but should it happen that one is not treated according to one's true rank, one maintains a dignified silence. By contrast, I was often told of an occurrence at a funeral in Tondon, an area known for the pride of its aristocracy, where a quarrel over the distribution of meat shares at a funeral had ended in murder.

Thus it happened that, when the delegation was asked by the girl's family what sort of standing the suitor held in his community, in spite of the fact that he was from one of the most important families in the area, they replied modestly that he was 'just an ordinary person'. This answer was taken at face value, and although the proposal was accepted, the family did everything possible to shame him, and he in his turn constantly went out of his way to impress them in order to live down the initial impression created by this incident. Whenever they had a ceremony, he would always attend with the largest possible group he could muster, bringing many large pigs and the very best spotted buffaloes. On one occasion when the Rantepao family held an exceptionally large funeral, which was attended by thousands of guests, he assembled so many groups to accompany him that when they processed into the funeral ground, they reached from the reception room right around the ground and beyond, all finely dressed, and bringing in all over a hundred pigs with them. When, however, his own grandmother died, the Rantepao family came in a group of nine or ten people, bringing with them one pig and one tiny buffalo with horns of about one finger's length, instead of the huge span usually expected and admired on these occasions. To be sure of getting his own back, the host ordered the men who receive the guests at the entrance to the ground to halt any other groups, so that when the guests from Rantepao came in, everyone would be able to see just how small and inadequate their group was. At the same time his mother, leaning out of the balcony where she was sitting, called out in a penetrating voice: 'Watch out, children! This buffalo will be running around looking for its mother!' For good measure, she added: 'Do you still remember how my son came to Londa with eight pigs and a spotted buffalo?' This was how the Malimbong family finally succeeded in putting to shame their boastful in-laws. The next time they came to attend a funeral, they arrived in a large group, bringing well-proportioned buffaloes and thirty-eight pigs.

These stories illustrate the burdens that may be incurred through mar-

riage in Toraja, and how especially acute the competition is likely to be where people marry outside of their own circle of kin and their own district. They also show the concern that still attaches to rank and its expression in public, ceremonial contexts. They help to illustrate why some people claim that there are benefits to marrying a non-Toraja and thus reducing one's ceremonial commitments. As to marriage across rank boundaries, women are the ones who carry the main burden of preserving 'purity' of rank through hypergamy. As in many societies, women of high rank, while enjoying a privileged status, were subject to a greater number of restrictions than commoner women were. In spite of restrictions on their marriages, it is clear that because men were not so constrained, there has in fact been a great deal of marriage between ranks, so much so that according to some people, almost everyone in a village can typically trace some tie to its leading *tongkonan*, either through marriage or because their ancestors were formerly bound to it as slaves.

#### *Modernity and the changing style of weddings*

As in many parts of the world, where modernity involves the penetration of indigenous cultures by world religions and the administrative devices of the nation state, there are now several different ways of getting married which are often carried out in combination. Christians may, if they choose, dispense with the old form of marriage altogether, and merely get a certificate from the Kepala Desa, complemented by a church service. No set wedding service is followed, but prayers are said and accompanied with Bible readings and probably a sermon. They may or may not decide on a *kapa'* to be written into the marriage certificate. For villagers, however, it is most common to hold a Christianized version of the traditional ceremony, and to have a *kapa'*. In the towns, the situation is different, as also for Government employees, including teachers. The latter are not supposed to follow the *adat* form but should marry in the Civil Registry Office in Ma'kale. They do not have a *kapa'*. Many townspeople also marry in the Registry Office, and follow this with a church service and a western-style reception afterwards, to which guests often bring presents of household goods, cutlery, enamel ware, glasses, trays and so forth, which the couple will need to set up house. This is unheard-of in a traditional wedding, but it was pointed out by a family who had relatives in both the town and the country, when their daughter was about to marry, as being one of the advantages of holding the wedding in the town, instead of going to the village to be at their family *tongkonan*. A lot of the presents were afterwards divided out to village relatives to thank them for their assistance in the preparations (such as in helping to cook the food for the reception), rather than being kept by the newlyweds themselves. The presents were,

however, carefully recorded, all of them being opened by a family member before numerous witnesses, since these articles form part of the property of the couple which would have to be divided equally between them if there were a divorce. The mother of the bride was keen for them to arrange a *kapa'*, but her daughter resisted this suggestion as unsuitable to their status as Government employees; she is a nurse, and her husband a schoolteacher.

For those few Toraja who are Muslim, the Muslim form of marriage is followed. The husband pays bridewealth, and there is no *kapa'*. A Christian family whose daughter eloped with a Muslim boy expressed their opposition to the match mainly in terms of their dislike of the bridewealth custom. They said it was as if the girl was being 'bought' – an idea which they found distasteful, and which I have heard echoed by others when bridewealth is mentioned. However, they were soon reconciled after the marriage had taken place. On the whole there is considerable tolerance for marriages across religious boundaries, so long as people are seen to be sincere in their chosen faiths; it is regarded as possibly dangerous to change one's religion lightly or repeatedly.

With all these different ways of obtaining social or legal recognition for a marriage, people may end up getting married several times over. Christians, especially, may go to church, get a civil document from their Kepala Desa, and hold a gathering along the lines of the old traditional ceremony. It can also be seen that the newer forms of marriage have tended to throw into question the legitimacy of the old: government employees are discouraged from having a *kapa'*, and the Registry Office introduces a new legal and bureaucratic element. In the process, the traditional rite has clearly become devalued; but there has been some degree of opposition to this, for Aluk To Dolo is after all an officially recognized religion. So by the early 1990s, a step had been taken toward reaffirming the recognition of Aluk To Dolo by granting its official representative in each district (*kecamatan*) the right to issue their own certificates of marriage. This in itself indicates a new bureaucratization of Alukta: the representatives are members of a Toraja-wide organization called the Parandangan Ada', which was founded in 1969 (at the same time that Aluk To Dolo was granted government recognition), and which has been fighting, somewhat ineffectively, a losing battle against the demise of the indigenous religion.

Commonly only one pig is killed for the wedding ceremony, even for *diparampo allo* in many areas. According to Pak Kila', the ancestors ordained things this way because they said, 'Don't plant a peanut and put a stone on top of it; don't start a household and load it with debts'. By the 1970s, there was a tendency for Christians to ignore this traditional restriction and to kill as many as ten, a trend which had only become more marked by the end of the 1990s, when some people were receiving 20 or 30 pigs at a wedding, particu-

larly in the towns. These pigs are principally brought by the parent's siblings, and become a debt which the parents must repay when their nephews and nieces marry. The contrast between the traditional wedding and the funeral is quite dramatic, the former having none of the extravagant sacrificing and competitive display which characterizes the latter. It is hard to say how much the new pattern of expenditure on weddings reflects a received perception of the great importance which Christianity has attached to the sacrament of marriage, or how much it simply reflects the rising living standards of people in the towns. A number of new elements have been added to the proceedings, which show borrowings from various sources. It is now popular to send out printed invitations, to have a white wedding dress in Western style, and for the guests to give wedding presents. In the villages, people may prefer to wear *adat* costume rather than western wedding dresses. I attended one wedding in Ma'kale in 1996 where the bride and groom sat in state in the style of the Bugis and Malay practice called *bersanding*. According to this custom, the bride and groom are treated as 'king and queen' for a day and sit enthroned and motionless, with attendants beside them, while the guests are feasted. In this instance, they sat on a dais that had been prepared in a special temporary structure in front of the *tongkonan*. It was decorated with red cloth, on which heirloom objects were displayed: circular gold *lola'*, ancestral *kris* (daggers) and beaded hanging ornaments called *kandaure*. Today's innovations can thus be said to involve a synthesis of local, provincial and international elements. As for the marital relationship, the ideal of a cooperative partnership remains at the heart of it, as it has always been.

## CHAPTER XIII

# Land, labour and inheritance

Subsistence agriculture continues to provide the livelihood of the great majority of people in Tana Toraja today. Land is the vital, inalienable resource which underpins both subsistence production, and the ceremonial economy which draws upon it. However, shortage of land, especially land suitable for wet rice cultivation, has been a factor of great significance in Toraja society. This has caused a steadily increasing flow of outmigration from the latter part of the twentieth century until the present. Today it is the hope of every family to be able to augment their incomes with the remittances of members who have left to seek work elsewhere, a factor that has much to do with the efflorescence of the ceremonial economy which I analyse in Chapter XVIII. The scarcity of land is linked to a relatively high population density, a historical feature of the Toraja highlands which is quite uncharacteristic for Sulawesi as a whole (Bigalke 1981:79-81; Roth 2004:167). Roth sees this factor as driving many of the problems of the late nineteenth century. While the nobles fought each other to amass more land, the consequences for ordinary people were increasing poverty and landlessness, or deteriorating terms for sharecroppers. Pacification and improved health care during the colonial period of the early twentieth century brought rapid population increase here as elsewhere in the archipelago, putting added pressure on land. From the 1920s onward there was some emigration to Luwu', though this was often seasonal, as people were forced to earn money to pay their taxes. But it was from the mid-1960s, when peaceful conditions were finally restored, that the outward movement of Toraja migrants really accelerated. Movement of Toraja to lowland Luwu', with the aim of opening new wet rice lands in previously uncultivated areas, developed on a scale that Roth (2004:168) describes as 'massive', while others set off to Palu in Central Sulawesi to work for logging companies, or to the nickel mines at Malili, or to seek employment with oil companies in Kalimantan. In the past two decades, a boom in cocoa production also led considerable numbers of Toraja to migrate to areas of Central Sulawesi where they were able to do well from this new cash crop. Some of these migrants were forced to flee the ethnic violence around Poso in 2000, and returned to Tana Toraja as refugees. At present, Toraja can be found in

many parts of Indonesia as far afield as West Papua, as well as overseas, and Kalimantan has lately become the most favoured destination. But for those who remain, farming is still the predominant activity.

Interests in land are vital to the relative self-sufficiency of most Toraja households. In this chapter I try to build a picture of the complications surrounding access to land, and the many and sometimes devious strategies by which it changes hands. This is important to an understanding of interlocking economic values in Tana Toraja, especially those of land, rice and buffaloes. In my final chapter, I shall discuss in more detail how some of those values have changed or persisted, both in relation to each other and in response to the gradual and increasing penetration of money into the economy throughout the twentieth century. The rules of inheritance are one of the important factors driving the competitive sacrifice of buffaloes at funerals which is such a distinctive feature of Toraja social life, though as I shall show, these rules differ significantly in different areas, with corresponding effects on the intensity of competition.

During my residence in Buttang it was chiefly my concern with gender that led me to be interested in landholding patterns. I predicted that the bilateral inheritance system which allowed equal rights of inheritance to children of both sexes must be very important in ensuring for women the high degree of autonomy that they enjoy. I was also trying to understand how much the level of social inequality in Malimbong might differ from that in other areas where the nobility, I knew, wielded greater power and had relatively huge landholdings. At the most basic level I wondered whether or not most households had enough rice to last them through the year. The tax registers held by the *desa* office were my main source in attempting to understand patterns of land distribution, since people were liable to be offended by direct questions about how much land or rice they had, and might well choose not to answer them accurately. As I became increasingly interested in houses as the focal points of the kinship system, I also attempted to understand how the fortunes of certain origin houses might rise and fall over time. If land was basically regarded as an inalienable resource, not available for sale, then how was it possible for successful individuals to convert wealth into land, as some clearly had in their efforts to build up the reputation of particular *tongkonan*, and how might a house lose its properties again and fall on hard times? The tax registers revealed the extent of two very common means by which rights over land, or the right to work it, can change hands, albeit on a temporary basis: sharecropping and pawning. Landholdings can scarcely be expanded here except by the avenue of obtaining other people's land in pawn, as security for a loan; but since according to *adat* law the original owners retain an inextinguishable right to redeem the land if they can pay their debts, to consolidate such holdings is almost impossible.



The tax registers confirmed that in Malimbong there are relatively few people who are completely landless. This contrasts with some other regions (such as Nanggala) where land is far more concentrated in the hands of the aristocracy, and there are a great many landless people who depend on day labour and sharecropping arrangements to survive. The quality of rice land can be assessed in terms of the number of *kutu'* or bunches of rice it is capable of producing in a single harvest. Rice land in Malimbong is relatively fertile, being more or less evenly divided, according to statistics which I gathered from the *desa* office, between grades I, II and III (categories calculated according to the expected yield per are).<sup>1</sup> At the time of my first fieldwork, 51.6% of householders in Malimbong were paying tax on less than a quarter of a hectare, which is not very much; from talking to people, I knew it was a safe bet that a good proportion of these were also working land belonging to others, on which they did not have to pay the tax, but to arrive at exact figures was impossible. Most households are involved in such arrangements, however I have no reason to doubt what people themselves claimed, that the majority at that time had not enough rice to meet their needs for the year. Most of the families in Buttang relied heavily on cassava to make up the difference in the daily diet, saving what rice they had for special occasions when they might have to feed guests. Selling rice was also one of the few ways open to them to obtain cash, which they needed for school fees, clothes, salt, paraffin, and the few other items in which they were not self-sufficient. By the 1990s this had changed; cassava had become a very minor part of the diet, and while most people still felt themselves to be cash-poor, they were able to make up their shortfall in rice by buying it with the proceeds from their cocoa or vanilla harvests. Since Tana Toraja does not produce enough to meet its own needs, most of this surplus rice is imported from the rice-exporting areas of the South Sulawesi lowlands.

#### *Sale, pawning and sharecropping of land*

Except in rare instances, land is not owned outright by individuals, but is regarded as a family resource. Land, as we have seen, is closely associated with the house and its descendants, and is continually divided between them over the generations. Inheritance gives one the right to work it, but not to sell it. All the rice fields are named, and descendants must know these names in order to defend their inheritance. If a person dies without heirs, their property reverts to their siblings and siblings' children. It is possible, under the provisions of the Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria no. 5, 1960 (Basic Agrarian

<sup>1</sup> 1 are = 1/100th hectare or 100 square metres.

Law of 1960), to have one's land surveyed and obtain a deed to it, but when I lived in Malimbong in the late 1970s, only one person in the *desa* had done so. This was not land that had ever formed part of a family inheritance, however; it was formerly unoccupied land beside the road, on which he had built a new house. Given how closely land is associated with the origin houses from which people trace their descent, there is a strong feeling that family land should never be allowed to pass into the hands of strangers. Those in urgent need of funds therefore prefer to give their land as security on a loan, rather than sell, so that however long it may take them to repay the debt, the land is always recoverable. In Malimbong in 1978, one hectare of land was reckoned as being worth about 40 buffaloes of the standard size known as *sangpala'*, but the actual number of buffaloes invested in a rice field may vary depending on the quality of the land and the particular history of transactions.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes by repeated loans to the same person, however, the lender can make a piece of land more difficult to redeem; if the land has been pawned again to a third party this may also add to the cost of redemption. Shortage of land forces prices up in Tana Toraja, while the system of evaluating land in terms of buffaloes (whose value is itself spiralling because of their central role in the ceremonial economy) has also tended to raise the value of land. Over the last twenty years, the development of tourism has meant that the sale of land has become very much more common in the belt along the main road between Ma'kale and Rantepao. Land prices there have outstripped older ways of calculating the value of land in terms of numbers of buffaloes; where this had happened, a piece of land pawned long ago might be worth so much more than the original buffaloes borrowed, that the current holder may insist on redemption at its cash market value.

In more outlying areas, sale is still highly unusual, but there did exist a traditional ritual procedure by which land might be sold outright. Land sold in this way was called *dibaluk mammi'* or *dipamammi'* (*dibaluk*, 'sold'; *mammi'*, 'delicious', meaning that the sale was very favourable to the buyer). One person told me that sale was in the past *pemali*, or prohibited, while another said that land should never be sold because it was *sondana to matua*, 'that which takes the place of our parents', that is, the inheritance which they leave for us, and *susu mammi'na mellotong ulu*, 'the sweet milk of the hairs of our heads', in other words the livelihood of our descendants. In spite of this, however, he himself was planning to sell his land in Tana Toraja when he retired as a teacher, and move to Palopo on the east coast of the peninsula, where land could be purchased much more cheaply. The traditional form of a sale was as follows: the buyer, the seller and a number of witnesses (at least three,

<sup>2</sup> *Sangpala'* refers to the length of the horns, reaching from the fingertips to a spot one palm's breadth above the wrist.

generally members of the *kombongan ada'* or village council) would go to the edge of the rice field in question. At the edge of the rice field a pig was sacrificed by the buyer of the land. In Malimbong, three chickens and a dog were also sacrificed. Offerings were made to the deities (*deata*) and the ancestors (*to dolo*) before the witnesses, and a haunch of the pig was given to the seller of the land. The seller, once the sale was concluded, might never again eat of the product of that field, and if its new owner were ever to give rice to the former owner, he had to make sure that it did not come from there. In Malimbong, the priest or *to minaa* was also called as a witness, and made the seller swear an oath to the effect that he, and his descending generations, would be destroyed if they ever again washed their hands in the water of that field or ate of its produce. In the rest of Tana Toraja, the practice was to mark the sale by planting a sandalwood tree (*sendana*) at the rice field's edge. In Malimbong, on the other hand, *sendana* are only planted on the founding of a *pa'buaran*, or sacred ground upon which the *ma'buat*, greatest of the Rites of the East, is celebrated. In the absence of written records, the tree became an enduring sign in the landscape, a proof for those who came after. The witnesses were supposed to pass on to their descendants their knowledge of the transaction. Today, documents are drawn up and signed by the witnesses, and the evidence of a witness's descendant would no longer be acceptable in the courts. It was not unknown, however, for a tree to be planted on the sly beside a disputed piece of land. I was told of one case, where a man of Sesean had pledged a rice field called Lambanan to the local District Head during Dutch times. There had been a document recording the transaction, but the latter destroyed his copy and secretly planted a *sendana* at the field's edge, refusing to return the land. When the owner saw this tree, he tore it up, but his efforts to redeem the land were in vain, and eventually he was obliged to take the case to the Court in Ma'kale.

The solemnity surrounding the sale of land, requiring the seller to bring down a curse on himself should he ever have anything to do with it again, reflects the traditional feeling that the sale of family lands is immoral. In spite of that, land does change hands quite frequently through pledging or pawning, and sharecropping arrangements are also common. Land that is held in pawn is called *dipa'pentoan*, (from *toe*, 'to hold'; I. *digadai*). Generally, the land is listed as '*gadai*' in the tax registers under the name of the person working it, since, until it is redeemed, he has full rights to the product of the land, and therefore pays the tax on it. The loan is commonly in the form of buffaloes. The owner and his or her descendants theoretically never lose their rights in the land, but once it has been pawned it may be generations before they are able to redeem it. This gives rise to numerous possibilities for disputes once the original witnesses to a transaction have passed away. On this point, national law is not in accord with *adat* principle. The Basic Agrarian Law of 1960 provides

that any land under lease may be redeemed automatically by the owner after seven years, regardless of whether the debt has been paid or not. This ruling is scarcely acceptable in Tana Toraja however, and people said they would be ashamed to redeem land without paying their debts. All over Indonesia, national and *adat* laws coexist, giving judges considerable room for discretion where they contradict each other. From my conversations with the judges in the courts in Ma'kale (who were mostly themselves Toraja), my impression was that they almost invariably applied local *adat* principles in land disputes.

There are two main reasons for pawning land: to borrow buffaloes at short notice to be used as funeral sacrifices, or to pay gambling debts. There is some social pressure to loan a buffalo for funeral purposes, while the lender can rely on the obligation of reciprocity that governs the ceremonial exchange system to guarantee eventual repayment. To borrow for other purposes – to raise money for medical expenses if you are sick, for instance – is much harder, as I learned in a conversation with a woman from a neighbouring village to Buttang, who had been diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1982. She could no longer afford to pay for treatment, although she could expect the sacrifice of several buffaloes at her funeral. During the 1970s, gambling was illegal at all times other than at the specially licensed cockfights which took place as an essential step in the very highest ranking funerals; in the 1980s and 1990s, suppression of gambling was a major goal of the local administration, which refused permits even for this purpose. This caused much ill feeling among the remaining adherents of the Aluk to Dolo, who maintain that such funerals cannot be completed without the cockfight. Legal or not, however, there is no denying that many men (rarely women) in Tana Toraja are very fond of gambling and some of them make a hobby of it, with the usual regrettable consequences for their household finances. In the past, as we have seen, it was a positive obsession of the aristocracy, especially in the late nineteenth century. Cockfights can be held surreptitiously on distant mountainsides, and some households discreetly entertain card and dice players late at night. Since the end of the New Order, there has been a notable resurgence of cockfighting. The sums that change hands at a big cockfight could run into millions of Rupiah in the 1970s, and with devaluation today no doubt are in the tens of millions. An acquaintance who was a keen gambler explained to me how he made use of the cockfight as an opportunity for investment. He used capital saved from his teacher's salary to lend money to other gamblers, taking land in pawn in exchange. On one occasion he had lent a man from Malimbong Rp. 160,000 at a cockfight, in exchange for a good rice field of his in the neighbouring *desa* of Ulusalu. He gave this land to another man to work for him by a 50/50 sharecropping arrangement. At that time, the sum was worth two buffaloes, which then cost Rp. 80,000 each. It was only two months before harvest time; at harvest, his share came to 500 *kutu'* (sheaves),

which he sold in the market at Ulusalu. He then demanded repayment of his money, making a healthy profit on the loan. Even so, he reckoned that the land, being fertile, would have produced more than 1,000 *kutu'* in all, and that the sharecropper had cheated him somewhat over the division.

*Desa* Office statistics for the six *kampung* of Malimbong in 1978 revealed that an average of 9.5% of rice land was held in pawn. Several of the biggest landowners in the *desa* were listed as having holdings nearly all of which were pawned land. One was an aristocrat and former District Head who had inherited a fair amount of land from his parents, but had greatly augmented his holdings during his lifetime by obtaining land in pawn. Others were teachers, who were able to make use of their readier access to cash to buy buffaloes and make investments, by lending them to those in need and taking land as security. Two such examples could be found in Buttang itself; they were both men who had started out inheriting very little land from their own parents. Land held in pawn, however, is difficult to consolidate, since it is always subject to redemption by its owners. There were one or two cases of people who, from very humble beginnings, as a duck herder, trader, or even, in one instance, an expert in the castration of dogs, had built up their wealth and obtained large amounts of pledged land.

Sharecropping is a common arrangement both within the family and between people who are not related to each other. The general arrangement in the 1970s was for the crop to be divided in half between the worker and the owner at harvest time, after the recovery of costs, such as tax, seed rice and workers' wages. Land worked in this way is called *disibalii* ('shared' or 'halved'). This method of division had not always held for the whole of Toraja, for I was told that in the area around Rantepao, the owner of the land used to take 5/8 of the harvest and the worker only 3/8. The owner's share was called *taa litak* or 'the share of the earth', while to sharecrop was termed *ma'tallung lesu* or 'to take 3/8'. That arrangement had come to be considered unfair, and by the close of the century shares had shifted still further in favour of the sharecropper, who at the present time commonly takes 2/3, indicating a quite significant shift in the value of labour. Sharecropping arrangements may stand for many years, or for one harvest only, for the owner has the right to take back the field at any time. A field may be given to someone to look after even after it has already been planted, or it may be requested from a wealthy person by a landless one, who may plead for some land to plough. Again, if a person has land in their home *desa* but marries and goes to live some distance away, they will commonly give their land there to a relative, usually a sibling, to work, and simply go at harvest to collect their share. There is no strong ethic of cooperation between siblings in working land together, but no matter how little land there may be, each prefers to take his or her own share. When I asked whether a group of siblings might cooper-

ate to work a piece of land in which they all had rights, I was told that such an arrangement could never work, for they would be bound to quarrel, and besides, some would be lazier than others.

One other possible alternative, if the land is really too little to be worth dividing, is to allow one sibling to work the land on behalf of all of them, taking half the product, while the other half will be divided among all of them, including the worker. Thus, if there were five siblings, the worker would take  $1/2$  plus  $1/10$  of the total harvest. Most people who live and work in town still have rights in land in their home villages, allowing siblings or relatives to work it, and coming at harvest time to collect their share, which they may either take home or sell on the spot, using the money to buy rice in town. Whoever the sharecropper is, even if it is a brother or a sister, the owner will usually suspect that he or she will cheat on the division and take more than their share, since for the one not on the spot it is almost impossible to be sure about the exact amount of the harvest. For their part, village people often have their grouses about their relatives in town, who are perceived to be comparatively wealthy and therefore open to charges of stinginess. A few families have individual members who have had very successful careers, for instance in the army or civil service, which have taken them to Jakarta or elsewhere. I was able to observe that even these people took care to maintain landholdings in Tana Toraja, for the careers of civil servants in particular are often linked to a senior patron and mentor. If this mentor should fall out of favour and lose his position in a certain ministry, then often those around him will fall with him, for the next incumbent can be expected to promote his own protégés. For this reason, and also sometimes with a view to their retirement, these people kept lands at home, and used the occasion of their return to attend funerals to oversee their sharecropping arrangements and seek out more land to be held in pawn.<sup>3</sup> They might also be checking on *mana'* land dedicated to the *tongkonan*, whose product is stored and used to feed people at rituals, or to help finance expenditures associated with the house.

When I lived in Buttang in the late 1970s, a majority of households (17 out of 24) were engaged in sharecropping arrangements of some kind. Of these, ten were between family members, mainly parents or siblings, one or two between more distant relatives or a combination of these. Two were between neighbours in the village, three were arrangements to work the land of wealthy outsiders, one was land given to a non-relative to work in exchange for a debt, and one family was working land belonging to both parents, neighbours, and outsiders. Although land so rarely changes hands through sale, then, we can conclude that there is much more flexibility than might at first sight appear in actual patterns of access to land.

<sup>3</sup> Some examples are discussed in Waterson (1993).



*Principles of inheritance*

Because land is in short supply, claims to it are often hotly contested. A dispute may be heard first of all by a gathering of village elders, the *kombongan ada'*, who have the advantage of collective memory about local landholdings and family affairs, but those who are not satisfied with their deliberations can take their case to court in Ma'kale. At an early stage of my fieldwork, I often attended the courts and was permitted to study the archive of past cases, which provided many insights into the workings of the inheritance system. I also gathered detailed information about some well-known local land disputes in Saluputti. In reading the court files I was struck by the sometimes completely contradictory claims brought by disputing parties, for where land has been held in pawn for several generations already, memory fades and one party may craftily try to advance a claim that it was really their family's inherited property all along. Other complications arise where a man has had multiple marriages and the inheritance is disputed between the offspring of legitimate and unofficial unions. Most problematic of all is often the situation arising when a wealthy person dies childless, in which case a wider range of closer and more distant relatives, as well as adopted children, are entitled to make claims on the inheritance, competing to assert these claims by the generosity of their funeral sacrifices. Sometimes the disputants become obsessed and may continue their quarrel through higher and higher levels of the judiciary, doubtless expending far more than the value of the land in dispute rather than admit defeat. In one notorious case in Malimbong, which had gone on for over a decade, the loser out of pride refused to accept repeated (and actually rather reasonable) verdicts against him and continued to pursue the case through the provincial courts in Makassar and all the way to the Mahkamah Agung or Supreme Court in Jakarta, eventually to be faced with a much more unfavourable verdict against himself than the original one. In the process, people observed, he had gone 'crazy' and made himself 'thin' with thinking about it, finding new grounds to begin it all over again and squandering much of his inheritance on these efforts.<sup>4</sup> In short, matters concerning inheritance and disputes over the control of land account for virtually all the cases heard in the regency's courts at Ma'kale. 'What would people have to quarrel about, if they weren't related?' was Bua' Sarungallo's laconic response, when I sought once to confirm that nearly all these cases involved quarrels between relatives.

As we have seen, marriage entails the setting up of an independent hearth and household. Inheritance *inter vivos* is therefore common practice, if the parents have sufficient land. As children grow up and marry, parents will

<sup>4</sup> This and a variety of other cases are discussed in full in Waterson (1981:341-65).

give them shares of rice land to work for themselves, so that they can be independent. Sometimes the land given is formally declared to be *tana tekken* (*tana*: 'land'; *tekken*: 'a walking-stick', intended to provide support for the newly-married couple). This term corresponds to the Indonesian *harta asal* or 'property of origin'. The product of the land is shared between husband and wife during the marriage, and the land itself will be inherited by their children; but should the couple remain childless, it will revert to close relatives of the owner, and cannot be inherited by the spouse. Should the couple divorce, each partner retains their own *tekken* properties. *Tekken* is also given to adopted children as a means of formalizing the adoption (as opposed to fostering, which is much more common but does not ensure the child's position as a potential heir). The remainder of the parents' lands are not divided until after they have both died. While all children of both sexes have an equal right of inheritance from their parents, the giving of *tekken* is subject to the parents' own wishes, and they may favour some of their children over others if they want to. Obviously, only parents with plenty of land can afford to give any at all as *tekken*, and very often they simply give their children the right to sharecrop a portion of land instead, sharing the crop between them. In this way the parents can secure their own sustenance even after they become too old for heavy agricultural work.

Property acquired by the couple through their joint efforts during their marriage is called *torakna rampanan kapa'*, or 'property of the marriage'. Such property is in principle to be divided equally in the event of divorce, and may include household goods and furnishings, as well as land, buffaloes, or other investments, such as coffee, clove or cacao trees planted during the marriage. The term corresponds to the Indonesian *harta pencaharian*, or 'acquired property'. *Ma'torak* means literally to weed the banks of a rice field with a trowel, and metaphorically implies that which is gained through the couple's own hard work. Sometimes, according to the discretion of the judge or village council hearing a divorce case, one partner may be awarded more than half of the *torakna rampanan kapa'*, depending on who is regarded as more responsible. Since it is the woman who is nearly always given custody of the children until they are old enough to choose where they will live, and since she also frequently retains the house (if it is built on her family land), she may be awarded a larger share on the grounds that she will have to take charge of it on behalf of the children, whose property it will eventually become. A strong feeling is commonly expressed that a step-mother will not be as loving or look after the children so well as their real mother, and for this reason it is the mother who is considered best fitted to guard their inheritance as well. Any property acquired in a subsequent marriage would be inherited only by the children of that marriage, while the new spouse would also retain control of any property which she had inherited from her parents. The strict separa-

tion of the two kinds of property is expressed in the saying: *Daka' dolo na daka' undian tangsilambanan* ('that which is acquired first and that which is acquired later must not be mixed up together'). To these categories may be added a third, of property acquired individually by one or other of the spouses, known as *barang pa'belang-belang* (*belang*: 'single'). In principle, though, husband and wife are supposed to pool their resources, and not to take decisions about the economic affairs of the household without consulting each other.

Children have the duty not only of looking after their parents in old age, but of seeing that their funerals are properly celebrated. They must sacrifice buffaloes and pigs, which within the traditional world view are deemed to follow the deceased to the afterlife to provide them with wealth there. As heirs, they have the right strictly to control who else makes such funeral sacrifices, and to prevent any other claimants elbowing in on the inheritance, for the right to inherit is closely linked to the duty of sacrificing a buffalo for the deceased. The supreme social importance of funerals provides the theme of my concluding chapters. Only after the funerals of both parents will the heirs meet to decide on the division of the inheritance. It is not customary to make a will, though parents may sometimes indicate how they would like the property to be divided, in the hope of averting any quarrels among their offspring after they have died. Giving most of the land in the form of *tekken* may serve the same purpose.

If a couple remain childless (*tamanang*), then a division will take place after the death of one of them. The relatives of the deceased spouse will then claim back the lands which he or she brought to the marriage, as well as a half share of the *torakna rampanan kapa'*, the land or other property acquired during the marriage. The question of who has a right to inherit is in these circumstances more complex, and it is in order to prevent quarrels breaking out that a certain number of nephews and nieces are generally adopted outright, giving them alone status as heirs. Otherwise, all of a person's siblings and their children, and even cousins and their children, may try to claim a share of the inheritance. For these purposes, potential heirs are divided into two categories, *sarume* and *solong*. Siblings and their children, and first cousins, are called *sarume*, and second cousins and beyond are called *solong*. The two terms refer to the inner and outer leaves, respectively, that encase the *kalosi* or areca nut when it is growing on the palm – a characteristically Austronesian application of botanical metaphors to kinship relations. Inner leaves represent the closest relatives, who have full rights of inheritance in the circumstances described, while the outer leaves, which are the first to drop off, represent the more distant kin, whose rights are secondary. In addition, a different principle of division of the property is followed, that of *ma'tallang*. This means that, instead of dividing the land into equal shares, the division is directly related to the number of buffaloes each heir contributes to the

funeral. In other words, if one of the heirs kills ten buffaloes, and another only one, the first will inherit ten times as much land as the second. If spotted buffaloes (*tedong bonga*), which are valued at ten or twelve times as much as an ordinary black buffalo – are killed, this too affects the calculations when it comes to the division of the property.

This system of *ma'tallang* is, in Saluputti, resorted to only where a couple die childless, while on all other occasions, attempts are made to divide the property equally. Given the small amount of land owned by most families, this is the most feasible course of action, and it is the one followed in most parts of Tana Toraja. In the Rantepao and Ma'kale areas, however, most especially in the Tallu Lembangna, the *ma'tallang* principle is always followed, even by the deceased's children. Nooy-Palm (1979:40) speaks of *ma'tallang* as if it were universal throughout Tana Toraja, but I found this not to be the case. *Tallang* is the word for a species of large bamboo, and *ma'tallang* means to divide into halves, quarters, eighths, and so forth, as one would split a length of bamboo. According to Bua' Sarungallo of Kesu', this competitive system was a nineteenth-century innovation, for his grandfather, who had lived to a great age, could remember a time when it was not customary. It would seem that this trend belongs to the time when the aristocracy were finding new sources of wealth in the coffee and slave trades with the lowlands, and is evidence of an intensification of the competitive element in the ceremonial economy, especially in the expenses of death rituals, at that time.<sup>5</sup> This was also the time at which many nobles chose to embark on land-grabbing wars with their neighbours, as described in Chapter IV. The Tallu Lembangna was the area where disparities in wealth had perhaps become most conspicuous, precisely the area where today the competitive system of *ma'tallang* is followed. I was told that in Sangalla', the ruling Puang who heads the most important *tongkonan* there generally keeps control of all the family lands, allowing other siblings to sharecrop, or giving them rice or buffaloes as they require them; *ma'tallang*, on the other hand, is the principle followed by lesser families in dividing inheritance. Possibly, then, competition became more intense in those sections of society where status distinctions were less clearly defined, and there was more possibility for manoeuvre up the social hierarchy. Some said that, prior to the period of these wars, status distinctions had, in fact, been more immutable. One of the ways in which some people benefited from the unrest was by gaining a name for themselves as warriors (*to barani*), being rewarded with lands by their lords. Following the rule of *ma'tallang* is another way in which a more ambitious sibling might concentrate his advantage at the expense of those who, younger or less well off than himself, fail to sacrifice on the same scale. It gives ruthless older siblings a

<sup>5</sup> See also Nooy-Palm (1984:304).

chance to deprive younger ones of their share of the inheritance, should the parents die before all of them are grown up and able to purchase and sacrifice buffaloes for themselves. This has been known to give rise to bitter quarrels and lawsuits later. Today some people oppose the practice for this reason, and, in those areas where it is the norm, have reverted to an equal division of property as being fairer. At the same time, they may prefer to husband their resources in the pursuit of other economic goals (often principally the education of their children), and want to keep the sacrifice of buffaloes from escalating. Where *ma'tallang* is practiced, the heirs must be careful, too, to exclude as far as possible other relatives from slaughtering buffaloes, since it is this that establishes one's right to inherit. These other relatives may have their contributions refused unless they are prepared to state publicly that these are not intended as making a claim on the inheritance, but simply to show their love and respect for the deceased. They may, however, in certain cases kill a buffalo with the aim of receiving a single rice field from the inheritance, and this is called *mangrinding* ('to erect a wall'). The killing of the buffalo serves to 'put a wall around' the rice field thus gained. Any land obtained in this way must, however, be returned to the heirs on the recipient's death.<sup>6</sup> Where there are both true and adopted children, the true children may attempt to exclude the adopted ones and nullify their claims on inheritance. Thus it can be seen that the *ma'tallang* system allows plenty of room for competition and bad feeling to arise, and rivalry is likely to be most acute where a couple die childless, or have both offspring of their own and adopted children.<sup>7</sup> Now it can be seen why people may feel under such pressure to obtain buffaloes – sometimes at very short notice – for a funeral, for if they cannot do it, they may lose their share of the inheritance. It quite often happens that, by the time the funeral is over, all the lands of the deceased have already been pawned by the heirs in order to muster the necessary funeral sacrifices; and they must then set to work to get them back again. This may greatly delay any division of the property, for if one person is more successful than the others in redeeming the land, he or she has the right to go on working it until the others can scrape together enough to pay off their share of the debts, which may take years. Court cases are most likely to arise where such situations have persisted over more than one generation, and some of the descendants of the original heirs, no longer on such good terms as their parents, may try to claim as their own land which has never been properly distributed.

How do women fare in this system? While women's right to inherit is the same as men's, it was frequently reiterated that, unless a woman speaks up

<sup>6</sup> See also Nooy-Palm (1979:40).

<sup>7</sup> Examples of court cases arising in such circumstances are discussed in Waterson (1981:341-65).

for herself, she may well find herself cheated by unprincipled siblings. Given the sort of rivalries which I have described, it seems that anyone of a weak and undemanding character may be seen as fair game by those who are more aggressive, but women, who are often (if by no means invariably) less outspoken than men, are particularly vulnerable to this possibility. On the other hand, provided that they have the means to make the necessary funeral contributions, there is no reason why, where the *ma'tallang* system is being followed, they should not receive more property than their brothers. When I discussed with women how they managed in these circumstances, they mentioned a number of strategies by which they might succeed in marshalling resources. The first source of help to be mentioned was always their husbands. In spite of the apparent economic equality between genders, there exists all the same a somewhat contradictory notion of the man as provider, who should be capable of looking after his family; more to the point, however, is the fact that husband and wife form a joint enterprise, pooling their labour and resources to meet ceremonial obligations, and it is in the interests of both of them to help each other in fulfilling such commitments, especially where there is a chance of obtaining land. A second strategy is to call in old debts, from among the network of kin and affines who attend each others' ceremonies. Thirdly, one may come to own a buffalo of one's own by making an arrangement to look after someone else's, the reward for which is one calf out of every four. Again, the profits from rearing pigs may be invested in buffaloes, though the pigs very often end up becoming funeral sacrifices themselves, before such conversions can be made. A really large pig, one which takes six or eight men to carry, was until recently worth one buffalo. Since pig-rearing is always women's work, their labour contributions to the ceremonial economy are very considerable. Fourthly, a woman may sell surplus rice from the lands which she owns, which she may have stored up over time. Finally, help from other family members was mentioned, in particular an elder sibling, an aunt or a foster-mother, who may help out of sympathy, but also hoping for a return of the debt in the long run, perhaps at their own funeral.

#### *Lotong's story*

One story with which I became familiar was that of Lotong, a Buttang ancestor. (He and his sister Sarebaine were already briefly encountered in Chapter IV.) It touches on many of the themes so far explored in this chapter, and exemplifies the possibilities for both accumulation and dispersal of wealth. Three generations ago, Lotong came to Malimbong from a neighbouring district, to marry a woman called Mondo'. With him came his younger brother, Tiakka, who after some years also married a woman of the same village. Lotong brought virtu-



ally no property with him to his marriage, and Tiakka, because he left home at an early age to accompany his brother, was later cheated out of his share of the inheritance by the rest of his family. Lotong began to trade in cotton cloth in a modest way, buying in Bugis country and selling in Toraja. Lotong's sister Sarebaine had been carried off to Rappang by Bugis slave traders. But because she was very beautiful, a Bugis nobleman took her as his wife and she became wealthy. This connection proved useful to Lotong, for one day he went to Rappang and begged some money from her, which he used as capital for his cloth trading venture. Sarebaine herself never returned to Toraja, and her descendants are still living in Rappang. Gradually, with the profits from his trade in cloth, Lotong began to buy buffaloes and invest them in land by lending them to those who needed them for funerals or other purposes. With the product from those lands, he was able to buy more buffaloes and pigs, which he lent out to people to tend for him. His wife Mondo' had a little land inherited from her parents, but this was all in pawn at the time she got it. After a while, Lotong was able to redeem this land as well. When he died, he was the richest man in Malimbong, with six rice barns in front of his house, one of which was so large that it had nine pillars instead of the usual four or six. He also owned numerous buffaloes. The couple however had no children, so they fostered a number of nephews and nieces, some of whose children in turn spent years of their childhood living with them. Altogether there were nine of these foster-children, only one of whom, a girl, was formally adopted by being given a piece of land as *tekken*. Lotong warned the others that after his death this land was to be hers without dispute and none of them were to lay any claim to it. He might well have worried, for in fact, after his death, another of his foster-children, a cousin of this girl, pawned the land without her permission to pay one of his gambling debts.

Lotong died in 1956, and the meeting of his heirs to arrange the funeral and discuss the division of his property lasted for one and a half days. About twenty buffaloes in all were killed at the funeral, many of those being the property of Lotong himself; in this way, a good part of his accumulated wealth was immediately consumed. As for the division of property, it was a daughter of Lotong's brother Tiakka who did best out of this. She had married a schoolteacher, and succeeded in bringing to the funeral a spotted buffalo worth four times an ordinary black beast, thus securing a proportionately larger share of Lotong's lands than anybody else. Another of her sisters was unable to sacrifice anything, for at the time she was bringing up a large family alone while her husband was away from home, having been coopted into the guerrilla forces of the Darul Islam movement. He and his wife later sharecropped much of the land inherited by the more fortunate sister, who lived some distance away in town. Since, however, most of Lotong's lands were only pawned to him, and were sooner or later redeemed by their owners, by

the 1970s little remained of his wealth and only one of the original six rice barns still stood before his house. In the list of Lotong's properties, there was only one field which he had succeeded in buying outright. Some lands which he held in pawn in his home village were never divided among the heirs, but were kept by his relations there, who were able to 'hide' them from the Malimbong relatives; the latter, not knowing the names of the fields or their precise locations, were in a poor position to enforce any settlement, but they still talked from time to time of bringing a court case against those relatives one day, as they did also of a local noble who had borrowed buffaloes from Lotong in his lifetime and had never repaid the debt.

Lotong's story exemplifies several important themes with regard to land ownership, inheritance, and the accumulation of wealth. In spite of his entrepreneurial success, we see that Lotong's wealth in land could not be consolidated, because most of it was only held in pawn. The desire for a large funeral also led to the immediate dissolution of his herds and the division of his properties among his nephews and nieces. One reason why childless people traditionally sought to foster a large number of children was to ensure that there would be plenty of sacrifices at their funeral, and this was doubtless part of Lotong's strategy as well. But it also meant that his landholdings were dispersed. The story also reveals several instances in which the ideal harmony between siblings, or relatives generally, is subverted: Lotong's brother was cheated of his inheritance after leaving their home village, his foster-daughter lost her land due to the selfish action of her cousin, and the home relatives refused to surrender some of his lands to the heirs. We see that, in order to maintain one's claims, one must not only be of strong personality, but have precise knowledge about the names and locations of fields. Where a person has been absent for a long time or does not have this knowledge, his or her position will always be a difficult one, which other relatives will do their best to take advantage of. Furthermore, not everyone was satisfied with the eventual division of property among the heirs, so that a quarrel existed between them for long afterwards. In one branch of the family, land was further dispersed by a member who gambled and got into debt, while the accidental fire that destroyed most of Buttang in 1982 was a further setback. For this branch, a lack of unity among the descendants, even though they were numerous, entailed a long delay until the house could be rebuilt.

#### *Agricultural labour and the formation of communal work groups*

The latter part of the twentieth century saw some significant changes in the way that agricultural work is organized and carried out. Group arrangements for working the land used to be common, but some of these have fallen

into disuse. I mention them here to round out the picture presented in this part of the book of the relationships that gave or give texture to village life. The changes are indicative of an increasing individualization of farm work and a shift toward the monetary evaluation of labour, with a corresponding decrease in traditional group organizations based on the exchange of labour or on payments in kind. Furthermore, the cultivation of rice, so fundamental to the entire world view of the Toraja, used to be accompanied by rituals at every stage of the agricultural cycle. These rituals were still being enacted by a majority of Buttang villagers at the time I first lived there, and were an integral part of the rhythms of village life, connecting people to the resident deities of the landscape, to whom offerings were made on high hillsides or beside the rice field itself in order to ensure fertility and abundance of the crop. This aspect of the agricultural cycle is detailed in Chapter XV.

An institution of considerable importance in some parts of Tana Toraja is the *saroan*, a kind of communal work group in which men tend to play a dominant role. The functions of this organization differ sharply in different districts. Although it played a rather minor part in Saluputti when I lived there, and appears subsequently to have been abandoned altogether, in northern areas such as Bori' and Sesean it is by contrast clearly a key social institution. There, rather than being principally a cooperative work group, the affairs of the *saroan* focus upon the all-important social concern of funeral sacrificing. These differences therefore offer a useful perspective on the relatively muted character of the competitive prestige economy in the western districts as compared to other regions of Tana Toraja.

Some of the unpublished reports of retiring Dutch administrators contain information about the former distribution and importance of the *saroan* as an institution. According to Seinstra (1940), the *saroan* is an organization that existed only in certain parts of Toraja: Tikala and Balusu in the north, and Madandan, Malimbong and Tapparan in the west. A number of neighbouring households, he states, agree to assist each other with work in the rice fields, choosing a leader (the *indo' saroan*, literally, 'mother of the *saroan*') and working each other's fields in turn, each man being paid a fixed quantity of rice per day for his labour. Both *to makaka* (freemen) and former *kaunan* (slaves) are described as having the right to belong, though the former had a greater influence than the latter. The fact that the *puang* or nobility are not mentioned here suggests that they may have been relying on the labour of their own slaves to work their land; however, he goes on to say that formerly, everyone in a given village had to belong to the *saroan*, on pain of fines, or of being turned out of the village, if they refused to participate. The *saroan* formerly also used to set up a fund of rice which could be borrowed by its members without interest (though it was not, he adds, intended to be used for gambling purposes), or with interest if borrowed by non-members. The

fund was also used to purchase pigs for slaughter after the harvest. This, he says, was called *matunu saro*, loosely translatable as 'to spend the fund' (*ma'tunu* means 'to slaughter'). According to Seinstra this practice of creating a common fund had died out, although the *saroan* members still killed pigs at the ceremony called *ma'bulung pare*, when the rice was ripening (see also Nooy-Palm 1979:95).

My own enquiries confirmed that the *saroan* is an institution typical of the north and west, but not found in the southern Tallu Lembangna. Volkman (1985:82) suggests that it might have been long ago displaced there as a form of political organization, with the development of a larger-scale federation which had its own elaborated hierarchy of offices monopolized by noble houses. On the other hand, Kesu', which also had a quite elaborate division of political titles and functions, seems to have preserved the *saroan* system as part of the organization of wards within villages (Nooy-Palm 1979:95-9). But perhaps here they offered less significant opportunities for playing politics than is the case for other areas.

Ne' Gento of Bori', north of Rantepao, gave a lucid description of how the *saroan* functions there. He was head of the local village council (*kombongan ada'*) and was much respected for his knowledge of *adat* and his skill in defending or advising those involved in lawsuits. As he described it, in Bori' everyone belongs to at least one *saroan*, and if their means permit, they may belong to several. As we would expect from Seinstra's description, it is neither a territorial nor a kinship grouping, but an association of neighbours. Besides those who are actually resident in the same village, there may also be more distantly dwelling members, but their role and influence in the *saroan* is correspondingly less. One may inherit one's parents' links with a particular *saroan*, or choose to join new ones. There may be several *saroan* in one village, each consisting of about twenty to a hundred members, including those living at a distance. Most of the *saroan* activities are male ones, so that women do not have much place in it, although a man coming to live with his wife at marriage may join the *saroan* to which her family belongs.

The *saroan* has a leader, and all its members are ranked according to their ability to contribute and to their prowess in making sacrifices at funerals, for quite unlike the *saroan* of the western regions, the main purpose of the organization here is the sharing of meat and participation in each other's ceremonies, activities which take on an extremely competitive character. The leaders of the *saroan* may seek to attract new members, even those of little prestige, since this will enhance their position as foremost in the ranks of the association. Each person has a number denoting his position, from one to forty, say, or however many members there may be. It is possible, without shame, to refuse the offer of membership in a *saroan* on the grounds that one already has commitments elsewhere; even a wealthy man may refuse to join

unless given a number low down on the list of members, in order to avoid the excessive demands that will be placed on him later on if he is near the top of the list. Both leaders and prospective members size each other up, the leaders looking to assess whether a new member can be relied upon to fulfil his obligations – a man of no great substance who joins too many *saroan* will not be trusted – and the new member looking to see whether the leaders take advantage of their situation to take more than their fair share, and whether there is a friendly and cooperative atmosphere within the group.

The foremost activity of the *saroan* in Bori', then, is not, as elsewhere, cooperative labour, but meat-sharing. All members attend each other's funerals or other celebrations and receive shares of meat, varying in size according to their importance. They do not themselves bring animals to sacrifice on these occasions, but when their turn comes to hold a ceremony, they are expected to be correspondingly generous. To be 'bold in sacrificing' (*barani mantunu*) is a highly valued quality, and when, at a funeral, the procession of participants enters the ceremonial ground leading the buffaloes and carrying the pigs they have brought, everyone can see and comment on the number, size, and quality of the animals. This becomes the arena in which status claims are made and upheld.

Mutual aid is only a secondary activity of the *saroan* here, and takes place mainly among the nucleus of members who live closest to each other. They may call each other to help with ploughing, housebuilding, cutting timber or bamboo, and so forth. The request is made the previous afternoon and if the job proposed is a short one, it will be done early the next morning, and no food will be provided for those who come to help. For an all-day job such as ploughing, or working on a house, food is prepared for all who agree to attend. In 1978, members coming to plough would usually be given one litre of uncooked rice in addition to their mid-day meal. This was considerably cheaper than paying the standard wage for day labour, which at that time was Rp. 500. Of course, long-term reciprocity is the essence of the arrangement, which on the face of it, might look quite egalitarian. But in fact, the system was formerly very much to the advantage of the wealthy aristocracy who held extensive lands, and thus had cheap access to the labour-power of their villagers. True, members did have the right to decline to attend, if the demands made upon them became excessive. Five generations ago in Bori', said Ne' Gento, there had been only one single *saroan*, dominated by one of his ancestors, a man named Ramba', whose family had been the most influential in the community. Today, this had split into eighteen different groups. After Independence in 1949, he explained, people no longer wanted to submit to this domination by the nobility within the *saroan*, and so they had broken away to form their own groups. A similar development may have taken place in a number of other places where formerly the *saroan* was much more

important than it is today. The end result of this process of fragmentation is that in some places people have given up the system of cooperative labour altogether, and prefer to work their own plots, or to pay wages for day labour. This is what had happened in Buttang, as will be described shortly.

The importance of *saroan* membership on northerly Mount Sesean is well described by Volkman (1985:77-82, 111-5, 139-41). Here, *saroan* composition is somewhat ambiguous, since in an ideal sense members are said to be derived from a common ancestor, so that the group is more or less identical with the *pa'rapuan* or descendants of a *tongkonan*. Both men and women inherit rights in *saroan*; it appears to be really households that are treated as members, though men dominate in *saroan* activities. At the same time, in practice, the group is based at least partly upon neighbourhood and can incorporate unrelated members including uxorilocally married men and newcomers such as schoolteachers posted in the community. Individuals typically maintain active ties in more than one *saroan*; which these are is clearly a matter of considerable flexibility, for as with the *tongkonan*, one inherits rights in at least two *saroan* from each parent. From Volkman's description, the *saroan* still functions as the key institution binding the community, within which men cooperate in agricultural, house-building, and ritual labour. The activity of eating together appears a particularly significant dimension of feelings of *saroan* unity (Volkman 1985:79). This is given expression most clearly in its shared performance of *menammu* offerings after the harvest is completed, when a pig is killed and divided by the men (a quintessentially masculine task), while the women of each member household provide cooked rice which is pooled together and shared. It is also the arena within which men vie with each other for roles as 'big men', with responsibility for negotiating the all-important division of meat at rituals, shares of which become a statement of status and indeed 'the substance of politics itself'. Each *saroan* has an acknowledged leader, more often several of them, who are called *ambe'* or 'father'; they are members of the nobility who are able to demonstrate the appropriate personal qualities of eloquence, industry, and wealth. Volkman (1985:80) describes a *saroan* leader as 'a cross between a New Guinea big man and a Bugis prince', which gives a good idea of the combination of rank with personal energy and charisma which forms the basis on which careers are built at the level of village politics. At the time of Volkman's fieldwork in the late 1970s, shared agricultural labour was declining in significance as more people went over to wage labour and sharecropping arrangements, but the role played by the *saroan* in ritual activities was still an intrinsic part of local politics. On Sesean, the word *saroan* is often used interchangeably with *tondok* ('village, community'). In other areas which do not have the *saroan* organization, the men of a village also act jointly in carrying out the ceremonial division of meat, but on Sesean, where less attention tends to be paid to rigid rank



divisions, the *saroan* seems to have become a vehicle for particularly intense competition in the prestige economy.

In western areas such as Malimbong, I found that the *saroan* differed markedly from what has been described above. Here there is none of the competitive assessment of members' powers as makers of sacrifices; instead, the foremost function is cooperative labour. A distinction must be drawn, however, between two kinds of grouping. Firstly, there is what is sometimes termed the *saroan umum* ('general *saroan*'), or *pa'tondokan* ('members of one village') to which every adult male in a village automatically belongs, and from whom any of its members may request help in house building, cutting wood for building, or making preparations for a ceremony. This group is based on long term reciprocity among all the villagers. Secondly, there are the *saroan* themselves, consisting of small groups of neighbours who make a voluntary arrangement in any given year to help each other plough their fields. The *pa'tondokan* and their activities will be described below; this organization is still an important part of village life. The custom of forming *saroan* to plough each other's lands, on the other hand, was falling into disuse in Buttang in the late 1970s. None were formed the year I lived there and I was told that the year before, ten people had decided to form one, but after only two weeks they could no longer agree among themselves, and had given up the idea. Many people had, however, belonged to a *saroan* in the past. The fullest account I received was from another acknowledged expert in *adat* affairs, Ne' Sambayang of Menduruk.

The *saroan*, as he described them, were freely-formed groups of varying numbers of people, from as few as two to as many as ten or so. He himself had belonged to several different *saroan* in his younger days. One of these had consisted of just himself and another neighbour, while others had been larger. The arrangement was made, initially, for a single agricultural year, though the members might continue together in a subsequent year if they wanted to. The *saroan* thus had considerably less permanence here than in the north. The members worked each other's fields in turn, each man receiving the benefit of an equal number of days' labour, so that unlike in other areas, there was no advantage to those whose lands were more extensive.<sup>8</sup> Although women play an important part in rice cultivation, they do not join in the *saroan*, but form their own work parties on a day-to-day basis.

The labour-sharing arrangements of the *saroan* were only used for ploughing, but the commitment had to be maintained more or less throughout one whole cycle of cultivation. A *saro*, or fee, comprising ten *kutu'* of rice, was paid

<sup>8</sup> This system bears comparison in many respects with the Iban *bedurok* system described by Freeman (1970:82), except that the latter may be used at all stages of rice cultivation and involves the labour of both the men and women of a household.

to each man per day by the owner of the field being worked. This, however, was not taken by the individuals themselves but became the capital fund of the *saroan*. In sharp contrast with northern *saroan*, the group had no leader, though one person might be chosen to guard the fund by agreeing to store the rice in his barn. Later, at harvest, the *saroan* members might come to help each other cut the rice, and again paid their wages into the fund; although, if their wives or other family members came to harvest, they took their wages home in the normal manner. Carrying the harvested rice back to the village (*manglemba'*) provided a third opportunity for the men to collect *saro*. As for harvesting, the wage for carrying rice is ten per cent. A man can carry about 1,000 *kutu'* in a day (representing 10 trips with 100 *kutu'*, a weight of up to 40 kg), and thus earn 100 *kutu'* for a day's work. All this rice paid into the fund was used to purchase pigs which were killed at the *ma'bulung* ceremony, held while the rice is ripening and intended to ensure a good harvest. This is the reason why commitment to the group had to be maintained until harvest, for often the fund would not be complete until then, and all debts settled, while the pigs had to be killed before the harvest. Killing these pigs was called *kumande saro*, 'to eat the wages', and the meat was shared out only between the members, for this was one of the few occasions when the slaughtering of meat was considered a private affair, and there was no obligation to share it out among the neighbours. Those not involved stayed discreetly away, and took care to prevent their children hanging around in the hope of being given a portion. Fritz Basiang, who lived in Rantepao, recalled once visiting a sister of his who lived in Talion (Saluputti) at the time of the *ma'bulung* rite. She at that time belonged to a group of three households who had formed a *saroan* group (also there called *siallo* or *sisaro*, 'to give each other days/wages'), and when they killed their pig he was astonished at the huge portions of meat that were urged on them, 'enough for a week in Rantepao!'. He commented that this was one of the very rare times when meat would be eaten to the point of satiation. This form of the *saroan* thus appears, rather remarkably, as the exact inverse of that in the north. Informal, temporary, egalitarian and leaderless, it concerns itself not with the competitive public division of meat in the mortuary context (where meat tends to end up becoming subdivided into miniscule portions), but with the private consumption to satiation of meat in a rite belonging to the life-affirming 'Eastern' part of the cycle. It may be noted, however, that the *ma'bulung* rite, when it was still being celebrated, was at the same time a community-wide affair. Pigs were also killed on behalf of the whole community, an expense to which all villagers contributed, and all received some meat from these animals. Today, however, most people seem prepared to sacrifice the enjoyment of this special opportunity for feasting, in order to save the expense and effort involved in working cooperatively. Instead they simply work their own land, or invite their neighbours to work

with them on a day-to-day basis, paying them a daily wage in cash.

Although *saroan* organization has fallen into disuse, mutual assistance remains an important principle in village life in Saluputti, as elsewhere. The *pa'tondokan*, or members of a village community, may be mobilized to assist with tasks which are not easily accomplished alone. Chief among these are housebuilding, and preparing for ceremonies. Even where professional carpenters are employed to construct the large houses of the nobility, it is the villagers who most often help to fell the timber required, and do the work of putting on the roof. Preparing for ceremonies often involves the construction of temporary guest shelters (*lattang*) of one or two stories, made of bamboo. Every adult man is adept in the basic construction skills involved. In addition, the *pa'tondokan* of different villages may be called upon by the Kepala Desa to help with work which is considered to be in the public interest, such as repairing a bridge or building a house for the local schoolteacher. Not to join in the activities of the *pa'tondokan* is more or less unthinkable and, I was told, might lead to expulsion from the village. The continuing importance of this form of village organization was brought home to me on the occasion of the marriage of Limbong and Silayang, described in the previous chapter. When Silayang took up with Limbong, he already had several wives and indeed had not been formally married to the last woman with whom he had been living. It was the *pa'tondokan* who, after a short time, insisted that the union be regularized by means of a proper ceremony, for, they said, it was not right for a man to come and take up residence in the village without being properly introduced into the *pa'tondokan*, with whom he would now be expected to work when the occasion demanded. The marriage ceremony which then took place served, therefore, not only to unite the couple as man and wife, but also to integrate the newcomer into the community where he now had certain rights and obligations.

All fellow villagers, as *pa'tondokan*, stand to receive a share of meat from ceremonies held within the village, in recognition of each household's services in helping with the preparations, or simply as an acknowledgement of membership. The nobility typically state that when they hold ceremonies, they do not kill meat for themselves, but for others, and that they must 'know the tiredness' of the *pa'tondokan* after all the work they have done, and reward them for it. It is important to reward them properly because it is they on whom the aristocracy rely to assist in the building or re-roofing of their great houses, the *tongkonan*. All the same, people readily acknowledge that those who are recognized as leaders (*dipoambe'*) of the community collect bigger rewards than the rest: when meat is divided, the nobles always receive by far the largest shares, while that which is given to ordinary villagers may be a mere token.

The variety of ways in which men, as neighbours, may be called upon to

work together in certain tasks has an integrating effect for the village as a whole, given that many of the men are not born there but are residing uxorilocally. Changing circumstances and external influences, at the same time, alter the configuration of mutual aid. Although the old *saroan* had practically ceased to function in this area in the late 1970s, the villagers told me that the government planned to encourage a system of 'land groups' (I.: *kelompok tanah*), based on a Javanese model of agricultural mutual aid groups, which might once again lead to a greater degree of communal labour. At that time it was hard to predict whether the new idea would catch on, given that the *saroan* had but lately been abandoned in favour of wage work or individual effort; it later became clear that it hadn't. Another force that was putting great pressure on previously taken for granted feelings of unity was Christianity. In the late 1970s, few Buttang households had converted, but by 1994, they all had. As more and more people abandoned the agricultural rituals, the old coordination of agricultural activities fell apart. When I returned to Buttang with my husband and children in 1994, my adoptive sister Sebo' insisted on killing a pig in my honour; the framing event for this sacrifice was now a Christian prayer meeting. As I watched the men of the *pa'tondokan* expertly butchering the pig and quietly working together dividing the meat up on leaves and cooking it in bamboo tubes over the fire they had made, it struck me that, although some obviously still had their doubts about the way things had gone, the great benefit they had derived socially from the change was that now they could do everything together again. The disjunctures caused by religious differences could be mended and a harmony restored to their activities, which had always been a valued part of village life.

Women perform a greater variety of tasks than men, and while not traditionally participating in any long term groups like the *saroan*, they do often work together. Just as the men do, they can be relied on to come and assist a neighbour in preparing for a ceremony, the chief task on these occasions being the pounding of endless quantities of rice for the expected guests. Again, in agricultural work, especially planting and harvesting the rice, women frequently work together, but by invitation, on an ad hoc, day-to-day basis. Women always work for a wage, either in cash or in kind, that is to say, in a proportion of the crop being cultivated, whether rice or garden crops. For women, too, new groups have been formed in the past few decades under the influence of the Church or the government. During the Suharto era, every *desa* all over Indonesia had its women's group, called PKK (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, or 'Guidance for Family Welfare'), led by the Kepala Desa's wife. After the fall of the New Order, the PKK movement, now renamed Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, or 'Empowerment for Family Welfare', continued active in some areas, while in others it has lapsed. The groups often work together to raise funds, somewhat on the basis of the

*saroan* system. The PKK is a sort of Women's Institute, running courses to teach women about hygiene, child care, and nutrition. It often helps women form rotating credit associations, with small monthly contributions from each member. Within the *desa*, each village may have its own group, though the relative activity of such groups differs from place to place. In Buttang there did not appear to be one, and I was told that the older women were not much interested, and preferred to work for themselves, though some of them had attended courses run by the *desa*. The women of Buttang were known for some older skills, such as in the singing of traditional chants performed by women at rituals of the Eastern or life-enhancing side of the ceremonial cycle. This talent, too, was sometimes called upon in new contexts: they were summoned to perform at the official opening of the new *desa* office. In several neighbouring villages the PKK groups had managed, by gardening in groups and paying *saro* of Rp. 100 or 200 per day, to raise enough money to have a concrete well and washing place built around the natural spring from which the villagers took their water. Other main aims of fund-raising are to purchase outfits for special occasions, consisting of sarong and blouse in matching colours for the whole group, and to buy mats, glasses and enamel ware plates, which they can lend out to people for a fee when they are holding ceremonies and have large numbers of guests to provide for. Church groups sometimes raise money in a similar way, working together on the *sisaro* principle and paying their 'wage' into a common fund, or even setting aside a rice field to be cultivated in aid of the Church fund.

In spite of large continuities in the farming life, we can trace in this chapter a number of significant shifts. Perhaps most crucially for the aspect of continuity, land remains largely uncommoditized, except in the very limited area where tourism development has given it a new cash value. For most people, the manner in which it is held, divided, or allowed to change hands remains firmly rooted in the kinship system. The pressure on land can however give rise to intense competition over inheritance, sometimes leading to bitter disputes; it has also led to a steady stream of emigration out of the highlands. Those Toraja who remain at home were protected by their subsistence base and high degree of self-sufficiency from the most drastic effects of the monetary crisis of 1997, when spiraling prices hit urban dwellers hardest. In fact they even benefited briefly from greatly improved prices for their cocoa, coffee and cloves when the monopolies on purchase of these crops, formerly held by members of Suharto's family, were lifted. However there has been a steady alteration in the value of work, in that older, non-monetary and cooperative modes of working have lost popularity, while cash wages for day labour have risen. Nowadays, most people would rather work either for themselves, or for cash, than take part in the old cooperative work groups. While the *saroan* of the northern part of Toraja (which as we have seen were

a quite distinctive type of organization) still retain their salience as enduring groups bound up in the feasting economy, *saroan* as they formerly existed in Malimbong were more transitory groupings, already rare in the 1970s and now defunct. Most notable of all has been the demise of the ritual aspect of cultivation, which formerly punctuated the rhythm of the agricultural cycle and coordinated the villagers' activities. The long, slow process of religious conversion, having divided the community and fractured many of their communal activities, has with the eclipse of the old religion enabled Buttang villagers to come together again, even if the occasions are no longer the same. In the next part of the book, I shall examine in detail the process of religious transformation.



**PART FOUR**

**Smoke of the rising and the setting sun**



## CHAPTER XIV

# The structure of Aluk To Dolo

Like other indigenous belief systems of small-scale societies, Toraja religion evolved in intimate relationship to local landscapes. It has been until recently such an integral part of people's knowledge of their own environment and how to live in it, that it was scarcely separable from other aspects of life. Indeed there was no need to think of it as separate, or even to give it a name. Its remaining adherents still commonly refer to it as *pa'kandean nene*, 'feeding the ancestors', or simply Alukta, 'our way'.<sup>1</sup> At what point it came to be known more officially as Aluk To Dolo ('Way of the Ancestors') is therefore an interesting question. That name does not appear in Kennedy's *Field notes on Indonesia; South Celebes 1949-50* (Kennedy 1953), and Bigalke (1981:194) infers that it may possibly not have been invented until the 1950s.

As we saw in earlier chapters, for several decades after the establishment of a mission in the Sa'dan highlands, very few Toraja were sufficiently impressed to be won over to Christianity. The Toraja nobility weighed up the possible social impacts of the missionaries' egalitarian message, responding negatively to moves which they saw as likely to erode their control over subordinates. With the proportion of Christians in the population standing at less than 1% in 1930, and still under 10% in 1950 (and a good part of these probably concentrated around the towns), the indigenous religion clearly remained a normative element of most people's world view. Bourdieu (1977:167) has characterised such taken-for-granted aspects of cultural systems as *doxa*, that which 'goes without saying because it comes without saying'. The need for a name arises only once it comes to be viewed, instead, as one of a number of competing orthodoxies. The slow pace at which Christianity established itself as an alternative may thus account for the relatively recent invention of the label Aluk To Dolo. But although at first Toraja treated the new faith with scepticism, the introduction of Christianity was eventually to lead to profound changes in the Toraja highlands. Here as elsewhere in

<sup>1</sup> Grammatically, 'our' here is used in an inclusive sense that embraces the person spoken to, though ironically, as the number of Alukta's adherents continues to dwindle, it becomes less and less likely that the person addressed does share, or even know much about, the *aluk*.

Indonesia, missionaries struggled to decide which parts of the indigenous *aluk* were incontrovertibly 'religious', and thus incompatible with a conversion to Christianity, and which parts could be reclassified as 'custom' (*adat*) and allowed to continue. In drawing these distinctions they introduced an artificial split in what had formerly been an integral and indivisible system, for as Toraja say: *Aluk sipori ada'* ('*Aluk* and *adat* are bound together'). Their views about which parts would have to be abandoned changed over time, as resistance to their elimination of some practices proved obdurate. The division and distribution of meat at funerals was one example. Initially classified as *aluk*, it was later redefined as *adat*, and continues to be a feature of great social importance today.

### *Rites of the East and the West*

It would be a mistake to think that Alukta lacks a structure of its own, however. In several ways it provides a highly structured view of the world and the place of humans within it. Human relations with deities and ancestors are central to this scheme of things, and they are chiefly expressed in the making of offerings. An elaborate complex of rituals ranges from individual offerings of betel nut, to major communal efforts requiring prolonged planning and massive expenditure. Certain fundamental divisions between classes of things shape the universe of Alukta. Ne' Roya, an elderly *to minaa* of Singuntu', south of Rantepao, whom I met in 1994, explained that essentially, Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the heavens, had placed upon the earth three kinds of things, each of 7777 kinds. This ideal number, most commonly used to refer to the quantity of *aluk* prescriptions and prohibitions, signals inexhaustible variety. The three kinds to which he referred were, firstly, *tu kepenaanna*, or 'things that have breath', that is, humans and animals; secondly, *tu kedaunna*, 'things that have leaves', that is, all forms of plants (*tananan*); and thirdly, the *sukaran aluk*, or ritual prescriptions, which also number 7777, although humans do not know all of them.<sup>2</sup> Pak Kila', elaborating on the relations between humans and animals, pointed out that they were all the crea-

<sup>2</sup> A variety of myths tell how, after living in the sky for several generations, humans were lowered down to earth by Puang Matua. He also sent the *sukaran aluk* (*sukaran*: literally, 'measurement') down to earth with them. Along the way, some of its 7777 components fell into the sea, or were accidentally dropped by the slave carrying the burden; Nooy-Palm (1979:138) recounts a version in which this slave took only 777 and left the 7000 behind because it was too heavy to carry. This was a blessing in disguise, since otherwise humans would have been unable to cope with all of them. Other myths tell of a second arrival of *aluk* on earth, this time known as the Aluk Sanda Saratu', or 'Complete One Hundred Rituals', which were brought by the *to manurun* Tamboro Langi' when he descended from the sky.

tions of Puang Matua from his forge with its paired bellows (*sauan sibarrung*) in the sky. Animals and humans all eat, and beget children, in a similar way. The difference between them lies in the fact that humans know how to make offerings, while animals do not. It is therefore the fate of the domesticated animals (principally buffaloes, pigs, and chickens, but also occasionally dogs) to be offered. He went on to cite the words of a ritual chant performed at the *merok* ceremony (a great Rite of the East distinctive to eastern and northern districts of Toraja).<sup>3</sup> This long chant is addressed to the buffalo which is sacrificed by stabbing with a spear at this rite, and these words explain why it is to be offered:

*Kamu to siulu'ki lanmai sauan sibarrung, apa kami mo torro to lino tu la memala' men-  
umba langan To Tu Mempa'ta, na iatu ladipenomban, susimo tu kada misiosso'i diomai  
nene'mu lanmai sauan sibarrung.*

You are our siblings who emerged with us from the forge of Puang Matua, but we humans are the only ones to make offerings in worship of our Creator, and you are the ones who are to be offered; such are the words handed down to us by your ancestors who emerged from the (forge of the) twin bellows.

In this formula, it appears that it was the ancestors of buffaloes themselves who, in accordance with the will of Puang Matua, instructed their human owners to use them as offerings. If it is performed well enough, the buffalo is supposed to weep as these verses are uttered, a sign that it is giving its consent.<sup>4</sup>

Ritual activity, then, has prominence over expression of dogma in the scheme of Aluk To Dolo. The more complex rituals are divided into many steps or stages, each calling for a separate offering. These are called the *lesoan aluk* (*leso* literally means 'an eighth'; the sense here is of an ordered sequence of parts, and eight is a number often used in Toraja to signify completeness). Many times, when directed to older people who are regarded as cultural experts, I have found myself recording long lists of these stages of the different rituals, always specifying the exact colour of chickens, or size and type of

<sup>3</sup> Van der Veen (1965) recorded a complete text of a *merok* chant which he collected in Kesu'. See also Nooy-Palm (1986), Chapter III, for a full description of the rite.

<sup>4</sup> Nooy-Palm (personal communication, 1994) kindly shared with me the unpublished manuscript of a chant collected by Van der Veen (n.d.), which is addressed in a similar way to chickens prior to sacrifice. The buffalo, pig and chicken are sometimes referred to as a trinity, as in the litany performed on the main day of the *merok* feast, at which a buffalo, pig and rooster are sacrificed (Nooy-Palm 1986:68). There is an invocation for each of them, recounting the history of how they came to be given this role, apologizing for the necessity of killing them, and explaining that this is truly their destiny. This concern for the sacrificed animal, and the idea of seeking its consent, is a recurrent theme in Southeast Asian societies; examples can be found in Howell (1996b).



Padang Mangi' (Ambe' Ka'pan), 1999



pig or buffalo to be offered. There is a highly elaborated vocabulary for the colours of chickens (based on both their plumage and their feet), mastering which is a challenge in itself. My field notebooks are dotted with pages full of such lists.<sup>5</sup> Often I was unsure what to do with them, but they must certainly be seen as a characteristic feature of traditional Toraja religion. In 1999, when I was staying in Menduruk, Ambe' Bolle' introduced me to an elderly first cousin of his, Padang Mangi' (Ambe' Ka'pan), who graciously agreed to my request for an interview, but at the same time impressed upon me the need to do things properly. Night time was the right time for conveying cultural information, and he doubted my staying power if he were to explain everything completely. Completeness, he added gravely, was also essential if one were not to incur the wrath of ancestors and deities. After dinner there followed hours and hours of listing of the stages of rites. Having already over the years collected a great deal of such information, there were many other things I would have preferred him to talk about. But if I sought to enlarge the conversation with questions of my own, he would stop talking, pretend not to hear me, or scold me to close my notebook. Reflecting on this afterward and comparing it with many similar experiences in the past, I realized that, in spite of my moments of frustration, I could at least understand very clearly from what he had chosen to tell me, what it was that he felt was essential to pass on about his own culture. From his perspective, what needed to be known was precisely this: the proper ways of doing things, the endless lists of offerings, in which, significantly, he had started with the house. We had ended with the different levels of the funeral rites, embedded in which were many features that were used as distinguishing marks of rank. Each level, he explained to me, was the *kaka'* or older sibling of the preceding one, growing more elaborate according to the social status of the deceased. Even after all those hours, he had only told me a small part of what he knew – testimony among other things to the extraordinary powers of memory that have often been noted of people living in oral cultures.

All rituals can be classified into two major categories: Rites of the East or Aluk Rampe Matallo, and Rites of the West or Aluk Rampe Matampu'. The deities are associated with the east (and in the case of Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the heavens, with the north). In opposition to the deities, the dead are associated with the south and west (Puya, the land of the dead, is said to lie far to the south or southwest of Tana Toraja). Rites of the East, therefore, are always addressed principally to the deities (*deata*), and are concerned with life. Their aim is to enhance the fertility and well-being of humans, animals

<sup>5</sup> Nooy-Palm (1986:9) describes the elaboration of ritual requirements as 'baroque', and labels it 'the most salient characteristic of Toraja ritual'; Volkman (1980:41) likewise comments on this experience.

and crops, especially rice. Rites of the West by contrast are for the dead. They comprise the many different levels of mortuary rites, whose details vary according to social rank, and ceremonies that focus on the ancestors (*to dolo*). The two classes of rites are also commonly known as Aluk Rambu Tuka' and Aluk Rambu Solo'. These terms are often explained, and have been translated (both by myself and other researchers) as meaning 'Rites of Rising Smoke' and of 'Descending Smoke'. The 'smoke' referred to is the smoke of offerings, but since it is in the nature of smoke to rise, the idea of descending smoke is certainly a puzzle. It cannot be explained by reference to an underworld; Puya, though distant, is not underground. But, as Tato' Dena', the *to minaa sando*, explains it, 'Rising' and 'Descending' refers not to the smoke, but to the sun. Rites of the East must be begun in the morning, whereas mortuary rituals are supposed to commence in the afternoon, after the sun has passed its zenith. The reason for these orientations rests upon the perceived parallel between the course of the sun and the passage of a person's life, from small beginnings growing to full energy and capacity, and then declining in old age. So Aluk Rambu Tuka' and Aluk Rambu Solo' can be more accurately rendered as 'Rites of the Rising [Sun]' and Rites of the Setting [Sun]'.

When offerings are laid out, they are carefully oriented in the right direction, depending on whether the recipients are the ancestors, or the deities. The most basic component of even the smallest offering is *pangan*, the ingredients for betel-chewing. Offerings are a form of communication, opening up channels between humans and the deities and ancestors, who are seen as sources of power and blessing that can be tapped. Just as humans traditionally greet each other by sharing betel from their betel bags, the offering of betel to superhuman powers serves to open communication with them.<sup>6</sup> Orientations are based on the idea of 'trunk' (*garonto*) and 'tip' (*lolok*), which we already encountered with regard to the placing of house timbers. The stem of a betel leaf, or an areca nut, is its *garonto*', and its growing tip is the *lolok*. Even a banana-leaf container in which blood from a sacrificed chicken is collected has its 'trunk' (the open end of the leaf) and 'tip' (where it is pinned together with a sliver of bamboo). A strip torn from a banana leaf, on which offerings are to be placed, naturally forms a pointed 'tip' at the upper corner of the outer edge, where the vein of the leaf curves slightly. In offerings to the *deata* (at least as I witnessed them in Saluputti), the betel leaf is oriented with its stem, or 'trunk' end, to the east, while a slice of areca nut is placed at right angles across the leaf with its 'trunk' to the south, and the inner kernel of the nut facing the 'trunk' of the betel leaf. If the offering is to the ancestors, the

<sup>6</sup> Nowadays it is mostly older women for whom this is still a daily act of sociability, since most men prefer to share *krettek* cigarettes, while younger women don't want to blacken their teeth by chewing betel.

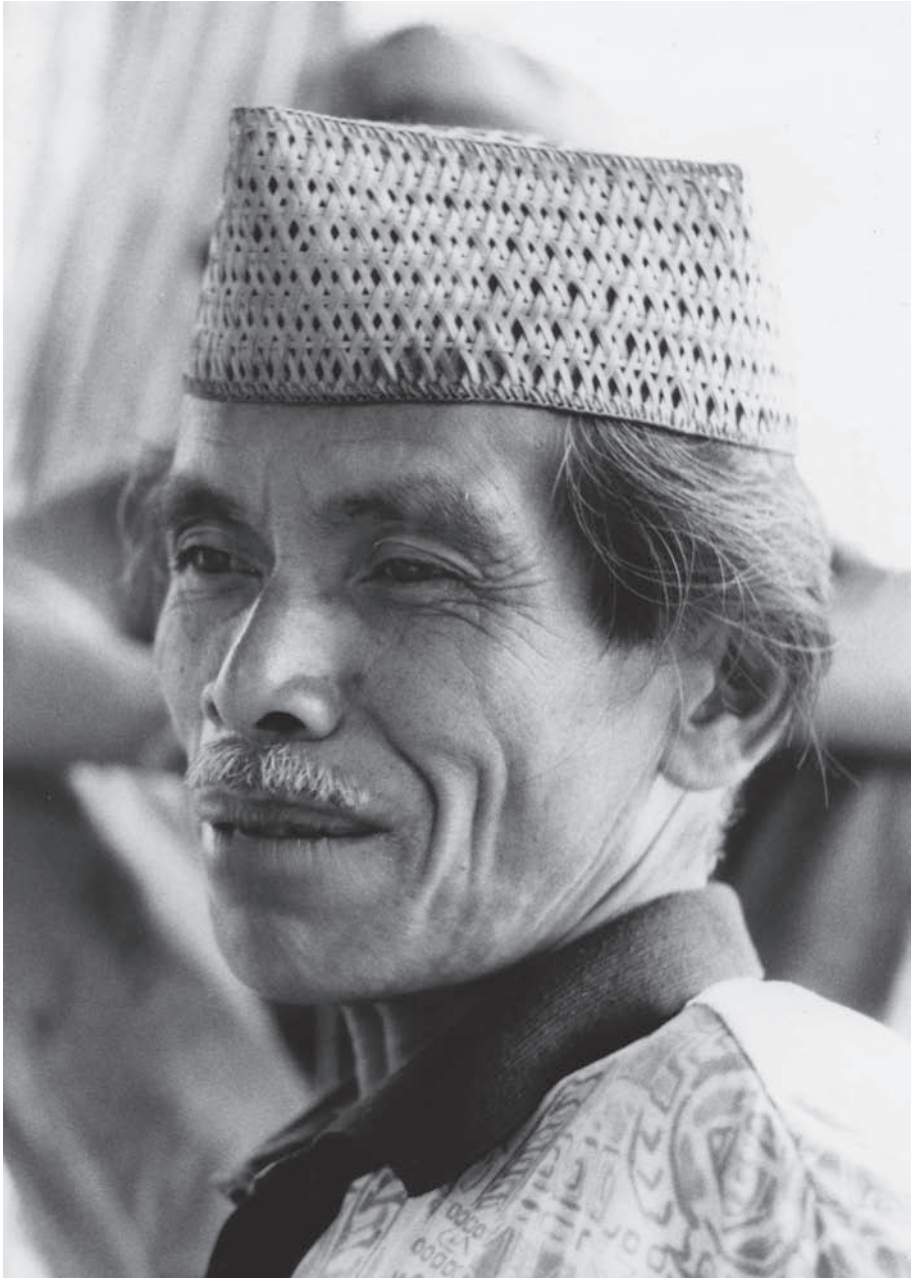
stem of the leaf is reversed, to face west. In both cases, the 'trunk' of the areca nut faces south, and I was told that this was because it must correspond with the house, whose 'root' end is to the south and whose front or 'tip' faces north. If the force of life and growth flows from 'trunk' to tip', then the orientation of the betel leaf would seem to accord with the idea that blessings should flow from these communications with the deities or the ancestors.<sup>7</sup> Thus we can see that cosmological orientations, and the idea of the flow of vitality from trunk to tip, are intrinsic to even the smallest details of ritual practice.

The two halves of the ritual complex, East and West, form a balanced whole; in verse they are called *aluk simuane tallang, sisese arusan* ('rites paired [like] bamboo, split in half'). In this image they are compared to the interlocking halves of roof-tiles made of split bamboo, which overlap each other in multiple layers on the roofs of traditional houses. Formerly, rites of the East and the West tended to occur in different seasons of the year, and were held apart as much as possible. However, a few rituals occupy a transitional status between West and East, binding the two spheres together. These accomplish the transformation of the deceased into deified ancestors. They enable the dead to move beyond Puya, the land of the dead (where life goes on very much the same as life on earth, but in the absence of fire) to a more abstract state, where they become one with the stars, and return to the earth as fertilising rain. Such is the poetic description to be found in funeral chants. Once this state is achieved, ancestors are described as being *mendeata*, 'like the deities', and have the power to bring blessings on their descendants.<sup>8</sup> These intermediate rites are called *pembalikan*, 'turning over'; they require different offerings depending on the level of the original funeral ceremony. Nooy-Palm (1986:152) calls them 'conversion rites'. I witnessed one in the Ma'kale district in 1979. Here they are called *pembalikan gandang* ('turning the drum'; beating the drum at funerals is one of the privileges related to rank) or *pembalikan pesung* ('turning the offering'). The change of orientation indicated by these names means that the Rites of the West are thereby brought to a close, freeing people to return to the celebration of the life-enhancing Rites of the East.

*Pembalikan* rites are not universally celebrated, however; in Saluputti, with its more egalitarian ethos, I was told that all the dead remain in Puya, automatically becoming *mendeata* with the passing of time. This does not prevent special attentions being paid to them periodically. A ritual distinctive to Saluputti is the *ma'paundi* ('to send after'), which I witnessed in 1979 in Malimbong. The name refers to the possibility of 'sending' extra sacrifices

<sup>7</sup> On the characteristic Austronesian concept of the 'flow' of life and blessings, see Fox (1980); Schefold (2001); and Buijs (2003).

<sup>8</sup> This term is often used too in describing the founding ancestors who lived long ago; they displayed various supernatural abilities and enjoyed extraordinary longevity.



Tato' Dena', the *to minaa sando*, special priest of the Aluk To Dolo

to the dead in the afterlife, if it is felt that they have not been sufficiently provided for at their funerals. On this occasion, a local nobleman had been having recurring dreams in which his mother appeared, complaining that she had been forgotten. Although already Christian, he then decided to kill a buffalo for her. At the same time, the bones of other relatives housed in the same tomb were rewrapped, and their effigies (*tau-tau*) taken down from their niches in the rock, washed at the edge of the rice field, and dressed in new clothes. At the margins of these proceedings could be seen a haunting figure, a very elderly man in a white headcloth, who was the neighbourhood's surviving *to mebalun*, or corpse-wrapper. This task was traditionally assigned to a hereditary group of families who either had the status of slaves (*kaunan*) or, in some areas, were considered to be outside the status hierarchy altogether.<sup>9</sup> Miserable as his position was, the *to mebalun* should have played a central role in the *ma'paundi* ceremony. He should have been the one to re-wrap the bones in the tomb, for which he would customarily have been rewarded with generous shares of meat. But on this occasion, the sponsor of the ceremony pointedly ignored him. He had chosen to carry out the *to mebalun*'s tasks himself, thereby renegeing on his traditional obligation to his former slave.

Further north, in Sesean, *maro* is the rite which can 'finish off the business of death', and allow the dead to achieve a deified status (Zerner 1981:103; Volkman 1985:53). At *maro*, the deata are summoned by means of sacred chants, causing some of the participants to fall into trance, during which they may cut themselves without drawing blood, climb ladders of knives, or dance on hot coals. Another rite specific to this region is *ma'nene'* (Volkman 1985:142-7), which bears some comparison with *ma'paundi* in Saluputti. More communal in its emphasis than *maro*, being celebrated by an entire community rather than sponsored by a single *tongkonan*, it used to be held every five to ten years, always at the close of the funeral season and before the beginning of rice planting. At *ma'nene'* the stone tombs (*liang*) are opened and the bones of the dead re-wrapped, *tau-tau* effigies are taken down from their balconies to be given new clothes, and the ancestors are 'fed' and honoured with fresh sacrifices of pigs and buffaloes. People stay awake all night, and

<sup>9</sup> For descriptions of the role of the *to mebalun*, see Nooy-Palm (1979:280-2) and Volkman (1985:142-52). They both describe how these priests of death were considered polluted and treated as outcasts. Their houses had to be built at a distance from those of other people, and when their services were required, people would throw stones against their walls to summon them. They had to marry into other *to mebalun* families. Volkman provides an interesting account of the changing status of the *to mebalun* in the Sesean area; she notes that Christians no longer make use of their services. Many *to mebalun*, or their children, have themselves converted to Christianity and migrated out of Tana Toraja to find work elsewhere, where they can avoid the stigma that attaches to them at home. One *to mebalun* of her acquaintance had attempted to free himself from his polluted status by ritual means. So far as I could establish, the *to mebalun* in Saluputti had not been subject to such extremes of avoidance as elsewhere.

the dead, especially corpses of the recent dead, may be cradled, talked to and wept over. The intimacy of relations with the dead, though formerly characteristic, has been decreasing over time as a result of Calvinist disapproval of communication with the ancestors (Waterson 1984b). Although Catholics in the Sesean area have managed to integrate *ma'nene'* with All Souls, it is disapproved of by Protestants, and performed increasingly rarely.<sup>10</sup>

Alukta was also an ethical system. Often, the *aluk* (ritual prescriptions) and *pemali* (prohibitions) are described as a pair, for, as Pak Kila' put it, the *aluk* teaches us to do good, while the *pemali* instruct us not to do what is bad. But the most complete expression of Alukta's underlying structure was given to me by Tato' Dena'. As he explained, it is actually founded upon four categories: first, the *aluk* (ritual requirements), second, the *pemali* (prohibitions), third, the *sangka'* (regulations defining the proper order and progression of stages of ceremonies, housebuilding, agricultural ritual, and so forth), and fourth, encompassing all of the above, *sanda salunna* (literally, 'all the rivers', rivers here having the metaphorical meaning of paths, or ways of doing things) which he rendered in Indonesian as *kebenaran*, 'the truth', the right way to live.<sup>11</sup> All these together form the *sukaran aluk*, the rules that were given to humans by Puang Matua. The *pemali* are very numerous, described in a couplet as: *pemali sanda saratu'*, *passalinan dua riu* ('the complete one hundred prohibitions, the two thousand taboos'), meaning that they are in effect countless, but they are not as strong as the *sangka'*. *Sangka'* are said to be the *kaka'* (older sibling), *pemali* the *adi'* (younger sibling). Taking an example from social etiquette, Tato' Dena' explained that, when people are sitting together, it is *pemali* to stretch your legs out into the middle of the room, but a worse form of impoliteness to sit with your back turned to someone; that is *sangka'*. To account for the relative strength of the four categories, he related the following story, a tale which also serves to confirm the impossibility of a return from the dead:

There was once a man of rude and obstinate character (picturesquely described as *to matoro porrok*, *to matarompo maua*, 'a person with an unbendable rear, one with an unbudgeable behind'). When he died he commanded everyone to stay around and wait to welcome his ghost (*bombo*), for, he said, he would surely return. Puang Matua, however, had built four fences or hedges around Puya (the land of the dead): these were the *aluk*, *pemali*, *sangka'* and *sanda salunna*. When his spirit set out to return from Puya, he reached the first barrier (the *aluk*) and pushed it with his hand, and it fell over. On reaching the fence of *pemali*, he shoved with both hands,

<sup>10</sup> A fuller description of *ma'nene'* can be found in Volkman (1985:142-7).

<sup>11</sup> *Unnola salunna* means to go with the stream, or to follow the right way, while *unnola tang salunna* means to go without any direction, or against the stream. There is an implication that when things are done right, the result will be positive, while those who go against the stream will come to no good.



and it, too, fell. But as he approached *sangka'*, *sangka'* spoke and said: 'There's no *sangka'* which says the dead may return to life.' Hard as he tried, he could not push over this third fence, upon which the fourth, *sanda salunna*, joined the conversation, saying, 'I told you that already!'

In spite of their ranked relationship, the categories of *sangka'* and *pemali* each contain both major and minor examples, so that it is not immediately obvious to which category a particular prohibition might belong. Where house-building is concerned, for instance, the rule that a house must face north is an example of *sangka'*, but prohibitions governing the arrangement of 'trunk' and 'tip' ends of posts and beams, such as the rule that posts must never be inverted, or set with the 'tip' end down, are *pemali*. So too are rules about the laying of mats in the house, which must always be arranged so that the seams point east-west, except at funerals, when they are laid pointing north-south (east being associated with life, south with the land of the dead). An apparently minor *sangka'* having to do with the feeding of pigs stipulates that one must bang on the pig-trough first, a more important one warns against letting one's pigs wander freely where they may cause damage to neighbours' gardens, thus giving rise to quarrels and bad feeling. The strongest of all *pemali* is the prohibition on murder: *pemali umpakande matanna bassi* 'it is prohibited to feed the iron blade'; lesser ones have to do with points of etiquette and politeness.

Tato' Dena' laid out several categories of *pemali*. There are those that govern relations between people, the strongest being the rules against incestuous relations between siblings, or parents and children. It is *pemali* also to 'follow the way of Rura' (*umpoaluk alukna to Rura*), a reference to the myth of Londong di Rura, who married together his four sons and four daughters, causing a flood to destroy his house and all who were gathered there. It is forbidden to 'offend with the lips' (*pemali sala' puduk*): to lie or make false accusations against others. It is *pemali* to steal (*boko*), even such small items as a needle, an egg, or the fence around a seed-bed (which might be tempting, in offering an easy supply of firewood). There are explicit rules against excluding others from their rights or their shares of inheritance (*pemali siseru bi'ti*, *sirumbe takia*; literally, 'it is prohibited to kick people in the shins, to elbow them in the upper arm'). These rules apply in matters to do with house membership (*lan tongkonan layuk*), such as refusing to acknowledge a branch of the family or grant them entrance to a house ceremony, or preventing them from helping to rebuild the house (with a view to disqualifying them from making claims on land or resources belonging to the *tongkonan*). It is similarly prohibited to cheat one's relatives of their shares in rice lands (*diong sumalunna lombok*; literally, 'in the valleys'), or in other property such as buffaloes, pigs and chickens, gold and inherited valuables. In matters to do with marriage (*lan rampanan kapa'*), likewise, it is *pemali* to steal someone else's spouse, or to

sleep with forbidden categories of relatives (*untengkai randan dali*, literally, 'to cross over the edge of the sleeping-mat'). For instance, Tato' Dena' explained, if your close cousin comes for a visit, and you go to her during the night, you will cross over the edge of your own mat in doing so. 'If people kept all these rules, there would never be any disputes', he commented wryly in conclusion.

Another important category of *pemali* has to do with rituals. Rites of the West are sometimes characterised as 'rites of the left' (*aluk makkairi*), and Rites of the East as 'rites of the right' (*aluk makkananna*). The two are thought of as being carried on the left and right shoulder of the body, and they should be kept in balance. To be imbalanced in performing one's responsibilities, more especially to neglect the *tongkonan*, will bring misfortune and even an early death. Two other sayings express the twin duties both to uphold one's obligations to one's origin houses, and to attend funerals. They are: *pemali tangma'barra' sangraku tama tongkonan layuk*, 'it is forbidden not to give a handful of rice to the origin house' (that is, to contribute to its ceremonies, or to the costs of rebuilding), and *pemali ke denni to disilli', na tae' na dikekeran bassi*, 'it is forbidden if there is a funeral, not to bite iron' (the phrase 'to bite iron' expresses a very great grief, and is narrowly used to refer specifically to the observance of mourning taboos by the closest family members. Here, it means to share the grief by attending the funeral and sitting with the corpse, which is a vital social duty whether or not one may actually be contributing livestock for sacrifice).<sup>12</sup> It is likewise forbidden to speak ill of the dead (*pemali umpa'palakan to mate*). Even if you have quarrelled bitterly with a relative, to the point of breaking off relations with them completely, you are still under obligation to attend their funeral and 'bite iron'. It is *pemali* to perform any ceremony incompletely, or to perform parts out of context. For this reason, Tato' Dena' was never prepared to recite the whole text of ritual chants just for my information, also because he said it was dangerous to summon deities or ancestors thus, if one were not really making an offering to them.

Mourning prohibitions fall under the heading of *pemali Rampe Matampu'*, or *pemali Rambu Solo'* (prohibitions of the West, or of Smoke of the Setting Sun), chief of them being the mourners' abstention from rice; while the *pemali Rampe Matallo*, or *pemali Rambu Tuka'* (prohibitions of the East or of Smoke of the Rising Sun) require participants not to eat maize, the food most closely associated with mourning. In the past, there were strong prohibitions on mixing elements from the two ritual spheres of East and West, which were supposed to be held strictly apart. For instance, *pemali tu umbating, ke tae' to*

<sup>12</sup> The term *to disilli'* actually refers to the humblest level of funeral rite, in which only pigs are sacrificed; here it is used as a form of modesty, to mean funerals in general. The same obligation applies to any family, however small the funeral.

*mate* ('it is prohibited to sing mourning songs if no-one has died') – a rule that has come to be broken quite often since the introduction of cassette recorders, with the accompanying temptation to play back tapes out of context. In practising Alukta communities, if a Rite of the East were being held, and somebody in the community dies, the rite would have to be suspended until completion of the funeral. Most people still consider it *pemali* to mix meat from funeral sacrifices with foods from rites of the East. Tato' Dena' told a story of a man from a neighbouring village who in 1974 had consumed some rice left over from offerings he had made at his seedbed, along with dried meat that had come from a funeral; he died instantly. In Dutch times, agricultural advisers proposed using the fallow rice fields to plant maize or peanuts (foods associated with mourning) during the dry season, but this idea was strongly resisted by Toraja farmers, who feared supernatural sanction would result from such mingling of categories. Nowadays in Saluputti, this prohibition has lapsed, and on a visit in 2002 I saw a number of fields thus planted, but people in other districts told me they would still not consider doing this.<sup>13</sup> Another general rule was that animals were not to be slaughtered except in the context of sacrifice: *pemali umpongko punala olo'-olo'* – 'it is prohibited to slaughter livestock without reason'. In the villages, it is still true that most people rarely eat meat that has not been sacrificed (except for occasional chickens, killed perhaps to entertain a visitor), though nowadays in the towns fresh meat is available daily.

A very important set of prohibitions are those against disturbing the peace (*marukka*) at public gatherings, characterised by the image of stirring up and muddying the buffalo's wallowing-hole (*ullutu tombang*). It is an offence to cause a disruption by thus carrying one's own private quarrels into the public sphere. To disturb the peace at funerals is described as *ullutu tombang panda ri bolong* ('to muddy the wallowing-hole of a black gathering', black being the colour of mourning). It is equally prohibited to do so at any Rites of the East (*pemali ullutu tombang mintu' pandana Rambu Tuka'*), or even where people are gathered together for harvesting (*takkenan bunu'*, 'the tying of sheaves'). Another venue of prime social importance where large numbers of people can be expected to gather is the marketplace (*pasa'*). Here too it is forbidden to start a fight (*pemali ullutu tombang tananan pasa'*). Anyone who breaks these rules may be subject to a heavy penalty. They can be summoned before the village council (*kombongan*), and ordered to pay a fine of one buffalo, the meat to be divided to all the council members and those present. As two sites which draw crowds, the marketplace and the ritual field are equated, for in

<sup>13</sup> In most districts, this might not be practicable anyway, since the newer rice varieties allow two harvests a year, but in Malimbong, people still favour the older rice varieties, and plant only one crop, leaving a long fallow period.

sacred poetry the latter is sometimes metaphorically referred to as *pasa'*.

Some *pemali* have to do with matters of etiquette and personal bearing. One such warns against kicking or stumbling over things (*pemali massunduk lentek*). One should avoid tripping over plates on the floor while people are eating, or worse still bumping into people where they are sitting, or even ('according to the ancestors', Tato' Dena' elucidated, indicating that this rule is no longer much observed), kicking stones while walking along a path. The general implication seems to be that human behaviour should be rational, ordered and restrained. Another rule enjoining personal restraint is that one should not utter curses (*mekabullung*) when frustrated, or all one's enterprises will fail. *Pemali ma'tibo-tibo* means that when emptying anything from one container into another, one must always tilt it toward one, with the receptacle in front of one, and never away, or else one will be throwing away one's good luck. *Pemali ma'kapoka'-poka'* means that it is forbidden to smash things in anger around the house, while arguing with one's spouse for example. While some of these might be rarely spoken of, Tato' Dena' elucidated, they do feature in a prayer to be uttered by the *to minaa* in Rites of the East, where in the preparatory stages of the rite, forgiveness is asked of Puang Matua on behalf of the entire community in case any *pemali* has been broken:

*Denni manii te'e to sisero bi'ti'*  
*dio anggenna eanan sanda makamban [...]*  
*Denni manii mekabullung*  
*Denni manii massunduk lentek*  
*Denni manii ma'tibo-tibo*  
*Denni manii ma'kapoka'-poka' [...]*

If anyone may have deprived others of their rights  
 If they have robbed them of any kind of property whatsoever [...]  
 If anyone may have uttered curses  
 If anyone may have kicked things  
 If anyone may have tipped things away from them  
 If anyone may have smashed things in anger [...]

Examining the range of these prohibitions, one can see that they formed a complete ethical system, regulating all aspects of life and behaviour. The Christian attempt to separate *adat* from *aluk* could not be effected without doing violence to this system, and might be judged an impossibility. *Aluk sipori ada'*, as the Toraja saying has it: '*aluk* and *adat* are bound together'. What Tato' Dena' did not emphasise, though it is often mentioned by others, is that to some extent the *pemali* also served to reinforce status distinctions. Some people still like to claim that for slaves to reject their dependent status is *pemali*, just as it is to hold a funeral ceremony, or build a house, more grand than your birth status allows. Although these rules have by now

become unenforceable, it was believed in the past that violations would call down supernatural sanction; one would 'get a swollen stomach' (*mabusung* or *kambang tambukna*) and die. There are two possible degrees of sacrilege involved in breaking prohibitions: a very grave offence is termed *kasalla'*, and is expected to result in certain death, while a lesser one, *kasalan*, may simply cause one's endeavours to fail. For instance, if taboos to do with rice (sometimes given a special name of their own, *pemulu*) are broken, it was thought that the rice would fail, or be eaten by mice. Christians have naturally ceased to observe many *pemali*, and on occasion have deliberately violated them with a view to demonstrating that they are superstitious.<sup>14</sup> In the 1950s, the lay preacher of a Pentecostal church at Tilanga chiselled the breasts off a sacred stone shaped like a woman and child, which stood beside the sacred pool there and had been an object of visitation by women anxious to conceive. As a result (according to Tato' Dena') 67 people, including the perpetrator, were afflicted with disease and died. Similarly, a woman who ordered one of her former slaves to remove a sacred offering-stone from her rice field, where she was finding it got in the way, was struck with 'swollen stomach' and died, as did the man who had done her bidding. Concluding his discussion on this topic, Tato' Dena' observed that it was useless to bring complaints before the village council when prohibitions were broken by those who no longer adhered to Alukta; but there was no need to offend sensibilities by committing acts of gross sacrilege, either. One should show respect for other people's religions. Unfortunately, as I myself was able to observe in the 1970s, converts to Christianity have sometimes been openly hostile to Alukta, and even look forward to its total disappearance.

More generally, in the past few decades the concern with prohibitions has been much eroded. Mourning prohibitions, for instance, had once been protracted and severe, especially for the widow or widower, close kin, and (for high ranking nobility) also certain designated slaves. Bine' of Tombang in Menduruk, an elderly and most articulate aristocratic lady who in the late 1970s was a fund of information about old times, told me that she had once been unable to eat rice for three years, when three members of her grandparents' generation had died in quick succession, and she had been in mourning for all of them. But even the prohibition on eating rice is not necessarily any longer observed, as I found on visiting a funeral in Menduruk in 1999. The close relatives of the deceased were in the front room of the house, keeping company with the body, which had already been wrapped in many layers of

<sup>14</sup> Missionaries encouraged people to test the *pemali*, for instance by breaking the restriction on eating rice while in mourning. Donzelli's (2003:86) adoptive uncle related how his brother had once questioned a Dutch missionary as to what Christianity really meant. His reply was, 'It means there are no longer *pemali*'.

cloth like a huge bolster. When I arrived they were eating a lunch of rice, and it was explained to me that as Christians, they were no longer obliged to keep the mourning taboos. Not just the observance of *pemali*, but ritual life in its entirety, we may conclude, has been very much simplified by conversion to Christianity, and the pace of this transformation has only quickened over the past few decades. As one acquaintance humorously put it, 'Christians shorten everything – except sermons!' His next comment proposed an unexpected thread of continuity with the past, for he added that he didn't think people gave really good sermons unless they were of noble descent, since only those people tend to know the elegant and poetic language which formerly dignified ritual occasions, and which could be carried over into the preacher's art.

#### *Ancestors and deities in the landscape*

Through their interactions with local environments, humans shape the landscape around them, and as they do so, cause meaning to become sedimented in it. They are then able to read its traces, and in turn enjoy a sense of belonging in it. Peter Gow (1995:51), writing of the inhabitants of western Amazonia, describes how people become, as he puts it, 'implicated' in the landscape, able to comprehend its meanings. This, he insists, is not simply a subjective experience of gaining knowledge, 'because implication depends on actively moving around in the landscape, and leaving traces in it'. For many of us, deracinated from our places of origin by the forces of modernity, any such sense of belonging is likely to be tenuous at best. But the world view of Alukta provides an excellent example of a religion embedded in a particular landscape. In this it contrasts markedly with what Weber characterised as the 'world religions'.

What was it that made it possible for the world religions to transcend the boundaries of their original cultures, and become acceptable to people in very different places? When we compare them with those that have remained localised, we can see that the former have tended to produce a standardised, text-based, and transportable message, chiefly addressed to the individual, while the latter remain indissolubly linked to the concerns of a particular community in its own distinctive environment. Alukta can thus be seen to share a number of qualities typical of localised indigenous religions generally. There is no declaration of faith, in the sense of a policeable formula such as typifies the monotheisms. Instead, there is considerable variation from district to district in the details of both myths (as we have seen in earlier chapters) and ritual prescriptions. Where the world religions offer the individual a message about the personal responsibility to seek a path to salvation, localised religions tend to focus on the community's efforts to maintain harmony





Making an offering beside the rice field while the rice is ripening (*medatu*), Tumakke, Talion, 1994

with the rest of the cosmos. Whereas in industrialised societies, the world religions have tended to separate out specific days and times for acts of worship, integrated into the rhythms of the industrial working week, localised religions are more likely to follow seasonal rhythms or their own irregular patterns of ritual activity.

World religions have their sacred buildings, set apart from the mundane; like texts, these are transportable in the sense that they can be constructed anywhere. In Alukta, no separate temples or places of worship are necessary since deities dwell in nature and can be contacted in the places they inhabit (on mountain sides or beside springs, for instance), or summoned from named points in the landscape to be present at a ritual. Offerings made during the cycle of rice cultivation take place at a designated spot at the edge of particular rice fields, and when the rice is ripening, people ascend the mountain slopes to make the offerings called *medatu* or *ma'bulung pare*. Women cook sticky rice in bamboo tubes, while the men slaughter and cook small chickens and lay out the offerings on strips of banana leaf, first of all to the deities, and then to the ancestors. A tall, leafy bamboo called *paloloan* is hung with miniature offering-baskets, containing small quantities of sticky rice and chicken, and erected at the spot as a sign that people have been in communication with the deities, requesting their beneficence for a bountiful harvest. For the



After the offering is completed, a tall bamboo (*paloloan*) hung with offering baskets for the deities is erected at the spot, Tumakke, Talion, 1994



The principles of Aluk To Dolo embody a respect for nature. Tato' Dena' prepares offerings for the *deata* at a hillside spring in Mengkendek, 1999. Local villagers planning to use it as a water source called him to perform the rite of 'purchasing the spring' (*unnalli kalimbuang*) to request permission of the deities first.

ancestors, a sugar-palm branch (*daun induk*) is erected, to which are tied their offerings of betel nut and *piong* (rice cooked in bamboo). After the offerings are completed, the people enjoy eating their share of the food together, taking a well-deserved moment of rest from the otherwise backbreaking work of rice cultivation. I attended one such rite in a ricefield called Rattang Sura', belonging to *tongkonan* Tumakke in Banga (Saluputti) in 1994. My host, Pak Kondo, described the *paloloan* as the deities' 'electricity pole' (*tongkat listrik*), a metaphorical channel of power and point of connection with the unseen. On a walk through the hills one may encounter such markers, long yellowed and dried, testimony to past acts of communication with the powers of nature embodied in the landscape. Instead of having permanent temples, Toraja typically build temporary architecture to demarcate the ritual field and to accommodate guests, both at the larger funerals and also on the *pa'buaran*, the site used to celebrate the largest rituals of a joyful, fertility-enhancing character. The house, as a microcosm intimately associated with the ancestors, may

itself become the holy space in which offerings are made.<sup>15</sup>

For an agricultural people, the idea that the forces of fertility reside in the landscape makes obvious sense. The deities of Alukta are amorphous, asexual beings who are not for the most part named or personified. They might be better thought of as embodiments of the landscape itself, a fusion of nature and the supernatural. Whereas Toraja do not claim to see ghosts (unless a person has died a 'bad' death due to violence or an accident), they do sometimes describe strange meetings with the *deata*. They are said to look just like humans, but with fine sharp teeth like needles. Beneficent as their powers in general may be, it is dangerous to have a personal encounter with them, for they can lure a person away into the forest so that they become lost and deranged. Some people report having been taken to a beautiful house in some deserted spot in the forest, where to the eyes of those who set out to search for them, there is nothing to be seen.

One of the few named deities is Indo' Lobo', Indo' Momba'ka', or Indo' Paranganan ('Mother of Growth', 'Mother who Increases', 'Mother who Multiplies'), who is held to be responsible for causing everything on earth to flourish. Special offerings are made to her at the rite performed when the rice is ripening. Tato' Dena' classifies the *deata* into three categories. There are those who live in twelve layers under the earth, who are called *to keingkok* ('the tailed ones') because they are said to have tails like fish (see also Nooy-Palm 1979:111). Then there are the deities residing on the earth (*deata lan kapadanganna*), who dwell in mountains, rivers, forests, stones, wind, and so on. These are the deities most commonly addressed in ritual. They are associated with the sky and with high places; Tato' Dena' describes them as *deata ditiro tuka'*, *puang dimanta' lulangan* ('deities to whom we look up, lords to whom we gaze upward'). Lastly, there is the *ampu padang* ('owner of the land'), whom Tato' Dena' described as being the same as the dreaded deity of smallpox, Puang Ruru', a 'deity of destruction' who must be fed with offerings of raw meat (*dipakande mamatanna*).<sup>16</sup> (Here – an example of his search for parallels between Alukta and Hinduism – he drew a comparison with Siva, though in some areas Puang Ruru' is thought of as female). Puang Ruru' is held responsible for causing sickness, whether of humans or livestock, and is the focus of two special sickness- and pox-averting ceremonies, *ma'bugi'* and *ma'pakorong*.<sup>17</sup> At *ma'bugi'*, participants dance and summon the *deata* to

<sup>15</sup> This is a point made by more than one adherent in defense against the accusation that Alukta has no places of worship.

<sup>16</sup> In other contexts, for instance in divining for a favourable house site, the term *ampu padang* refers to the deity or spirit of the location, whose permission must be sought before commencing to build.

<sup>17</sup> For a description of the *ma'bugi'* ritual, see Crystal and Yamashita (1987); for *ma'pakorong*, see Waterson (1995c).



be present, calling them in chants from named mountain tops of their own immediate locality. Here is a fragment of such a chant, told me by villagers of Buttang:

<i>Iko deata i Kallan</i>	You deities of Kallan
<i>Iko puang Buttut Dido'</i>	You lords of Buttut Dido'
<i>Iko deata pa'buaran</i>	You deities of the ceremonial ground
<i>Iko puang bura-bura</i>	You lords of the foam [water]
<i>Iko deata i londo'</i>	You deities of the land
<i>Iko puang Sarapeang</i>	You lords of Sarapeang
<i>Iko deata ri Messila</i>	You deities of Messila
<i>Iko puang ri Sado'ko'</i>	You lords of Sado'ko'

The names are all those of mountains which are familiar local landmarks in Malimbong; Buttut Dido' and Sarapeang are also the sites of the annual *ma'bulung pare* offerings, made when the rice is ripening. The *pa'buaran* is the sacred ground on which the greatest of all fertility-enhancing rites, the *ma'buu'*, is held. The last *ma'bugi'* that villagers in Buttang had attended was celebrated in the next-door village of Pasang around 1988; as more and more of the community have gone over to Christianity, it may well have been the last that will be held in that area. At *ma'bugi'*, when the *deata* have been summoned long enough, their arrival is demonstrated when some of the dancers fall into trance. In trance, people perform amazing feats, climbing ladders of knives, pulling drawn swords against their abdomens, or dancing on hot coals. The *deata* are believed to protect them from hurting themselves, and an application of sacred red *tabang* (Cordyline) leaves is supposed to staunch blood and heal any wounds without trace. Protestants view possession as demonic and have opposed any rite involving trance with particular firmness; as time passes, the deities retreat back into the landscape and become a distant, fading presence.

In 1999 I met an elderly man, Ne' Tambing of Sa'dan, who recited for me a more elaborate example of *ma'bugi'* poetry, whose purpose is to summon the Bugi' deity, whose home is far away at the edge of the sky. The chant is reproduced in full in Appendix B, not only as an example of the rich but dying art of Toraja ritual poetry, but also because in its detailed description of a journey through a landscape, full of named locations, it provides a remarkable example of a characteristic Austronesian trope to which Fox (1997:8) has given the name *topogeny*, or 'the recitation of an ordered sequence of place names'. The verses begin by describing the Bugi' (a deity of indeterminate sex according to Ne' Tambing), observing the omen birds in order to select an auspicious day to set out on the journey.<sup>18</sup> She, or he, then sets out to

<sup>18</sup> While here the Bugi' is named as a separate deity, in Ma'kale and Mengkendek, it is Puang

travel, stopping to rest, crossing the sea, and arriving at Palopo (the port in Luwu', on South Sulawesi's east coast). After conversing with the *datu* (ruler) of Luwu', the deity is then described travelling up into the Sa'dan highlands, passing a string of mountains and named villages, until eventually arriving at the site of the festival. The language of ritual has an instrumental power; it is intended to make things happen, both in the external world and in the minds and bodies of the audience. The recitation of the Bugi' deity's journey is inscribed into the landscape, in such a way as to enable the listeners to imagine the progression, through a series of recognized landmarks, leading to the moment of arrival. Proof that Puang Bugi' has indeed been summoned will be demonstrated when participants fall into trance and become possessed or 'taken' by the deity (*naala deata*). Puang Bugi' is then invited to moderate the winds of sickness and turn them away, back toward the distant mountains from which s/he has come. The chant then continues with a poetic description of the deity's extraordinary house, which is oriented differently from human houses, and like the original house of the *to manurun* ancestor Tamboro Langi' is suspended from the sky:

The one who has a hanging house  
 The one whose village is windswept  
 House which is suspended from the sky  
 House which came into being by itself  
 Built without using a bush-knife  
 The way of the Bugi' axe  
 The way of the Dutch adze  
 The way of the fine axe  
 The way of the golden adze [...]

One whose house is turned back to front  
 One whose village is oriented toward the east  
 With a window facing to the north [...]  
 Its bindings are no ordinary bindings  
 Its cords are not of rattan  
 The moon is used to bind it  
 The stars are its cords  
 The sun holds it together.

The verses then announce the recovery from illness and politely request the

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Ruru' (or Puang Maruru', or Datu Maruru'), the deity causing illness and pox, who is summoned at *ma'bugi'*. In these districts, this deity is thought of as male, in Saluputti, as female, while Nooy-Palm's description derived from her interviews with a healer in Nonongan suggest he is male but a cross-dresser: he is 'yellow like the gods and wears a dress' (Crystal and Yamashita 1987:52; Waterson 1995c:84; Nooy-Palm 1979:292).



deity to return home, with a wish that both parties shall prosper until such time as they may meet again.

Parallels in other Southeast Asian societies are not hard to find. Atkinson (1989), for instance, details the chants by which Wana shamans of Central Sulawesi call their spirit familiars, which are actually called *patoe* ('summons'); the power of words is also well analysed by Clifford Sather in his work on Iban bards and shamans. At the Gawai Antu, the final secondary rites for the dead, their songs recount the journey of the spirits of the dead, led by the gods and goddesses of the Otherworld, as they travel to the world of the living. The longhouse, in the course of this recitation, itself becomes 'a symbolically organized landscape', 'thronged with unseen visitors' (Sather 1993:101, 103). In the Iban shaman's spirit journeys in search of the wandering soul of a sick person, his chants similarly invoke a mythologised landscape familiar to the participants, as he acts out with props his encounters with the spirits and the soul's recovery (Sather 2001). In the Toraja context, a quite different occasion on which journeys through the landscape are sung in ritual verse is at a funeral (see Appendix C). Then, the deceased person's spirit is encouraged to depart for the land of the dead, which necessitates a lengthy journey to the south. Here again, the words are designed to be efficacious both in effecting the spirit's departure, and in consoling the participants who visualize the journey in their imagination.

#### *Intimacy with the ancestors*

Toraja traditionally entertained simultaneously a variety of ideas about the location of the ancestors. Their spirits, although said to reside in Puya, an afterlife located far to the south, were also thought to return sometimes to visit the houses of their descendants. They might come to sit in the cool shade on the platform of a rice barn, or keep company with the living when they went to plant and harvest the rice. They thus remained close at hand, maintaining a beneficent interest in the well-being of their descendants. Rather than feeling afraid of them, there was (as I experienced it) more of a sense of intimacy with the ancestors, which was most vividly embodied in the ceremony called *ban manuk* ('to give chickens'). This rite was held several days after a burial, and served to bring to an end the prohibitions associated with mourning. To me, these were some of the most enjoyable occasions of my fieldwork. People would go to the site of the stone grave (*liang*), always on a hillside from where we could enjoy spectacular views across the landscape, to 'give chickens' not just to the recently deceased, but to the ancestors as a group (family tombs are often clustered together wherever there is suitable granite rock available, and each one contains generations of dead). Everyone

would bring with them cooked chicken, as well as foods associated with the period of mourning: roast sweet potato, boiled maize, *la'pa'* (cakes of steamed cassava sweetened with coconut and cooked in banana leaf), and bananas. This is a rare occasion when the offerings are made by women. After proceeding in single file to the grave, they would first keen and weep (*ma'bating*) for a few minutes, and then lay out the offerings on a rock. Then they would sit together and chat for a while, allowing a decent interval to elapse in which the ancestors were supposed to have consumed the essence of the food. After this, everyone present would eat some of the food, including that which had been offered. On one occasion, when a two-year-old child was the object of these rites, they also took his hat and plate, and a little model of a rice barn, and left them by the *liang* for his use in the afterlife. The men, meanwhile, had been killing and butchering two pigs and a large number of black or white chickens. After the women's offering, the men would come and offer some of the cooked meat, on a plate on which they had first collected some maize or cassava-cake from each woman present. Far from being mournful, the atmosphere on these occasions was cheerful and relaxed, a sort of large-scale picnic in the invisible company of those who had gone before. But *ban manuk* is now a thing of the past in Malimbong.

'Feeding the ancestors' was a custom not limited to ritual occasions. In a practice which once had parallels in many parts of the Indonesian archipelago, they used to be fed at mealtimes too.<sup>19</sup> A small basket (*bi'tak to dolo*) was kept above the hearth for them, into which morsels of food were placed at mealtimes. My family in Buttang had such a basket, which was still in use in the late 1970s; a few years ago I enquired after its fate and learned that it had been inherited by *sebo'*, my younger sister. She and her husband remain among the few members of the family who have not become Christian. She lifted the basket down from the shelf of her house in Menduruk; we saw that it was empty save for an old toothbrush. We laughed, and she joked that the evidently desecrated basket had become *hiasan*, an Indonesian term for objects hung on living-room walls as decorations. The image sticks in my mind all the same, as one small and (to me) poignant instance of the process of disenchantment that happens as a world view once taken for granted collides with other systems of belief. In ritual verse, the ancestors are described as moving beyond Puya to become one with the stars, returning to the earth as rain and causing the crops to flourish. The vision of the ancestors as remaining part of the natural cycle is not unique to Toraja, whose ideas show close parallels with those of other small-scale farming societies. This cyclical notion provides one particular way of transcending death's finality. The monotheisms by contrast present a conception of a linear progression to

<sup>19</sup> See Waterson (1990:217) for a discussion of some comparative examples.

an afterlife so radically different from this one as to be almost beyond imagination, from whence no return is possible and no communication with the living is permitted. As I have described elsewhere (Waterson 1984b), since the relationship with the ancestors was formerly so intimate, this severing of communication can sometimes be a source of emotional conflict, especially to older converts.

But the intimate interweaving of Alukta with a particular landscape is at once its strength – that which once made it so locally appropriate – and its weakness; it simply cannot easily be translated to other contexts. Even those who have not converted, once they migrate outside of Tana Toraja, may feel at a loss as to how to maintain Alukta outside of its original context and community. Like the attachment to houses of origin, which people say could never really make sense outside of Tana Toraja itself, the surviving rituals cannot easily be staged beyond the homeland. This is one reason why migrants continue to show a remarkable loyalty to their place of origin, often returning long distances to be present at funeral rites or house celebrations. The vigour with which these two particular categories of rites are still performed, now generally in modified, Christianized form, is an indication of their continuing, embedded importance in social life. Their significance for the maintenance of kin relationships and for the building of local political prestige remains something to which many Toraja feel a proud attachment, as being the foundations of their own distinctive culture. Nevertheless, many other rituals in the Toraja corpus, particularly those associated with the East, have fallen into disuse. Christian converts were counselled against participating in them, and once communities are split, the larger rites simply become too expensive and difficult to arrange. The next chapter tells of the greatest of these, the *ma'buat' pare*; while the following one aims to describe the process of interaction with a world religion, and Alukta's slow decline.



## CHAPTER XV

# The enhancement of fertility

What has happened to the ritual complex of Alukta as more and more of its adherents have gone over to Christianity? When I lived in Malimbong in the late 1970s, I was able to observe a wide variety of ceremonies. Besides attending numerous funerals, I also attended a *ma'paundi* rite (in which extra buffaloes are killed for the use of the deceased in the afterlife) and a *pembalikan gandang* ('turning the drum') conversion rite for the deification of a deceased ancestor. Where Rites of the East were concerned, I saw all the offerings connected with the agricultural cycle, and attended several house ceremonies, as well as one *ma'bugi'* and one *ma'pakorong* (rites to ward off sickness), and witnessed two of the smaller *ma'bua'* rites (*ma'bua' muane* or 'male' *ma'bua'*). The greatest of all the Rites of the East, the *ma'bua' pare* or *ma'bua' baine* ('rice' or 'female' *ma'bua'*), by then was already very rarely performed, though Buttang villagers told me that one had been held in Buttang about ten years previously, and in a neighbouring community about ten years before that. I felt very lucky, therefore, to learn that a *ma'bua'* was in progress in a community just west of Ma'kale in 1979, and although I was not able to follow the entire sequence of rites leading up to it, I did witness the culminating night of this most dramatic ritual performance. On a return visit in 1982-1983, I was also able to see part of a *ma'bua'* held in Sareale, high up on the slope of Mount Sesean.

### *The ritual rhythm of the agricultural cycle*

The agricultural timetable varies from area to area across Tana Toraja. Broadly speaking, the people in the north tend to plant much earlier than those in the south, and they sometimes take advantage of this at the busiest times of the year, for example at harvest, to move south in search of day labour, after they have finished their own harvesting. They value this opportunity since the precipitous terrain of the north means that there is less land there suitable for wet rice fields, so that people there tend to have smaller holdings of their own. Even between Malimbong and neighbouring *desa*, the timing of agricultural activities varied considerably. Rice was planted two months

earlier in Talion, and all the planting there would be finished while the fields in Malimbong were still lying fallow and the seedbeds were only just being prepared for the next crop. The staggering of timetables could be an advantage here too. Sebo', for instance, would go and stay for several days with her mother's brother in Talion, in order to help with the harvest there. Kin have an automatic right to join in the harvest and they are generally offered considerably more than the usual ten per cent of what they reap as their fee. The timetable that I show here is the one that was followed in Malimbong when I lived there in the late 1970s. Most people here still prefer to plant their own local varieties of rice which are slower to ripen than the new high-yield varieties widely adopted in other areas such as Ma'kale and Rantepao. They were taking one crop a year, so the timetable shown here fills the whole year. In other places two crops a year, or even five in two years, were possible, but the land in Malimbong is very fertile so there was less pressure to switch to the new varieties, since people often said that they preferred the taste of their old varieties. Even at the present time they continue to plant them. The timetable is specific with regard to time as well as to place, for at the time when I was there, the majority of householders were still adhering to the Aluk To Dolo and performed the *aluk pare*, the ritual cycle associated with cultivation. My timetable therefore lists agricultural activities together with the offerings and rituals performed for each stage. The *aluk pare* was an integral part of the rhythm of life at that time, and the offerings made in the fields and high places to enlist the blessings of the *deata* connected people to their familiar landscape in an intimate way which to me had a beauty of its own. There is one principal, named *deata* who is important in this context: she is known as Indo' Paranganan, Indo' Lobo', or Indo' Memba'ka', all names which mean 'Mother who Multiplies'. She causes the rice (and also people, animals, and property of all kinds) to multiply; when the offerings were laid out on strips of banana leaf, one of them would be specially for her.<sup>1</sup> A pleasantly relaxed atmosphere reigned at the preparation of these offerings, which provided a much needed break from the backbreaking labour of cultivation, and the sticky rice and tiny chickens of which the offerings were composed were delicious treats which relieved the monotony of the usual daily diet, amused the children, and provided useful morsels of extra protein. When the rice was beginning to flower, offerings would be made on hill tops and mountain sides to the deities inhabiting the landscape, and tall bamboos (*paloloan*) hung with little offering-baskets (*karerang*) for them would be erected and left as a

<sup>1</sup> According to Tato' Dena', there is also a *deata* called Indo' Soso'i, 'Mother who Diminishes'. If she is angered by a woman who breaks the *pemali* (prohibitions), she punishes her by diminishing her store of rice; every time she takes rice from her barn, Indo' Soso'i will take an equal amount, so that her store will dwindle rapidly.



sign that the offerings had been carried out. Now that is all history, at least in Buttang, for by the mid-1990s, all of the villagers had adopted Christianity, and the *aluk pare* has become a thing of the past. That had already happened even by the 1970s in many other Toraja communities, where agricultural ritual had been disrupted not only by the change in faith but also by the speeding up of the cycle once high-yield varieties were being cultivated.

The cycle begins round about the month of December with the preparation of the seedbeds (*patta'nakan*) in which the rice seed is sown. It takes between one and two months for the seedlings to grow, depending on the variety of rice being used. Ploughing all the fields ready to receive the seedlings when they are transplanted takes two or three months for the whole village, though the length of time for any one household obviously depends on the size of their holdings. Many people take the opportunity to work for others in work parties, receiving a daily wage together with their mid-day meal. After they have been ploughed, the fields are smoothed over using either the hands or a sort of sledge called *aki'*, which is pushed over the surface of the field. There is also a lot of work involved in repairing the dikes and banks of the rice fields, which become worn away over the year by being used as footpaths. Only within the past ten years have paddy tractors come into use here. Ploughing is now a much less exhausting job. For a payment of Rp. 100-200,000, a man can hire a tractor for a few days and get the job done much faster.



Women planting rice, Menduruk 1996

Like ploughing, the work of pulling up and transplanting the seedlings is often done in parties, invited by the owner of the rice field, and given a mid-day meal. The women who do this are not usually paid in cash, however, but in rice at the time of the harvest. For each day's work they receive ten *kutu'* or small sheaves. The task of pulling up the seedlings takes place in a characteristic atmosphere of hilarity and distinctly louche humour. While working closely together, the women laugh and make jokes of a frankly sexual nature. The first time I joined such a group I was quite surprised by the sudden abandonment of their usually demure demeanour, and the vivid explicitness of their exchanges. When a group of men passed on their way to plough, they called out to them and teased them too. They explained to me that they did this because it made the work less hard, and stopped them from feeling tired. However, it is quite possible that this distinctive behaviour has traditionally had a special, ritualised connection with the rice cycle itself, and was in fact enjoined, being intended to ensure that the plants would flourish. My attention was drawn to this possibility by the recent publication of a thesis concerning the religious ideas and practices of the neighbouring Mamasa Toraja (Buijs 2003). Buijs describes in some detail the customs connected there with the ancient practice of broadcast sowing of the rice seeds directly into the sawah, which is not practised in Tana Toraja. When the time comes for thinning and spacing out the seedlings (a phase comparable to transplanting in Tana Toraja), the women would playfully spray passers-by with mud and water, and they would also sing special songs called *ma'dondi*, inviting men who pass on the sawah dikes to come and join them to 'play' in the rice field. The men would then squat in the flooded rice field, and take the women on their knees, embracing them and moving up and down, while the women continued to sing to them in a special, drawling way.<sup>2</sup>

In Tana Toraja, when the rice was beginning to ripen (*ma'bulung pare*), if it was not looking very promising it was formerly the custom to hold kick-fighting contests (*sisemba'*). This ritual sport could also be performed after the harvest, with the intention of effecting an improvement in the next year's harvest. The other context in which *sisemba'* used to be performed was at funerals, but by the time of my fieldwork, kickfighting had been banned by the local government because the fights had a way of turning nasty and causing quarrels. Although it was thus associated with both the ritual spheres of the

<sup>2</sup> Buijs 2003:138-41. Mamasa is the area immediately west of Tana Toraja, recently separated from Polewali to become a Kabupaten on its own. In spite of dialect and cultural variations, the two Toraja regions have much in common. Most of what Buijs describes has now passed into history, since the area has been even more heavily Christianized than Tana Toraja. The Dutch tried to ban *ma'dondi* in the 1930s, since both married and unmarried people took part and it sometimes led to quarrels. Nevertheless, Buijs had the opportunity to witness women singing *ma'dondi* as late as 1993 – though the men refused to join them.

East (fertility) and the West (mortuary rites), *sisemba'* was described to me by Uto', the elderly ritual specialist (*to minaa*) from Ulusalu, as *ada' raya napodengan bo'bo'* ('the great *adat* that causes the rice to flourish').<sup>3</sup> A now vanished activity with the same purpose was called *ma'tikaruk*. It involved beating the bounds of the *bua'* in a night-time procession with torches, finishing with a turn around the *pa'buaran*, the sacred ground where the *ma'buu' pare* was held. This as we shall see is clearly an echo of the climactic moment in the *ma'buu'* itself, in which a procession with giant torches circles the sacred ground, the expressed hope being that the community's fortunes will 'flare up' like the flames of the torches.

Another almost forgotten but once distinctive practice, whose intent was to help the rice to grow, was swinging (*ma'kendong*). While the rice was ripening a swing, formed from a thick bamboo pole tied between two ropes, would be hung from a *barana'* (figus) tree. People of all ages and both genders would take turns to play on the swing, night or day, until they grew tired of it, while singing songs to the rice. Three chickens of different colours would be sacrificed: one for the *deata*, one for the ancestors, and one for the *ampu padang* or 'owner of the land', the immanent spirit of the locality. The practice had apparently died out by the 1950s, but Uto', and another elder, Dekke', still remembered it. In 1982 they related some of the songs they used to sing:

*Na sae pare ma'endong*  
*Sae nalemba uai*  
*Nabaleo bura-bura*

Tall rice will come  
 Come borne by the water  
 Carried by the foaming water

*Inda sae toke' kendong*  
*Umbasse kundali manik*  
*Kundali manik puang*  
*Ullang rara'na deata*  
*A – a – ah, endong!*

Who has come to hang up the swing?  
 To hang the rope like a necklace  
 Yellow necklace of the gods  
 Golden necklace of the deities  
 A – a – ah, [let it grow] tall!

*A – endong – e – ondo – pare lomben,*  
*Pare bandoti langi'!*

Ah – tall – eh – heavy<sup>4</sup> – tall rice  
 Rice [of the variety called] *bandoti langi'* !

The chorus would be sung repeatedly, many times over. The words are a form of 'expectation' (*panglambe*), a theme which also predominates in the symbolism of the *ma'buu'* rite. On one occasion, Dekke' laughingly recalled, he had

<sup>3</sup> There is a sacrificial aspect to such contests, which are capable of drawing blood. Compare the custom in Manggarai (West Flores) of staging whip duels (*caci*), which must draw blood, while the rice is growing (Erb 1996).

<sup>4</sup> The word *ondo* refers to the jogging, up and down motion of men who almost run while carrying heavy sheaves of rice on a bamboo carrying-pole over the shoulder.



Harvesting with the traditional harvest knife (*rangkapan*) at Tallung Lipu, 1994. The stalks are gathered in the hand and tied in a bunch (*kutu*). Quantities of rice were traditionally measured in *kutu*.

changed the words for a joke, calling out to the *deata* that he would sacrifice for them a crow and an eagle, after which he immediately fell off the swing and broke his leg. Naturally this was interpreted as divine punishment for his impudence. Swinging in connection with the flowering of the rice is an undoubtedly very ancient custom, which can be found from southern India right through Southeast Asia, being known also among some of the Thai hill tribes. Acciaioli reports it from Bugis areas, where he photographed a swing in 1987.<sup>5</sup> Chris Gregory, while studying rice-growing in Bastar, southern India, was taken into the fields by the villagers to witness the pollination of the rice, a stage which lasts only a day or so. The tiny flowers emerge and swing in the breeze, brushing against each other; then the people of Bastar say, 'Lakshmi (the goddess of rice) is swinging (also a euphemism for sexual intercourse)'. The human effort to help the rice by joining in the swinging can thus be understood as a kind of sympathetic movement; perhaps a similar association (with its potentials for a parallel sexual symbolism), underlies the emphasis on movement in the other activities just mentioned.

<sup>5</sup> Acciaioli, personal communication.

Cutting the rice is also mainly done by women, though men may join in. In Malimbong it is still cut stalk by stalk with the traditional harvest knife (*rangkapan*; I.: *ani-ani*).<sup>6</sup> Children may lend a hand, even from the age of six or seven, though they are not scolded if they give up the effort and start to play instead. At the end of the day, the owner of the field comes along to give to each their share of 10% of what they have reaped. The owner is at liberty to give more if they feel like it, and usually does so to relatives, even if they have not worked a full day. Most people can cut at least 100 *kutu'* a day, some rather more, say 140, so that a day's wage for harvesting works out at about the same as, or slightly more than, the wage for planting. Those who are not relatives of the owner of a field would feel embarrassed to join the harvesters unless they are invited, or unless they also helped in the planting, which gives them an automatic right to harvest there as well. They will now receive their wage for planting from the harvested rice, along with the payment for reaping.

After the rice is cut it is piled in stacks called *po'ko'* and left for a day or so to dry in the sun. Some fields have a special flat place which is always used as the drying ground and where offerings are made. This is called the *pangalloan* ('drying place') or *pangratta'* ('flat place'). After drying, the rice is bound into *ro'pa'* (bunches of five *kutu'*), and carried home to be stored in the barn (*alang*). Once the rice is in the barn, the agricultural cycle is complete, being marked traditionally by offerings. I witnessed the harvest offerings in Buttang when our household and several others performed them in 1978. The first of these involves the preparation of sticky rice cooked in bamboos (*piong*), in the house yards near the rice barns. This is called *ma'piong alang*. Our household joined with two others, that of Indo' Teken's younger sister who lived next door to us, and another neighbour, Ambe' Pare, to make the offerings one afternoon, each household preparing ten or fifteen bamboos of rice. Our household provided a small reddish-coloured chicken (*manuk rame*), which was killed by Ambe' Pare on the platform of the rice barn, its blood being collected in a banana leaf and later cooked together with the chopped meat in a separate bamboo over the fire. The *piong*, once cooked, made a fragrant treat which was handed out among the children and shared with anyone passing by, with plenty left over to eat at home that evening. Ambe' Teken told me that in the past, the whole village was supposed to perform this offering together, cooking lots of sticky rice in large bamboos and having battles with home-made water pistols. Another game traditionally played at this time was spinning tops (*ma'gasing*). This was viewed as part of the *adat* (custom) rather than *aluk*, since one can also play tops at any other time, and

<sup>6</sup> In other districts where new varieties are grown, these are cut with sickles and threshed in the field, since in those varieties the grain does not adhere to the stalk so firmly.



it was not regarded as having any sacred significance. That afternoon, too, people were supposed to weave strips of young sugar-palm leaf (*pusuk*) into diamond-shaped packets, which are filled with sticky rice and steamed to make *belundak* (called *ketupat* in Indonesian). One special packet is shaped like a cockerel with a long tail. Early the next morning, the concluding rite, called *ma'belundak*, would be held, the packets being hung from the rice barn and around the drying-place, and anyone who liked could pull them down and eat them. Some young rice, cut first of all, would be pounded to flour to make a white paste, which was dotted with a fingertip on the house, the barn and the rice mortar as a form of blessing.<sup>7</sup>

As it turned out, our performance of the rites that year showed evidence of a few irregularities. Our three families were two days behind some of the other households, who had already made their *piong* earlier, and it was not until three days later that Ambe' Teken fetched home the palm leaf for making the *belundak*. Early in the morning, when the children were supposed to take the *belundak* out to hang up at the drying-place, they didn't go because it was raining. And the timing had been complicated by the desire of some people in a neighbouring hamlet to perform *ma'paundi*, a rite that belongs to the sphere of the West. This involves sacrificing buffaloes and pigs for a deceased relative, sometimes long after their death, if the livestock killed at the original funeral is deemed to have been inadequate to ensure their well-being in the afterlife, or had been less than the descendants had originally promised. Some villagers had protested that a rite of the West, associated with death, could not be held before the agricultural rituals, quintessentially of the East, having to do with life and fertility, had been completed. In former times the separation of the two spheres was very strictly followed, and to mix them is still widely considered to invite supernatural sanction. The holders of the *ma'paundi* therefore delayed; but our own delay in carrying out *ma'belundak* meant that by the time we did it, the *ma'paundi* had in fact been carried out. Our household even received shares of meat from that rite, which were eaten in between the performance of *ma'piong alang* and *ma'belundak* – again, something which ought to have been avoided. It appeared to me therefore at that time that, although the rites were still part of everyday life in Buttang, they were no longer followed so conscientiously as they had been in the recent past, and they no longer served the coordinating function that they clearly once must have had in the community. I did not imagine that, fifteen years

<sup>7</sup> This parallels the use of blood from a sacrificed animal to make similar spots, sometimes on a person's cheeks or forehead, in some other rites of the East, as a mark of respect for the deities. Both are called *ma'toding*. In Bori', north of Rantepao, I was told that women would also dab the rice paste three times clockwise on the three hearthstones, in a gesture called *ma'pakande lalikan* ('feeding the hearthstones'). The hearthstones had to be fed before the first of the season's rice could be eaten.



later, they would have disappeared altogether.

Once the rice has been stored in the barn, from now on it is the woman of the house who takes charge of it, and she who enters the barn to take what is needed for the household's daily requirements. Any sale of rice should be by agreement between husband and wife. To enter or to steal from another person's barn is considered an especially heinous offence, although I was told in the 1990s that it had happened occasionally, and that rice had even been stolen from the drying-places. Christians, having given up the celebration of the traditional rites, have substituted for them a Christianized version of 'harvest festival', denuded of detail, at which sticky rice is still cooked, but with prayers substituted for the making of offerings.

The agricultural cycle in Buttang, 1978

Month	Stages of rice cultivation	Aluk Pare (ritual offerings)
January	<i>ma'pariu</i> (ploughing) <i>mangarak</i> (pulling up seedlings) <i>mantanan</i> (planting)	<i>mantanan pare</i> ('rice planting') rice field fish pools stocked 1 chicken killed at house, offerings taken to edge of sawah
February	<i>ma'pariu</i> (ploughing) <i>mantanan</i> (planting)	
March	<i>ma'torak/tumorak</i> (weeding)	<i>massisi' peleko</i> ('to store the weeding-trowel in the roof') after weeding finished 1 chicken killed at house
April	<i>mangramba dena'</i> (bird scaring) <i>ma'torak</i> (second weeding)	* <i>ma'to dolo banne</i> ('to make offerings to the ancestors [for] the young rice'). Small pig killed in village, woman of each household prepares sticky rice (prelude to <i>ma'bulung</i> )
May	<i>mangramba dena'</i> (bird scaring)	* <i>ma'bulung pare</i> ('the rice is flowering'). Pigs killed, offerings made. Three day prohibition on cutting and burning grass ( <i>ma'pemali padang</i> )
June	<i>mangramba dena'</i> (bird scaring)	<i>ma'pasae bua</i> ('to make fruits come') when rice is ripening. 2 chickens

July	<i>mepare</i> (harvesting) fish pools drained and large fish removed	* <i>ma'piong mepare</i> ('to make harvesting offerings'). 1 chicken at sawah's edge, with <i>piong</i> (rice cooked in bamboo) before commencing to cut the rice
August	<i>mepare</i> (harvesting)	
September	<i>mangallo</i> (drying the rice) <i>mangro'pa'</i> (tying the rice into bunches of five sheaves)  <i>ma'pakissin</i> (storing rice in barn)	* <i>mangallo</i> ('drying'). Packets of sticky rice ( <i>belundak</i> ) hung up on the drying floor ( <i>pangalloan</i> )  * <i>ma'piong alang/ma'pakissin</i> ('offerings at the barn/'storing') 1 chicken  * <i>ma'belundak</i> . <i>Belundak</i> hung around the house and barn doors dabbed with spots of rice paste End of cycle
October	fallow plenty of small fish in wet fields	
November	fallow	
December	<i>ma'pariu patta'nakan</i> (ploughing the seedbed)  <i>manglullu'</i> (prepare the seedbed) <i>mangambo'</i> (sowing seed)	<i>massu'bak patta'nakan</i> (‘ploughing the seedbed’) 1 chicken  <i>manglullu'</i> 1 chicken <i>mangambo'</i> 1 chicken

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(\* denotes rites still generally practised and witnessed by me when I lived there)

### *The ma'buu', climactic Rite of the East*

The *ma'buu'*, as a large-scale communal performance, embodied some of the most idealistic aspects of the world view created by Aluk To Dolo. The chances of this ritual being staged again are now very small, so I feel it is worth recording my experience here. A distinctive feature of the rite was that it was organized by a whole group of villages called a *buu'*, which formed a ritual community expressly for this purpose. In pre-colonial times, then, it was fundamentally along these lines that communities immediately larger than the *tondok*, or village, were organized. Several *buu'* formed a *lembang*, the unit that became the basis for the Dutch division of territories into *desa*. The

leading noble house of each *bua'* was called the *tongkonan bua'*, and played a prominent role in organizing the rite. Over them all was the *tongkonan layuk*, or politically dominant origin-house of the *lembang*. In some areas, the *bua'* are called *penanian*, which as Nooy-Palm (1979:61) explains, derives from the word *nani*, 'to sing', and refers to the performance of songs, especially by groups of women, which is a characteristic feature of the rite.<sup>8</sup> The aim of the rite was to ensure the fertility of humans, animals and crops, especially rice. In its emphasis on communal well-being it contrasts strikingly with the stress on rank and the sometimes aggressive competition that is a feature of mortuary rites. The *ma'bua'* is intended to secure benefits for the whole community – though this ideal, it might be said, is contradicted in reality by the rigidity of social divisions. As the highest of the Rites of the East, a certain complementarity may be observed with the highest-ranking of mortuary rites; the culminating rite for both takes place in a special ritual field, the *pa'buaran* for the *ma'bua'*, the *rante* for the funeral. Afterwards, distinctive carved ornaments may be added to the façade of the noble origin-house that has sponsored and led the rite, becoming markers of its ritual history: the *katik* (a long-necked bird said to represent a hornbill or mythical rooster) for the *ma'bua'*, and the *kabongo'*, a wooden buffalo-head with real horns, after the highest level of mortuary celebration.<sup>9</sup> A house that carries both of these ornaments indicates that its descendants enjoy the prestige of having succeeded at some time in celebrating the supreme rituals of both East and West.

The word *bua'*, according to Nooy-Palm (1986:10), is related to Indonesian *buat*, 'to do, to make', and once referred to 'work' of a ritual nature. In this it parallels another verb, *gau'*, which means both 'to do' and 'to perform a ritual'.<sup>10</sup> *Ma'bua'* differs in its exact form in different parts of Toraja, and whether it was ever held regularly, if at all, must have depended partly on the prescribed number of buffaloes held to be necessary for its celebration in

<sup>8</sup> Nooy-Palm (1979:60) describes how sometimes, a federation of *bua'* took it in turns to celebrate the ritual. For instance, in the territory of Bungin (part of the Ma'kale region), the celebration of the *bua'* rotated in a cycle through a federation of seven *bua'* communities, culminating every seventh year in its celebration by the *bua'* of the highest-ranking noble *tongkonan*. She gives a complete list of the *lembang* in Toraja territory, and the *bua'* that composed them. The number of *bua'* in a *lembang* varied between three and eleven. Areas that did not celebrate the *bua'* were organized in similar groups that coordinated the celebration of the *merok* feast. Ritual therefore formed the major basis for cooperation of communities larger than the village, though since this was only periodic, it does not imply administrative unity on a day-to-day basis. We should also note that the leadership provided by prominent noble *tongkonan* was as much ritual as political, since these houses controlled important ritual titles. The descendant who was selected to live in the house would assume the title and take a leading role in the rites.

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller analysis of the *katik* and *kabongo'*, see Waterson (1988).

<sup>10</sup> Cognates of *gau'*, carrying a similar combination of meanings, are widespread in Austronesian languages (compare Javanese *gawe*, Balinese *gahé/gawé*, Iban *gawa'lgawai*, and Tikopia *jekau*. The Tikopia call their rituals 'the work of the Gods' (Firth 1967).

each region: one in the west, twelve in the southern Tallu Lembangna, and 24 in Kesu', which made its expense prohibitive there and may explain why *merok* is effectively regarded as the highest Rite of the East in that district. Still more crucially, prevailing political and economic conditions must always have affected the ability to plan the rite, since it takes over a year to complete and requires not only abundant resources but also peaceful conditions. Nooy-Palm (1986:14) suggests that internal warfare might have prevented the celebration of the *ma'buu'* 'in the first quarter of this [20th] century'. Since pacification had already been imposed by the Dutch in this period, I take her to mean that communities had not yet recovered from the after-effects of the social chaos brought on by the last quarter of the previous one. She notes that the last *ma'buu'* to be celebrated in Kesu' was celebrated in 1923; in that decade, H. van der Veen reported a loss of interest in staging the rite in that region. The 1950s and 1960s were again troubled times in Toraja, which would have inhibited the ability to carry out the rite. By the time more peaceful and prosperous conditions were restored in the 1970s and 1980s, a new problem had become the division of many communities between those who were Christian, and those who still adhered to Alukta. Malimbong comprised seven *buu'* (Leppan, Bone, Menduruk, Sa'tandung, Buttang, Sawangan and Kole), but when I lived there in the 1970s, they did not appear to be following a definite cycle as described by Nooy-Palm (see note 1, above). In fact, it was uncertain if they would ever hold a *ma'buu' pare* again. Once the community is split, arrangements become increasingly difficult, and the costs have to be shared between fewer and fewer participants. Moreover, various noble houses of the *buu'* are designated holders of twelve distinct ritual titles, and their leaders are supposed to serve as functionaries, who not only had responsibilities in the annual cycle of agricultural rituals (*aluk pare*), but who each had a special role to play in the *ma'buu'*, especially in its culminating celebration. They are called Indo' (literally, 'Mother', here meaning leader; the title holder can be a woman or a man). If the current inhabitants of these houses have become Christian, the Church will not countenance their performing the traditional roles in this rite for the pagan deities of Alukta. A more recent problem, since 1997, has been the financial crisis (I.: *krisis moneter* or *krismon*), which brought a drastic devaluation of the Rupiah, and has made it even more unlikely that the celebratory, thanksgiving rites of the East will be revived, at least in the near future.

The attachment of ritual titles to different noble origin houses played a part in binding together the different settlements of the *buu'*, whose unity was metaphorically conceived of in terms of a buffalo's body. The buffalo was and arguably still is the supreme measure of value in Toraja society (a subject to which I will return in Chapter XVIII). The two main titleholders were called the Indo' Padang, or 'Leaders of the Land'. Of these, one was the Indo' Deata

(Indo' of the Deities), the other was Indo' To Dolo (Indo' of the Ancestors). The Indo' Deata was slightly superior to the Indo' To Dolo, and took the lead in making the offerings which started the yearly agricultural cycle. He or she was really the leader of the rice rituals, while the duties of the Indo' To Dolo belonged to the Rites of the West, the sphere of the dead. In Saluputti, each *bua'* was known as *misa' tedong* ('one buffalo'), and was divided into two halves, termed *sese tedong* (half a buffalo). The *bua'* of Buttang, where I lived, comprised two halves, each consisted of four villages or groups of villages, making a total of eight *leso tedong* ('eighths of a buffalo'). The Indo' Deata and Indo' To Dolo belonged to opposite halves of the *bua'*. In the case of Buttang, the former came from the neighbouring hamlet of Kata and the latter from Pasang. The Indo' Deata took the lead in starting the rites of the annual agricultural cycle, making offerings on a rock in a specially designated rice field called the *pa'taunan*, which had to be planted first.<sup>11</sup> He was supposed to perform all the rites, whereas ordinary people might only do the ones they felt they could afford. Furthermore, the Indo' Padang were not supposed to eat rice from anyone else's house but their own, so whenever they undertook a journey, they had to take a little rice from their own barn, and, if they ate at another house, some of this rice would be mixed in with the host's rice in the pot and cooked together with it. One of their responsibilities was to ensure that people did not mix up the rites of the East and of the West. Whenever a ceremony was held in the *bua'*, the Indo' Padang had to receive a share of meat from the animal slaughtered, the Indo' Deata being given a slightly larger share than the Indo' To Dolo, because of the higher status of this office in its association with the affairs of life rather than death. If a very large rite was held, shares might further be distributed to all of the other ritual office-holders as well. At the *ma'bua'* rite, the Indo' Padang were given a leg of every pig killed, which amounted to a very large quantity of meat.

Another title-holder was the To Mangramba Balao, 'The One who Drives away Mice'. Each village in the *bua'* had one of these functionaries, whose duty was to make an offering before the rice was harvested, to prevent mice from coming to eat the ripening crop. In addition to this, at the beginning of the final ceremony of the *ma'bua' pare*, he had to lead a dog all around the ritual field, the *pa'buaran*, while the children followed him, and beat the dog, sometimes even killing it. The dog here was intended to act as a substitute for the mice, which the people wished to drive away from the rice fields. He

<sup>11</sup> By the 1970s, however, Christians in Buttang no longer waited for the Indo' Deata, but started whenever they felt like it. I was told that, in the past, besides the *pa'taunan* there were other specially designated ritual rice fields, always the property of the nobility, called *uma dirambu* ('smoked rice fields'), which had been distinguished by the performance of offerings more numerous than those made for ordinary fields. One of these, *mangrambu* ('to smoke') involved the burning of certain aromatic leaves at the four corners when the rice was about to flower.

was rewarded for his role with a section of fat from the stomach of each pig killed in the final ceremony. Then there was the To Mantanán Sendana, 'The One who Plants the Sandalwood Branch'. This person plants a branch of sandalwood on the *pa'buaran*, the ceremonial ground to mark the opening of the final stage of the ceremony, the *la'pa'*. He received sections from the neck of each pig killed.

The To Massuru' Deata ('The One who Brings Offerings to the Deities') and the To Massuru' To Dolo ('The One who Brings Offerings to the Ancestors') were the two representatives of the Indo' Padang, whose job was to recite chants over two pigs offered, one for the deities and one for the ancestors, before the final ceremony of the *ma'buu'*. The Indo' Padang each received a leg of their respective pigs, while the To Massuru' Deata had to be given ten neck vertebrae, and the To Massuru' To Dolo half a shoulder, from each. The To Ma'tekko (To Ma'tengko), or 'One Who Ploughs', gets a share of the ribs from each pig in the *ma'buu'*. His title simply means that he is a leader, an Indo', since the ploughman is the one who controls (*ma'indo'i*) the buffaloes while ploughing.

The Indo' Kalo' ('Leader of the Irrigation Channel') might be one or two in number, depending on the number of irrigation channels in the *buu'*. In the *buu'* of Buttang, the title of Indo' Kalo' was attached to the *tongkonan* in which I lived, in the village of Buttang itself. The title holder was Indo' Teken, since it was she who was a descendant of the house, but her husband, Ambe' Teken, was the one who actually did the man's job of sacrificing a pig when required, while she would cook the accompanying rice for the offerings. In the annual cycle of agricultural rites, the Indo' Kalo' had to provide a pig for sacrifice in the *ma'bulung* rite, performed while the rice was ripening. The Indo' Kalo' received a front leg and shoulder from the pig, the rest of which would be divided among the community. I witnessed this sacrifice in Buttang in 1979. At the *ma'buu'*, he was also responsible for the sacrifice of two pigs (provided through contributions from all the participants) beside the irrigation channel, prior to the final ceremony.

Like the Indo' Kalo', the To Ma'kampa Inan Banne, 'The One who Guards the Place of the Seed-Rice', must sacrifice two pigs during the *ma'bulung* rite. At the *ma'buu'*, he has a special little hut in the centre of the ceremonial field, where people visit him to 'buy' good fortune, giving him a handful of uncooked rice and pig fat (*awak*) as payment. They then hope to be blessed with plentiful rice, buffaloes and children. He receives a section of the ribs from each pig killed at the ceremony. He must also kill a pig of his own. The reference to 'guarding the seed-bed' is one that runs throughout the rite; the ceremonial ground itself is metaphorically referred to as the 'seed-bed' in the poetic language of ritual, and the 'seed-rice' is a way of referring to the *aluk pare* (rice rituals) itself. Lastly, the To Ma'tanduk Pesangle, 'The One With



Horns Like Rice-Spoons', has a special role to play in the drama of the final night's ceremony. He has to mimic a buffalo, pulling a plough three times around the sacred ground, during the acting out of agricultural activities known as *pelambe* or *pelambean* (expectations), which will be described in detail below. His share of the pigs sacrificed is a portion of fat from each.

In all of this, we can discern several themes which can be said to be characteristic of precolonial social organization. The *bua'* was essentially a ritual entity, in which the incumbents of powerful noble houses had special roles to play. The elaborate ritual division of meat both reinforced their statuses and provided lesser shares for other participants too. Traditionally, people only ate meat that had been sacrificed, and rarely as most people got to eat it, this was one rite when meat would be available in abundance. The themes of the rite, and also the functions of the title-holders, were closely bound up with the cultivation of rice and with the annual cycle of agricultural rituals. The whole arrangement belongs to a time when rice and its cultivation was the fundamental source of livelihood, a time when cosmology and community organization were much more closely integrated than they are today.

There are two kinds of *ma'bua'*, the *ma'bua' muane* or male *ma'bua'*, and the *ma'bua' baine* or *ma'bua' pare*, the 'female' or 'rice' *ma'bua'*.<sup>12</sup> These two form a pair of which the 'female' is the greater, and in Malimbong and surrounding areas they used to be held alternately by any particular *bua'* community at intervals of as much as ten years. The expense involved would have precluded a more frequent holding of the rite, though on the other hand, the benefits it was thought to ensure were supposed to continue for years in the shape of improved harvests and the multiplying of livestock. A myth tells that at first the Creator, Puang Matua, gave humans only the male *ma'bua'*. But they sent a delegation to the sky to beg him for the female *ma'bua'* as well. At first Puang Matua demurred, pretending there was no such thing, but seeing that they were in earnest he cast lots by splitting a reed (*biang*) in half to see which way the two halves would fall. The two halves of the reed fell down from the sky and both landed with the flat inner surface pointing upward. Interpreting this as a favourable sign, the deity then granted humans the female ritual, in order to make a pair with the male one. We find here once again the notion of completeness expressed through the complementary pairing of components, which is not only a striking feature of the Aluk To Dolo, but a characteristic predilection of Austronesian societies generally, and of eastern Indonesian societies in particular.<sup>13</sup> Once when I queried a *to minaa* from Ma'kale as to

<sup>12</sup> In Kesu' the rites are called the *ma'bua' padang* (*ma'bua'* of the land') and *la'pa' kasalle* ('great culminating rite').

<sup>13</sup> See for example Forth (1981) and Fox (1988) for explorations of this theme. Pairing of elements as 'male' and 'female' is especially prominent in the easterly islands of Nusa Tenggara,

why there were two versions of the rite, he explained that the reason there had to be a male and a female *ma'buu'* was simply 'because there are male and female human beings'. Given that the aim of these particular rituals is to enhance fertility and ensure successful reproduction, this complementarity has an obvious logic; at the same time the fact that the 'female' rite is considered the greater of the two, and is indeed the ultimate Rite of the East, appears to reflect a specially close symbolic association of women with fertility. At the same time, a connection of women with rice is made explicit in the two names of the ceremony: 'female' *ma'buu'* and 'rice' *ma'buu'*.

Another story about the *ma'buu'* warns against making fun of the poor, and highlights the unusually egalitarian ethos of this ritual. A very poor man called Bua Reu ('Grass Seed') was always mocked and taken advantage of by his fellow-villagers. When they were preparing for a *ma'buu'* celebration they told him not to bother lending a hand, for why waste effort when he had no pigs to sacrifice? But he patiently replied that he had his two hands to help with. In the forest, helping to gather wood to build shelters for the singers who would come to perform, Bua Reu encountered a stranger who told him to expect a large party who would bring their own food with them. So in spite of his neighbours' laughter, he built a large shelter in readiness. On the final night of the festival a troupe of magnificently dressed people stopped in front of Bua Reu's house, and their singing was like nothing anyone had ever heard before. In fact they were deities (*deata*). Before dawn, while everyone was still listening entranced to their performance, the strange guests suddenly disappeared, but the food they had brought was sufficient to feed everybody present. Thus the fortunes of Bua Reu were reversed, and never again did people dare to make fun of him.

Rather than status distinctions, which feature prominently in mortuary rites, the symbolism of the *ma'buu'* revolves around the theme of *pelambean* or 'expectation'. Everything expresses the hope and expectation of bounty and fertility. Expectation, one might say, is the driving force that propels people to invest extraordinary communal effort in this performance. Behind that is the commitment to a certain world view, necessary to make the undertaking convincing. It is of some interest to note, here, the prominent place that Marcel Mauss awarded to 'expectation' as a simultaneously sociological and psychological phenomenon, in his exploratory essay on 'Real and practical relations between psychology and sociology' (1979:29). Mauss declared the study of expectation to be 'most urgent', as a social fact which presupposed a consideration of humankind in its totality, involving both mental, emotional

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though it is not the only form of pairing to be found in Toraja, where gender distinctions, as we have seen, tend to be somewhat muted. The idea of a female entity encompassing a further division between male and female is another recurrent theme.

and bodily dimensions, as much as social ones. In this essay he pointed out the dual role of expectation in both holding a social order in place (people's expectations of rights, of the law, or of the acceptability of money, for instance, not to mention their moral expectations of relationships), and further, of providing an impetus to action (as for instance in the economic sphere, in lotteries, speculation or investment; or in diplomacy). Above all, he saw the drama of expectations aroused and discharged as being played out vicariously over and over again, not only in the performance of magical acts, but in the arts, in games and in rituals. To my knowledge nobody took Mauss up on his startlingly original proposal for further investigation of this phenomenon. The Toraja *ma'bua'*, however, provides an unusually vivid example of its expression in ritual. One might go further, and say that the idea of *pelambean* expressed in the *ma'bua'* is matched in the mortuary setting in the form of Mauss's more often celebrated insight: the expectation embodied in the powerful social obligation to repay a ceremonial gift. By performing the *ma'bua'*, humans entertain and please the deities, while simultaneously placing them in debt through their offerings. At the same time, 'expectation' is symbolically expressed in a dramatic acting out of the desired state of affairs.

A sequence of preparatory offerings and activities leads up to a final night of celebration. I was never able to follow this entire procedure from beginning to end, but during my fieldwork, I did have the opportunity to witness parts of both the 'male' and female' rites. In November 1978, I observed the final night of a 'male' *ma'bua'* in Panglion (*desa* Talion). In January 1979, the rite was held by another *bua'*, Kalembang, in the same *desa*. That same month, I also had a chance to see the spectacular culminating rite of the *ma'bua' pare* as celebrated by the *bua'* of Rano in Batupapan, some miles west of Ma'kale. Several *to minaa* assisted at this occasion, chief among them being Tato' Dena'. Older members of that community recalled that the last time the rite had been held there had been in 1958, just after Andi Sose had been defeated and driven from Toraja, when the rice was ripening and people must have been in the mood to celebrate.

The 'male' *ma'bua'* begins with a month or two of 'circulating the drum' (*umpaliling gandang*) around each village in the *bua'*, each in turn sacrificing a pig and having their most skilled drummers beat the drum (or pair of drums) all night. The drums are the property of the *tongkonan bua'*, the house which leads and coordinates the ceremony, and their possession is a mark of rank and ritual prestige. Their circulation through the *bua'* draws all of the participating villages together and serves as a build-up to the final ceremony. During these preliminary stages, offerings of chickens are made at all the rice fields and by the paths leading into the *bua'*; walking there, I passed several tall bamboo poles hung with little offering-baskets (*karerang*), signs of recent ritual activity, while another bamboo, hung with fringes of the bright yellow

*pusuk* or young sugar palm leaves, had been fixed high across the path as a sort of gateway into the *bua'*. Five days before the final rite, another pig had been killed at the sponsoring *tongkonan* in an offering called *to melambe* ('people are expectant'). The offerings from this sacrifice were laid out on a special kind of altar called *basi*, which consists of a central post of bamboo, ornamented with incised decorations around the top, around which is woven a square bamboo tray, suspended by strings at the corners which are tied at the top of the post. Young sugar palm leaves were stuck in the top of the post. Offerings for the *deata* were laid out on leaves in this tray, while those for the ancestors (*to dolo*) were placed in a long-stemmed wooden bowl (*dulang*) beside a flat basket of betel nut offerings (*pangan*) at its base. On this final night, groups of singers, both male and female, took turns to perform. The words of the songs sung are poetic and often obscure, sometimes defying translation. On the morning of the final day, or *la'pa'*, a single buffalo is sacrificed, and another *basi* altar is erected on which offerings are made from its meat. At Panglion, a total of 160 households participated in the rite, each also bringing a pig to the final day's celebration; together with those brought by visiting groups, a total of over 200 pigs were killed. After the pigs have been sacrificed, all those present share a meal of rice and meat. In front of the *tongkonan bua'* were two tall bamboo poles called *tangaran*, decorated with heirloom cloths used as banners, and two other poles fitted with many short cross-pieces (*parakka*), from which dozens of cuts of meat from the sacrificed pigs were hung prior to their eventual distribution. The singing troupes moved around from village to village within the *bua'*, and their performances continued late into the night. I saw two groups of female singers, *to ma'dondo*, each of about twelve to fifteen women and girls. One late-arriving group from another village of the *bua'* were held to be particularly skilled singers; they were all dressed in colourful sarongs and tight-sleeved blouses, with tall triangular headdresses decorated in red and gold to look like the carved gable triangle of a house. The headdresses were ornamented with long strings of gold lozenges, called *tida-tida*, which hung down beside the wearer's ears on either side. The women held long staffs, to which small tins or containers of seeds were tied by means of a handkerchief, so that when they swayed and shook the staffs, or pounded them on the earth in unison, they all rattled. Taking up her position in the middle of the group, one singer led with the verses (*retteng*), while the rest provided the chorus. Men's groups are called *to manimbong*; on this occasion, a group of about thirty men and boys all sported red headbands with a white egret's wing set in the side, and held carved wooden disks called *sarong*.<sup>14</sup> The discs have a tassel in the front, with a small coin on a string set in the back to

<sup>14</sup> The same word is used for the finely-woven bamboo sun-hats worn by women on special occasions.



Men performing chants (*to manimbong*) at a *ma'bu'a' pare* rite held at Sareale, Sesean, 1983

make a rattle. These the line of singers raised and lowered, shook or tapped on their knees in unison, as they swayed back and forth with a slow chant.

The songs sung by men and women are rather similar. They often begin with some modest disclaimer about the origins and abilities of the singers. They describe themselves as coming from remote, wild places in the hills, or sometimes as being very poor. Sometimes they describe setting out on a journey to come to the ceremony. At other times, they summon the listeners to come with them to faraway, mysterious places on the mountain sides, where the calling of birds can be heard. It is tempting to interpret these themes as having to do with the fact that the *ma'bu'a'* is designed to summon the deities of wild nature and their powers of fertility.<sup>15</sup> Some fragments of song evoke agricultural imagery to do with the clearing of gardens, the flourishing of full-eared rice, and images of egrets and herons, birds often seen wading in the rice fields, metaphorically compared to farmers ploughing; others draw a parallel between the crowds gathered for the festival, and those to be seen on market day:

<sup>15</sup> This certainly was a predominant theme in women's rituals in nearby Mamasa Toraja (Buijs 2003). That area remains more heavily forested than Tana Toraja, where deforestation is far advanced. Possibly the tapping of powers from the wilderness retained a greater salience there than in Tana Toraja for that reason.

<i>Dao' mekutana tau</i>	Don't ask questions
<i>Da'mu ma'mindara to'o</i>	Don't ask who we are
<i>Kami mo pea to buttu [...]</i>	We're just children of the mountains [...]
<i>To tang sikita dadinta</i>	We don't know each other's birth
<i>Tangsiissan garaganta</i>	We don't know each other's origins
<i>Tangsola pangidenta</i>	We weren't born in the same place
<i>Dionгна' sangtondok noang</i>	I was born in the place of the wild boar
<i>Sangpasangan bai ala' [...]</i>	I live in the place of wild pigs [...]
<i>Koro'-koro' to ma'bikkung</i>	Egrets working with hoes
<i>Tambolang to membaya se'pun [...]</i>	Storks weeding the sawah dikes [...]
<i>Ta lao sau' mo tendan</i>	Let's go down to the bridge
<i>Lo' tondon lo' Tumonga</i>	To the river bank at Tumonga
<i>Umperandan to ma'pasa'</i>	To look out for the people returning from market
<i>Untiro to ma'tammuan</i>	To see the people meeting together
<i>Sedanan sarong to lendu'</i>	The hats of passers-by hanging up
<i>Pandan doke to mambela</i>	The spears of those from far away propped up
<i>Ta lao tama pangala'</i>	Let's go into the forest
<i>Untiro re'de'na dama'</i>	To see the damar resin boiling
<i>Rae-raena tamboan</i>	The damar-pots bubbling away
<i>Marassanmo balintoto</i>	The woodpecker is drumming
<i>Unrete-rete oninna</i>	Sounding its drum repeatedly
<i>Bakkun-bakkun bulayan</i>	[our song is] smooth as beaten gold
<i>Ta lao rokko mo issong</i>	Let's go down to the rice mortar
<i>Ta diong mo pa'lambukan</i>	Down to the place of rice-pounding
<i>Umpabarang-barang pindan</i>	We'll use a porcelain bowl as a winnowing-basket <sup>16</sup>
<i>Umpoteta'pi' bulaan</i>	A winnowing-basket of gold
<i>Bakkun-bakkun bulayan [...]</i>	[our song is] smooth as beaten gold
<i>Ta lao langan Messila</i>	Let's climb up Mount Messila
<i>Dao tondonna la Ledo</i>	Up to the cliffs of Ledo
<i>Umperandan kuse lendu'</i>	To watch for cuscus passing by <sup>17</sup>
<i>Seba natampe indo'na</i>	A monkey abandoned by its mother

<sup>16</sup> Chinese porcelain bowls were kept as heirlooms by noble houses, and are especially associated with the female or transvestite priests, *to burake*, formerly associated with rites of the East. The *burake* is described in ritual verses as striking a bowl filled with water, to make a ringing sound, intended to attract the *deata* (Koubi 1982:45 note 2; Buijs 2003:176 note 1). The woodpecker's drumming would be reminiscent of the sound of the small drum used by the *to burake*, with beads attached to short strings which strike the surface of the drum when its handle is rapidly rotated in the hand.

<sup>17</sup> In ritual verse, 'cuscus' and 'monkeys' refer metaphorically to buffaloes, which sometimes roam wild on the mountain sides.



<i>Sattikole, sattikole</i>	[meaningless word added as a refrain]
<i>Umbara na ola indo'?</i>	Where has its mother gone?
<i>Male langan Buttū Kallan</i>	Gone up Mount Kallan
<i>Denden datu, denden datu</i>	[meaningless words added as a refrain]
<i>Ta lao tama talondo</i>	Let's go to the waterfall
<i>Tuo langanna Sarambu</i>	That spouts up at Sarambu <sup>18</sup>
<i>Denden datu, denden datu</i>	[meaningless words added as a refrain]
<i>Pia'-pia' to randanan</i>	Children who live on the riverbank
<i>Anak to sa'de uai</i>	Girls from the waterside
<i>Tambolang male mi langan</i>	Stork going up there
<i>Korong umbekka ettekna</i>	Heron with striding legs
<i>Saruran letten lemo</i>	[Our song is like] water gushing from a bamboo spout <sup>19</sup>
<i>Saruran letten lemo</i>	Like a smoothly rolling lemon

The celebration of the *ma'buā' pare* involves many more preparatory stages. In the north, it lasts for a whole year, during which time, a group of eight noble girls called *to tumbang* (or in some places, just a single woman), remain secluded within the *tongkonan* that is leading the ritual. For the duration of this period the house itself is said to be pregnant.<sup>20</sup> Around the central pillar of the house is built a sort of figure called the *anak dara* or 'maiden', made of bamboo, grasses, sugar palm and *tabang* (Cordyline) leaves; in spite of her female name, she also includes a spear and sometimes a machete, and thus appears to unite both male and female features.<sup>21</sup> The girls form an important part of the final procession at the culmination of the rite, being carried around the *pa'buaran* in litters, together with female priests called *banaa* and *to burake*. In 1983, I visited the village of Kalimbuang in Sareale, on the slopes of Mount Sesean, where a *ma'buā'* was in progress, and saw the *to tumbang* in their seclusion in the house together with the *anak dara*. They were mostly rather old, for nowadays, few if any girls would be prepared to take a year off school in order to submit to these restrictions. This represents the most extreme Toraja example of the concentrating or intensifying of ritual power through immobility, a theme which as we have seen is markedly associated

<sup>18</sup> A place name, also meaning 'waterfall'.

<sup>19</sup> *Saruran* is the name given to bamboo waterpipes, used to channel irrigation water into the ricefields. A literal translation of the line would be: 'water-spout, rolling lemon'.

<sup>20</sup> See Volkman (1985:56-8) on *ma'buā'* in Sesean; Nooy-Palm (1986:10-61) on *ma'buā'* in Kesu', Pangala', and Riu.

<sup>21</sup> Nooy-Palm (1986:36) gives a long list of items incorporated into the *anak dara* in Riu, including various everyday household objects, most of them used by women in the preparation of food.



Tall poles, topped with miniature objects connected with agricultural activities, are planted around the sacred 'seed-bed' at the centre of the *pa'buaran*, Kasimpo, Ma'kale, 1979

with women and in this case with the idea of fertility generally, also expressed by the *anak dara* at the centre of the house.

A special feature of the *ma'buu'* is that the *la'pa'*, or final night of celebration, takes place on the *pa'buaran*, the sacred field reserved just for this purpose.<sup>22</sup> The following is a description of the *la'pa'* I attended at Rano in 1979. Rano's *pa'buaran* is located near the village of Kasimpo. In the middle of the field stood a tall *sendana* or sandalwood tree, which for the occasion of the rite had been fenced off. The area within the fence was referred to as the 'rice seed-bed' (*pa'mukkurun*), and a tiny hut had been built there for a ritual functionary known as the 'guardian of the seed-bed'. Around the edge of the ground, on each of four sides, a two-storey shelter of bamboo had been constructed, one for each 'quarter' (*tepo*) of the *buu'*-community. These were to house the participants and their guests overnight. In front of these, four huge bonfires had been built.

In the late afternoon of the final day, a huge procession entered the *pa'buaran*, all shouting wildly and led by the priests (*to minaa*) wearing horned headdresses. With them were the twelve ritual functionaries who have special duties in the *ma'buu' pare* and whose titles are passed down through different noble houses in the *buu'*. They and other leaders of the community took up their positions within the fenced-off area around the tree. The procession included troupes of women singers (on this final night only the women performed), and men carrying bamboo poles fifteen or twenty feet long, one for each participating household. To the tops of these poles were tied a number of objects associated with rice, buffaloes and pigs. They comprised a miniature seed-basket and winnowing-tray, a gourd used for washing calves, a bamboo tube such as is used for milking, a muzzle used in weaning calves, a miniature pig-trough, rice cooked in woven leaf packets (*belundak*), of the sort traditionally prepared for harvest celebrations, and a stalk of a kind of sugar-cane, whose thick stem was said to represent the hope that the rice would grow equally thick and produce an exceptional harvest.<sup>23</sup> Other men bore carrying-poles over their shoulders, to one end of which was tied a ring of meat from the necks of pigs killed the day before, and to the other, bunches of young areca nuts and palm leaves, representing the ears and leaves of rice respectively, and more of the packets of cooked rice associated with harvest. These carrying-poles were fixed to the end of bamboos projecting from the roofs of the four shelters, while the long poles were planted in four large

<sup>22</sup> This field forms a symbolically opposed pair with the funeral field, or *rante*.

<sup>23</sup> A feature apparently unique to Malimbong was the carving of miniature wooden animals (buffaloes, chickens and pigs), which were used to ornament the guest shelters on the sacred field. I was shown an example, in the shape of a spotted buffalo, which had been used at the last *ma'buu' pare* held in Buttang, in the late 1960s.



*To minaa sando* Tato' Dena', wearing a buffalo-horn headdress, performs the *massinggi'* chant at the *ma'bua' pare*, Kasimpo, Ma'kale, 1979

groups around the central tree and the 'seed-bed'.

As night fell, the women began to sing, and continued to do so until dawn. Around the 'seed-bed', the ritual leaders made offerings on special platforms. These offerings were in the shape of tall cones of sticky rice called *lappo'*. *Lappo'* (or *lampo'*) is the word for the conical stacks of newly-harvested rice which may be seen drying in the fields at harvest-time. These offerings are made to Puang Matua, the 'Old Lord' of the heavens. Each large cone is surrounded by several smaller cones, a portion of pork and a dribble of palm wine is added on top of the cone, and betel nut is offered at the same time. Once it was dark, the bonfires were lit and kept burning continuously throughout the night. At about 2 a.m., four groups of men (one from each quarter of the *bua'*), burst into the ceremonial ground carrying blazing torches made of huge bundles of split bamboo, about fifteen feet long. Leaping in the air, they rushed three times around the central tree. They must run in an anti-clockwise direction, described as an auspicious movement 'to the right'. This was said to represent a cleansing of the community from any offense such as incest, and a hope that the hearts of the people would have strength like the flames, and that they would enjoy prosperity. On a more fundamental level, the heat and light of fire in this rite of the living may be contrasted with ideas of the coldness of death, and the absence of fire in the land of the dead. After their torches had been extinguished, I was told, they would be taken home and used as firewood to cook more sticky rice for offerings to be made the next morning.

After this, two of the ritual officiants, the Indo' Deata or Bunga' Lalan, (whose job is to coordinate the sequence of rituals associated with the annual rice-cycle), and the To Ma'tanduk Pesangle ('The One with Horns as Big as Rice-spoons'), put on buffalo-horned head-dresses, and they in turn began to run three times around the ground. In front of each of the four shelters they stopped, as by the light of the fires they mimicked the mating of buffaloes, to riotous cheers and moos from the crowd. With the help of other participants, the entire agricultural cycle was then acted out: first, the milking of buffaloes, then ploughing the rice fields with buffaloes, then hoeing, planting, weeding, reaping and finally the bearing home of a heavy harvest. The atmosphere was charged with excitement and laughter, the onlookers crying '*Bonga! Tedong bonga!*' ('spotted buffalo!' – the most valuable kind), and many humorous comments were passed between the actors and the onlookers. At the same time, Ne' Badung, one of the elderly *to minaa*, working hard to coordinate the performance, become angry and scolded people for not joining in in sufficient numbers, as they were supposed to.<sup>24</sup> No scene could have better reflected

<sup>24</sup> No doubt the *to minaa*'s difficulties reflected not just possible inhibition on the part of the participants, but also the problems of coordinating any rite that is only held at very long intervals, since only a few of the performers may remember what was done last time.



that dual character of ritual, being simultaneously work and play, for all of this earthy, laughter-inducing mimicry was at the same time the serious work of the gods. It was intended to bring real effects, and it all went under the name of *pelambean*, 'expectation'.<sup>25</sup> Play is an integral part of the ritual; together with the blazing of bonfires and torches, the shouting and cheering, and the wild rushing motion of men running and leaping, it is part of what generates the ritual energies designed to summon the forces of fertility, and bring enhanced vitality for the whole community.

Early the following day, about 7 a.m., Tato' Dena' and Ne' Badung together performed a chant in honour of the leading nobles of the community. This chant is called *massinggi'*. The two priests held the ends of long banners (*sarita*), while the other ends were held by the nobles as they sat in the shelters on either side of the field. As he sang, Tato' Dena' shook a small bell on the end of a long switch.<sup>26</sup> After this, the carrying-poles decorating the shelters were taken down and the meat on them taken home to cook for breakfast. Tato' Dena', accompanied by other functionaries, then proceeded to walk anti-clockwise round and round the sandalwood tree, as he recited a long chant telling the story of the origin of the *ma'buu'*. Like the enactments of the previous night, this chant is called *pelambe*, 'expectation'. While he did this, others extended the platforms made to hold the *lappo'* offerings until they reached all the way around the tree, for on this morning every household joined in making the rice cone offerings. Tato' Dena' next performed the chant for the single buffalo (and an additional pig) that was to be sacrificed to Puang Matua. This chant takes two hours, beginning with a request for forgiveness from Puang Matua for any previously undisclosed fault or breach of the *aluk* that might have been committed within the *buu'* (offerings of atonement had already been made at early stages in the entire ritual sequence of the *ma'buu'*), and continuing with an account of the history of the creation of buffaloes and pigs, and requesting their forgiveness for sacrificing them. If well done, the buffalo is said to weep as it accepts its destiny. The buffalo must be a male one, with a white tail (a kind of marking suited to Rites of the East, but not used for funerals). The cost of the animal was shared by every household in the *buu'*. All this while the rather small buffalo was tethered to

<sup>25</sup> Compare Turner (1982:32) on the ludic dimension of ritual, as 'intrinsically connected with the "work" of the collectivity in performing symbolic actions and manipulating symbolic objects so as to promote and increase fertility of men, crops, and animals [...] to cure illness, to avert plague [...] to ensure the proper succession of the seasons and the hunting and agricultural responses of human beings to them, and so forth.' Turner notes the combined effects of Protestantism and the Industrial Revolution in separating work and leisure, and systematically draining the play out of ritual. The playful aspects of Toraja ritual are further analysed in Waterson (1995c:94-5).

<sup>26</sup> Compare Nooy-Palm (1986:59-60).



a stake of sandalwood, linked to the shelter of the *to bara'* and *to parengnge'*, or leading nobles of the *bua'*, by a red cloth. As he sang, Tato' Dena', who was attired in a long robe and horned headdress, with a spear in his right hand, also wore bound around his right wrist a woman's folded white blouse. This, he later explained, was a mark of respect to women as birth-givers. White is a colour particularly associated with Puang Matua. The blouse must later be 'redeemed' from the *to minaa* on behalf of the community by the leaders of the *bua'*, by payment of a token sum of money. This is one point in the ceremony where explicitly female symbolism is connected to the general theme of fertility.<sup>27</sup>

Finally the long poles with the miniature objects tied to them were taken down. They were blessed with drops of blood from the buffalo. The little seed-baskets were left in the hut of the 'guardian of the seed-bed' beneath the sandalwood tree, the sugar cane was planted all around it, and the other objects were taken home to be hung up on the front of the house or the rice barn and carefully kept. The poles themselves are called *pelambena pare*, or 'expectation of rice', and the objects are kept in the hope that these expectations will be fulfilled. A constantly reiterated hope is for many offspring: 'rows of buffaloes, armfuls of children', or 'children to carry on our shoulders, on our hips and on each arm'. The following morning, a further concluding offering of a chicken is made; this is called 'making cool' (*ma'pasakke*), signifying health and a cooling off of the ritual 'heat' generated by the extraordinary activities of the previous days.<sup>28</sup> A special offering of the buffalo's nose (that by which it is led) is made to the deity who looks after buffaloes, *to manglaa* ('the buffalo herder'). One last procedure designed to ensure peace and harmony in the return to normality is a meeting at which any outstanding quarrels, problems or disputes in the community should be settled. On this occasion Tato' Dena', in his special status as *to minaa sando*, was present to offer advice and to interpret dreams or recent, unusual occurrences. For instance, one man recounted how a basket of his had fallen down, and one of his hearthstones had cracked. He wanted to know if this was a bad omen. The interpretation offered was that one of the paths through his rice fields might crumble and need repair in future, but that nothing worse should be read into it. The interpretation of dreams in a ritual context (known as *ma'teteian bori'*, literally 'building a bridge of interpretation') is carried out in such a way as to suggest reassuring, positive meanings to all of them, and serves symbolically

<sup>27</sup> Tato' Dena' drew a comparison with the *merok* feast of the Kesu' region, at which a buffalo is also sacrificed, and betel-nut offerings are placed upon a woman's blouse, folded within an offering-basket.

<sup>28</sup> On ritual 'heat' and 'cooling' in other contexts, see Nooy-Palm (1986:144) on the *ma'bugi'* rite, Zerner (1981:106,110) on the *maro*, and Waterson (1995c:92, 94) on the *ma'pakorong*.

as an assertion of harmony and well-being in the community. Great communal effort had been invested in the ritual intensification of life; this final meeting brought the *ma'buu'* to a conclusion.<sup>29</sup>

As the greatest Rite of the East, the *ma'buu'* more than any other rite that falls in this category can be seen as standing in complementary opposition to the mortuary rites of the West. From this point of view, the emphasis on the well-being of the entire community, as well as the prominent roles played by women, are of special interest. It is not that women are excluded from any Toraja ritual; they are not. But their roles as singers in this rite, itself characterised as 'female', gives them a special prominence.<sup>30</sup> At funerals, a central concern is with the display of buffaloes, getting them to fight each other, their sacrificial slaughter and the all-important distribution of the resulting meat. The latter is intended as a highly public statement about the relative statuses of houses and their living representatives. Men are in charge of the distribution, and most often collect the meat shares. That whole procedure is designed to emphasize and renew differences of status, and as such is potentially divisive. It is true that the *ma'buu'* has to be sponsored by leading nobles of the *buu'* community, that the various ritual roles involved are the hereditary property of noble houses, and that the *massinggi'* performance that concludes the rite is designed to praise the nobles. Yet the contrast between the concerns of mortuary rites, and the leitmotif of 'expectation' which runs throughout the *ma'buu'*, could not be more marked. The theme of the *ma'buu'* is essentially egalitarian, for what is expected is the bounty of fertility, and the benefits are to be reaped by the entire community in an undifferentiated manner.

If the *ma'buu'*, as the centrepiece of the old cosmology, is no longer likely to be celebrated in Tana Toraja today, perhaps this more than anything else is an index of the profound shift that has taken place in world view and plausibility structures, those cultural patterns that give a deeper meaning to life.

<sup>29</sup> We may recall here that both the favourable interpretation of dreams (*ma'tetean bori'*), and the theme of expectation (*pelambean*) – of long life, children to carry on the arms, hips and shoulders, and the 'hooking' (*ungkadang*) or drawing down of every sort of good fortune (as mangoes are plucked from tall trees by means of a hooked pole) – also feature prominently in house ceremonies (*mangrara banua*) and the ritual chants performed for them (see Chapter IX).

<sup>30</sup> From Buijs' (2003:193-214) description of the roles of women in the (now vanished) ritual life of the Mamasa Toraja, they were even more prominent there. The ritual called *pa'bisuan* was entirely focused on women, who let their hair down and ran screaming into the forest, led by a female priest called *burake*. There they would climb a *barana'* (figus) tree, which was said to bend down its branches to receive them, and dance all night on its branches, possessed by the deities of nature. Men were forbidden to laugh at them, and in the morning they were carried back to a special structure in the village where the celebration of their empowerment was continued for three or seven more nights with dancing and the sacrificing of pigs. The rite was not only a celebration and acknowledgement of human dependence on the powers of the wilderness, but also a passage to adulthood for women.

Rice itself, Tato' Dena' commented, came from the sky to begin with, and still comes from the heavens, since it cannot grow without rain. But agricultural patterns have been changed in much of Tana Toraja by the introduction of new high yield rice varieties requiring the use of pesticides and multicroping. Productivity today could be more easily interpreted as the result of such technological interventions, and the rhythms of an annual cycle have been lost. Moreover, as the population continues to grow, more and more young people find themselves without land to farm. They know that they will have to leave Tana Toraja and try to make a living elsewhere; increasingly, sources of prosperity must be sought outside the traditional subsistence economy. Christianity chose to oppose the Rites of the East; but other changes too have altered the context in which the fertility of rice was once a supreme concern, capable of motivating ritual cooperation on a grand scale.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> A parallel point is made by Coville (1989) in her discussion of the *maro* rite of northern districts of Toraja. This similarly required the cooperation of a territorial ritual community which saw itself as responsible for the productivity of the land. Though *maro* was still being celebrated in the 1980s, partly in a response to bad harvests, she found that divisions within the community and a loss of ritual knowledge had led to 'a diminished performance', whose efficacy was in question, but which in spite of this still arguably served to articulate aspects of collective experience.



## CHAPTER XVI

# A changing religious landscape

The initial turning-point in Christian conversions appears to have come only after World War II and the end of the colonial period. In the 1950s, the disturbances caused by Darul Islam guerrillas in the Sa'dan highlands caused a larger number of people to become Christian, either as a reaction against the violent treatment they were receiving from these militant Muslims, or as a strategy to protect themselves from the potentially fatal accusation of being *kafir* ('heathen'). Ever since then, Alukta has been in steady decline, to the point when at the turn of the twenty-first century its eventual disappearance as a functioning system seems almost inescapable. We can see this as just one instance of a long-drawn-out historical process, accelerated around the world during the colonial era, by which small-scale religions have been increasingly displaced by those associated with more powerful societies. In looking at long term changes in Toraja society over the twentieth century, this alteration in religion and cosmology can be seen as one of the most striking features, and one which, in this chapter, I seek to explore more fully. The census statistics presented below chart the shifts in religious allegiances and the dwindling of adherence to Alukta.<sup>1</sup>

Table 2. Changing religions allegiances in Tana Toraja, 1960-2000

Year	Alukta		Protestant		Catholic		Islam		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1960	149,613	54.8	96,698	35.4	11,344	4.2	15,329	5.6	273,014	100
1980	47,908	14.5	221,716	67.1	39,104	11.8	21,716	6.6	330,475	100
1990	35,159	9.7	247,755	68.7	53,109	14.7	24,841	6.9	360,894	100
2000	17,840	4.5	278,145	70.6	66,957	17.0	31,224	7.9	394,166	100

<sup>1</sup> Source: Office of Statistics, Kabupaten Tana Toraja. Catholics, as well as adherents of Alukta, often complain that they are under-represented in the census statistics, for which they blame over-enthusiastic Protestant census-takers. Schoolteachers, for instance, often declare all their pupils as Protestants, even if they come from Alukta families, and warn them (falsely) that they cannot hold civil service positions if they maintain an allegiance to Alukta. Still, the general trend is clear.

Conflicting reports exist for figures in the 1970s. Nooy-Palm (1979:9) claimed that 'almost 60%' of Toraja were Christian by 1975, but Crystal (1974:140) proposed that 'a plateau in Christian affiliation seems to have been stabilized over the past twenty years at about 40-45% of the total populace'. Elsewhere (Crystal 1978:109) he suggests a still lower figure of 35%. His optimism (which now seems to have been unfounded) that the rate of defection from Alukta was slackening, was an understandable interpretation of the events of the moment. Aluk To Dolo was granted official status as a religion by the Indonesian government in 1969, while at the same time Crystal was witnessing the beginnings of an emergent tourism industry, bringing with it what he termed a new 'tourist ethic', which could provide renewed validation for indigenous ceremonial practice (Crystal 1977:118). The early 1970s at last brought conditions of social, economic and political stability, after the prolonged disruptions of the 1950s and 1960s. These years also saw the abrupt eclipse in the fortunes of Parkindo, the Indonesian Christian Party, which had enjoyed two decades of dominance in local politics. Their ambition was to make Tana Toraja a completely Christian area, which they could then control. Alukta had no part to play in this picture, which helps to explain why Crystal found, during the period of his first fieldwork in the late 1960s, that people were almost afraid to mention the Aluk To Dolo, while local officials assured him that it didn't exist!<sup>2</sup> Parkindo had held 75% of the seats in the DPRD (the local parliament, or Regional People's Representative Council), but suffered a humiliating loss in the elections of 1971 when Toraja voted *en masse* for the government party, Golkar. Golkar candidates were drawn from across the religious spectrum in Toraja, so that for the first time there were to be more Aluk To Dolo than Parkindo representatives in the new DPRD (Crystal 1974:144). With hindsight, the question arises why in fact Aluk To Dolo has not been able to hold its own, but has continued to lose adherents so rapidly.

In 1978, when I began my fieldwork, I encountered wide differences between the central valley area, around the towns of Ma'kale and Rantepao, where almost everyone was Christian, and the more remote districts, where converts were fewer. In the most isolated western area of Simbuang, which I visited that year (at that time a three-day hike away on mountain paths),

<sup>2</sup> Eric Crystal, personal communication, 1983. That tactic had been repeated more recently, as I learned from a conversation with Pak Kila' in 1994. At that time, he was involved in a long-running struggle to secure permission for a cockfight, necessary to complete the *aluk* for a high-ranking funeral in Tondon. The Bupati at that time, who was fiercely opposed to any form of gambling, refused to allow it, even when permission had been granted by the Department of Religion in Jakarta. According to Kila', the Bupati claimed that Aluk To Dolo had only eight adherents remaining anyway, which had prompted the Parandangan Ada' (council of representatives of Aluk To Dolo) to organize a re-count. This produced a figure closer to 40,000.



I was told that only 20% of the people were Christian. One of the reasons I eventually selected to live in *desa* Malimbong was because the indigenous religion was alive and well there: statistics in the *desa* office recorded 60% of the population of 4,327 as adherents of Alukta. It was a surprise to find in 1994, on a return visit, that everybody in the village of Buttang had converted to Christianity, some only a year or two before, while figures for Malimbong as a whole had fallen to around 300. What was it that caused the abandonment of Alukta, in spite of the protected status it enjoyed as an officially recognized religion? To answer this question, it is necessary to say something about the manner in which Suharto's New Order state intervened to control religions in Indonesia.

#### *Local religions in the Indonesian national context*

Indonesia's constitutional 'Five Principles', the Pancasila, to which all citizens are expected to give their allegiance, stipulates as the first and most fundamental principle 'Belief in one God' as the basis of national values. Although the question of which deity was deliberately left unspecified in the interests of political unity, official definitions of religion (*agama*) strongly privilege the world religions. As Atkinson (1987:174-6) has pointed out, the term *agama* derives from Sanskrit, and thus is itself associated with the externally-derived authority of just one of the several world religions which, over the centuries, have had such profound impacts on political and social life in Indonesia. For bureaucratic purposes citizens are obliged to state their religion on identity cards and many official forms, but at the time of Indonesian Independence the only officially recognised categories of religion were Islam, Christianity (Catholic or Protestant), and Buddhism. The latter category was subsequently amended to 'Hindu-Buddha' as a result of concerted lobbying by Balinese Hindus to secure legitimate status for their religion, a campaign which finally met with success in 1962.<sup>3</sup> After the blood-bath of suspected communists which brought Suharto to power in 1965, the equation of atheism with communism made it dangerous not to declare a religion.<sup>4</sup> Very few of Indonesia's many indigenous religions have been successful in campaigning for official recognition, but those that have, have all been registered under the umbrella of Hinduism. Besides the Balinese, that label provides legitimacy also for the Javanese Hindus of Tengger (Hefner 1985). They have customarily referred to their religion as *agama Buda*, while speaking of Balinese religion as *Bali Buda*.

<sup>3</sup> Geertz 1973. Confucianism was also added to the list in the final years of the Soekarno era.

<sup>4</sup> For a harrowing personal account of state pressures to declare a religion, see Hersri Setiawan (2000).

Hefner traces how this perception has shifted over time with the activities of a Hindu reform movement, which in 1955 set out to establish more direct affiliation with Balinese Hinduism. This tactical manoeuvre, again, was a response to the pressure to establish legitimacy for their religion, though by 1980 the community remained split more or less in half between Hindu reformists, and traditionalists who remain fiercely opposed to this new development and prefer to hold on to the *Buda* identity (Hefner 1985:41).

When representatives of Toraja Aluk To Dolo commenced their own campaign for recognition, they were lucky to have connections in the Department of Religion in Jakarta, which helped them achieve their aim in 1969. 'Dayak' peoples of Kalimantan had a longer struggle. According to Tsing (1987:271 note 14), who did fieldwork with the Meratus of southeastern Kalimantan in 1979-1981, some 'Dayak' groups of Kalimantan had started a campaign in the 1970s to have their religious practices classified as Buddhism, but this movement failed. At the time she lived with them, some Meratus nevertheless claimed to be Buddhists on their identity cards, some chose the label Balian (literally, 'shaman'), while the most popular choice was Kaharingan, a term which is widely used throughout Borneo, and which was chosen as the designation claimed for their religion by the Ngaju, Ot Danum, Luangan and Ma'anyan peoples of Central and South Kalimantan. Kaharingan has in fact been the only other successful candidate for recognition to date.<sup>5</sup> It was finally granted official status in 1980 (Weinstock 1981, 1987), though Tsing's acquaintances had apparently not yet had news of this success at the time she was living with them.

A recent study from a neighbouring region of Sulawesi provides an intriguing parallel with the Toraja situation. Ken George (1996) writes of the people of the Pitu Ulunna Salu region of the Salu Mambi headwaters, north-west of Tana Toraja. Here, in an area much more poor, remote and marginalised than Tana Toraja, about 10% of the population have resisted conversion by the Toraja Church of Mamasa (Gereja Toraja Mamasa) and have clung to their indigenous faith, known as *Ada' mappurondo* (which means literally, 'customs already in place'). George describes these communities, living in the single Desa of Bambang, as an 'enclave', although none of the villages there is wholly *mappurondo*, and some communities have so few adherents that they are no longer able to stage rituals themselves, but join in those performed by their kin in other hamlets. All the same pressures are at work here: the challenge from world religions, historically and officially associated

<sup>5</sup> So far as I am aware. However, Kila' told me that conferences of the Parisada Hindu Dharma were also attended by representatives of the To Wani To Lotang of South Sulawesi, the Badui of West Java, as well as from the Karo Batak and traditional syncretists of the Wetu Telu from Lombok.

with 'civilization'; the association of a 'proper' religion with the requirements of citizenship (and with urban life, education, modernity, and the life style of civil servants) in the modern nation-state of Indonesia; the appeal of new religions to the young; and the practical difficulties of maintaining traditional ritual obligations once communities become fractured. *Ada' mappurondo* seems to have survived in this more isolated group as part of a culture of resistance and concealment, developed as a means to cling on to an older identity. Compared to Aluk To Dolo, its situation was much more precarious. This at least was the case in 1985, when at the end of George's first stay in the field, he had gone with a group of adherents to Ujung Pandang (Makassar) to try and help them in a bid to gain official recognition as a religion – a bid that failed. This tiny group simply lacked the resources to fulfil the bureaucratic requirements to establish fixed sites for rituals, and offices at each level of the local administration. But George acknowledges the difficulties of making accurate predictions at a particular moment of one's fieldwork. Pessimistic as he had felt at that time, on a return visit in 1994 he found cause to revise his earlier, gloomy prognosis for *Ada' mappurondo's* chances of survival. After prolonged efforts, one member had that year succeeded in obtaining official papers registering it as an *aliran kepercayaan* ('sect', or 'stream of belief', a category falling short of full designation as a 'religion', but better than nothing), from the provincial offices of the Department of Education and Culture. Several households had returned to *Ada' mappurondo*, when young men raised as Christians had taken *mappurondo* wives, and, with new income available from cash crops, some women's rituals were even beginning to be revived and performed more frequently than before. The great irony of this example, for me, is that, even though *Ada' mappurondo* lacks the advantage of official recognition, the proportion of its adherents remains now about the same as that of Alukta in Tana Toraja.

When Alukta won official status, it was categorised as a form of 'Hinduism'. For this reason, individuals who have played leading roles as its representatives, such as Tato' Dena' and Pak Kila', have made conscious efforts to trace connections between the two religions, and can readily cite examples in support of this idea. Tato' Dena' had visited Jakarta in the 1970s at the government's invitation in order to study Hinduism and its possible reflections in Alukta. When I got to know him in 1979, I was at first surprised to see in his house copies of the Baghavad Gita and other texts, along with a number of books about Hinduism, which he had brought back with him from this visit. An example of 'Hindu' elements in Aluk To Dolo, given both by him and by Pak Kila', is the presence of words of Sanskrit origin in the Sa'dan Toraja language. Toraja is like many other Indonesian languages in this respect, though Kila' claimed that the concentration of such words was much higher – as much as 10% – in

the priestly, and often obscure, language of ritual verse.<sup>6</sup> He also detected similarities in the manner of making offerings, and in the erection of a tall bamboo pole as a sign that offerings have been made. In Toraja this is called *tadoran*, or *paloloan*; in Bali, he told me, a similar pole is known as *penjol*. Contacts with the Parisada Hindu Dharma, a Hindu organization based in Bali, have been on-going; Kila', for instance, had attended several of their conferences, held every five years or so, including one in Bali in 1980, and another in 1991. On his living room wall was a photo from the latter conference, showing himself, in full *adat* costume, shaking hands with President Suharto. This meeting had also been attended by representatives of other indigenous religions, the Badui of West Java and the To Wani To Lotang of South Sulawesi, which he claimed also had enjoyed official status since 1969. For a while, a programme had been instituted by the Department of Religious Affairs to fund scholarships for Alukta students to study religion at a college in Bali, a move which might have further augmented the search for convergences. However, this policy petered out after a few years without apparently having any long-lasting effects.

With the granting of official status to Alukta in 1969, a further bureaucratic requirement was the setting up of a council of representatives from each district. This council is called the Parandangan Ada'. Pak Kila' served for a number of years as secretary, and later, head, of this organization. He explained that the Toraja word *parandangan* means the foundation-stone on which each of the pillars of a house or rice barn are set. The council's purpose is therefore to uphold the *ada'*, or Toraja custom. Tato' Dena', naturally, is also a member. During the 1990s, a meeting-hall had been constructed close by his village at Bungin near Ma' kale, but a continuing problem for the organization is its shortage of funds and the difficulties of communication. The members live very far apart in different districts; most do not have telephones, and travel is time-consuming. So even to arrange a meeting is very difficult. Unfortunately, there seems to be little consensus or sense of direction within the group of members, so that its influence is very limited and it is powerless to halt Alukta's continuing decline. Kila' retired from his position as head as a result of disagreements with other members, and in 2004 it seemed that the organization was meeting only rarely.

Beyond the immediate requirement to identify with Hinduism, it is obvious that Indonesian bureaucratic conceptions of what constitutes an *agama* put pressure on Alukta, and any other indigenous religion, to define itself according to certain criteria, in order to prove that it is not 'lacking'. In this

<sup>6</sup> I am not enough of a linguist to be able to assess this claim. Some *tongkonan* possess ancient silk *patola* cloths from Gujerat which were traded through the archipelago as luxury goods centuries ago; but there is scant evidence of any direct Hinduisation in South Sulawesi, as we saw in Chapter II.

view, 'proper' religions have sacred texts, preferably a belief in a single deity, specialised sacred buildings and fixed schedules for worship; anyone adhering to a belief system which lacks these attributes has been in danger of being condescended to by Christian or Muslim neighbours as *kafir*, 'heathen', or *belum beragama*, 'not yet having a religion'. It is easy to see that in the Indonesian context, with its plurality of cultures, the patchwork distribution of religions plays a critical role in the formation of ethnic identities. Groups that have maintained their indigenous religions till today are most often those that occupy a marginal relationship, not just to a centralised government based in Jakarta, but to historically more powerful states which have been their immediate neighbours: the Bugis and Makassar for the Toraja, the Muslims of Mambi and Mandar for Pitu Ulunna Salu's adherents of *Ada' mappurondo*, or the Muslim Banjar people of coastal Kalimantan for the Meratus. The Wana of Central Sulawesi, a tiny group of montane swiddeners and hunters, have historically occupied a peripheral and often victimised position both to coastal Muslim states, and to headhunting local chiefdoms which were the first targets for conversion by Dutch missionaries in the early twentieth century. After Dutch pacification, and again in Indonesia's New Order, they were put under intense pressure to resettle in coastal areas where they could be brought under administrative supervision – pressure which they have repeatedly resisted (Atkinson 1989:263). They were then obliged to defend their beliefs against the superior attitudes of their Christian neighbours, while lacking any influential connections in Jakarta that might help them secure official status (Atkinson 1987:181).

The ongoing evolution of those religions that have found a place under the 'Hindu' umbrella in Indonesia is thus a matter of considerable fascination and complexity, given the pressures they have been under as much from other faiths at the local level as from state interventions or external influences. The potential for their further 'Hinduization', or for innovations in response to competition from the world religions, would appear to be highly varial according to the specific local context.<sup>7</sup> Since 1998, seismic shifts have occurred in the balance of power between centre and periphery in Indonesia, with multiple implications for the relationships between religious and ethnic groups. After the fall of Suharto, there was an immediate surge in indigenist discourse (Li 2001). This was an understandable reaction of groups which had been for so long marginalised by an overcentralised régime, and demeaned by labels such as *suku-suku terasing* ('isolated tribes'). They had already chosen to redefine themselves as *masyarakat adat* (literally, 'customary communities', which has become the standard Indonesian translation of the term 'indigenous peoples'), thereby plugging in to an already existing international discourse

<sup>7</sup> Ramstedt (2004) provides an excellent and wide ranging comparative picture.

of indigeneity. This very significant choice of terminology was first made at a meeting of NGOs from different parts of Indonesia whose representatives in 1993 (coincidentally the UN's International Year of Indigenous Peoples) convened very discreetly in Tana Toraja to discuss common grievances over environmental threats caused by arbitrary state appropriation of lands and resources in their respective areas. The meeting was sponsored by Pak Laso' Sombolinggi' of Madandan, director of WALDA (Wahana Lestari Persada or 'Movement for the Preservation of our Environment') an environmental NGO with links to WALHI, a national environmental movement based in Java.<sup>8</sup> This meeting led to the formation of an umbrella organization called Japhama (Jaringan Perlindungan Hak Masyarakat Adat, or 'Network for the Protection of the Rights of Customary Communities'). A number of subsequent regional meetings were held over the 1990s, and Toraja representatives were present at many of them. By March 1999, it was possible to hold a much larger and more public Congress in Jakarta, which announced the formation of the Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), or the 'Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago'. Those attending included ten representatives from Tana Toraja. The pressing concern which drove this movement at the beginning was the felt need to contest loss of control over local environmental resources.

When I talked with him in 2002, Pak Sombolinggi' expressed his appreciation of the ecological awareness embedded in the indigenous Toraja cosmology and practices, in which natural resources such as trees and water are seen as being protected by their own *deata*. It is part of the ethic of Alukta that humans must make offerings to ask the *deata*'s permission before felling timber, or opening a new spring. He mentioned that a local Christian minister had expressed a desire to cut a grove of trees on a hilltop in order to prevent 'idolatry'. Such attitudes are not only a deliberate affront to the values of Alukta, but reveal an ignorance of the dangers of already advanced deforestation and a falling water table in Tana Toraja. Agroforestry projects by contrast are a WALDA priority. Pak Sombolinggi' lamented young people's growing ignorance of their own culture and history, even the loss of Toraja names as more

<sup>8</sup> I am very grateful to Greg Acciaioli for telling me of this significant but unpublicised event, and for sharing with me the minutes of the inaugural meeting. Although I talked with Pak Sombolinggi' and his wife, Ibu Den Upa' Rombe Layuk, about the work of WALDA in 2002, I remained unaware that Tana Toraja had been the site of this meeting. The Toraja branch of AMAN is known as AMAT (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Toraja) (Donzelli 2003:28). Ibu Den Upa', as well as being an active member of AMAN, has recently founded a women's organization in Madandan, Persekutuan Perempuan Kampung ('Association of Village Women'), with plans to train women in massage, teach handicrafts to children, and produce school and preschool teaching materials with *adat* content (such as stories about traditional plant remedies, proverbs and myths). Such content is notably lacking from currently available primary school texts in the Toraja language, whose stories focus on such things as the virtues of wearing clean clothes and going to Church, to the exclusion of any indigenous content.



and more young people take Christian names. However, there is no evidence that Toraja members of AMAN, who are themselves Christian, have concerned themselves with the question of whether Aluk To Dolo would continue to play any part in the ongoing formation of 'Toraja' identity. Conceivably, this organization could have provided a platform from which to lend support to Alukta's continued existence, but so far this has not happened.

### *Conversion, modernity and identity*

Looking at the current distribution of religious allegiances in Indonesia, especially in light of the horrifying ethnic violence unleashed in Ambon, Halmahera, and Central Sulawesi in the wake of the New Order's collapse, one becomes aware that conversion to world religions has very different time depths in different places. In cases where that choice has been made only recently, the very question of which religion is chosen may have depended on a felt need to express an already existing sense of cultural difference. As we have seen, the Dutch capitalised on those differences by introducing Christian missions to marginal, highland areas, as a means of creating buffer zones which they hoped would discourage the spread of Islam. But in the Toraja case, mass conversion to Christianity might not have happened without the subsequent experience of aggression by Muslim guerillas in the 1950s, which made the label *kafir* suddenly a matter of life and death. This at least is a factor suggested by Bigalke (1981:423-4), and commonly recalled by people I knew. Bigalke notes that in 1952-1953, forced conversions to Islam amounted to several thousands of persons in the southwest of Toraja alone. In these conditions, it is not surprising that people in other parts of the highlands reacted by converting to Christianity. He concludes that the effect of Darul Islam in these years was to polarize Muslims and Christians so sharply as to eliminate any hope of accommodation between them, and undermine the viability of secular political alternatives.

A further complication has been the extensive migrations (both state-sponsored and voluntary) which have created a high degree of ethnic mixing in some areas, with a corresponding intensification of competition for available resources. Sooner or later, those who have claims to be more indigenous may feel resentful of the successes of entrepreneurial newcomers, whatever their religion.<sup>9</sup> The outbursts of violence in Central Sulawesi and Ambon have

<sup>9</sup> See Benjamin (n.d.) for a provocative discussion of the contrasting attitudes of indigenous and exogenous populations as a possibly fundamental dimension of sociality. The latter, he argues, are always already predisposed to see land and resources in their new home as alienable and exploitable, which will tend to enhance their chances of commercial success.

caused the return of many Toraja migrants from those areas in recent years. The point at which 'ethnic' conflicts in Indonesia become labelled as 'religious' is thus a complicated matter, though recent experiences indicate that it often coincides with a moment of outside interference. Religious loyalties, always a matter of concern in Indonesian national politics, have become all the more so with the activities of the more militant Islamic groups; equally disturbing is the apparent reluctance of many moderate Muslims in Indonesia, despite abundant evidence, to believe that such groups are really capable of committing acts of terror. In early December 2002, just two months after the shock of the Bali bombing, I was in Tana Toraja, when two more bomb incidents (both fortunately somewhat ineffectual) occurred in Makassar. The suspects arrested were found to have in their possession plans of the main churches in Tana Toraja, which in the month before Christmas are repeatedly thronged with hundreds or even thousands of churchgoers, as the different congregations invite each other to carol services in the run-up to the festival. Warnings were issued and military guards posted to protect the churches; the sense of anxiety was palpable. Fortunately, no incident occurred; but such events have naturally created a heightened sense of tension at the local level. The suspicion that Muslim lowlanders might seek new ways to extend their influence into the highlands surfaces frequently in Toraja conversations these days; justified or not, the sense of threat tends to reinforce the desire to preserve a distinctive identity, which now for most Toraja is Christian rather than Alukta.

But defining oneself in opposition to outsiders is not the whole story; in Tana Toraja we must take account also of the way in which Christianity was also aligned with ideas of 'progress' and modernity. The mission's links to the colonial administration, and its involvement in the earliest provision of education and health services, meant that its influence was actually far greater than the tiny numbers of converts in the colonial period would lead us to suppose. Calvinist attitudes to idolatry were predictably harsh, and converts are often the ones who are most intolerant of the beliefs and practices they have just renounced. Not infrequently, these are the people who have enjoyed positions of influence in the local administration, giving them opportunities to be actively obstructive to Aluk To Dolo. Some church members, who came to form part of a small, educated 'middle class' in the towns, have come from middle-ranking families; they sought to create for themselves a 'modern' identity based more on meritocratic principles than the privilege of birth. Such at least was the claim of some of my high-ranking acquaintances, who saw them as social climbers.<sup>10</sup> They maintained that the Toraja Church council was largely composed of people of middle or lower rank. The council's attacks on aspects of traditional rituals, according to these acquaint-

<sup>10</sup> Compare Donzelli (2003:65).

ances, were largely motivated by a desire to eliminate features regarded as expressions of rank. This applies especially to mortuary rites, where different 'levels' of ritual are distinguished by such features. For their part, Christians from very high-ranking families have been strongly resistant to abandoning those features of ritual which are seen as essential to the upholding of status accumulated in their families over generations of ritual performance.

A long-lasting controversy which became particularly stormy in the 1980s concerned the right to have a permanent hardwood *tau-tau* or effigy of the deceased, a privilege belonging to only the highest ranking funerals – involving a minimum sacrifice of 36 buffaloes in Malimbong, 24 in the Kesu' region.<sup>11</sup> Traditionally, offerings must be made to the *tau-tau* as it is constructed, and the deceased person's spirit was certainly considered to be in some sense absorbed into it; it would be carefully positioned at the culminating ritual so that it could see the buffalo fights and the slaughter of sacrificial animals being carried out on its behalf. It would also be placed inside the circle of *ma'badong* dancers who sing all night in honour of the deceased. At that time, the Church synod was adamant that the making of a *tau-tau* constituted idolatry and was not to be tolerated. For aristocratic families which had had effigies made for their ancestors in the past, however, not to have one effectively meant a fall in status which they were equally unwilling to accept. Things came to a head in 1983 when three leading pastors were excommunicated from the Church after they attended a funeral for which a *tau-tau* had been carved. A decade later, I was surprised to find that the *tau-tau* issue had fallen off the agenda. By that time, an agreement had been reached (at least among some Christians) that after all, the *tau-tau* was simply a likeness of the deceased, no different from a photograph. Nobody had an objection to keeping photographs of dead relatives, and therefore there was no reason to repudiate the *tau-tau* either. In fact, over time, the style of the *tau-tau* has greatly altered. From being a highly-stylised, spirit figure with minimalist features and ghostly eyes of shell, it has become increasingly lifelike, as carvers (some of whom have been to Bali to learn from sculptors there, and who now commonly work from photographs) have responded to the desire of their clients for greater realism. No longer sacralised and animated by offerings, the effigy has in effect become a portrait sculpture. Through the 1980s and 1990s, another fiercely contested issue with regard to traditional practices was the holding of cockfights, likewise an essential step for completion of the highest-ranking funerals. Both the Church and the Bupati were strongly opposed to this, in line with the strict prohibition of gambling which was a policy of the Indonesian government. Here again, the pendulum has swung in recent years, with the revival of cockfighting in the aftermath of New Order collapse.

<sup>11</sup> *Tau-tau* means literally 'small person'; the statues are about two thirds life size.

Pak Kila', whose life has been largely dedicated to defense of the increasingly beleaguered Aluk To Dolo, once drew a parallel between the position of its remaining adherents and that of Aboriginal peoples in Australia. Overdrawn as that comparison might be, it is ironic that it is Toraja themselves who are today the main opponents of Alukta. In the 1970s, I often met members of the Toraja Church (Gereja Toraja) who were strident and uncompromising in their opposition to Alukta. But their stance now seems to have softened somewhat by comparison with newer denominations such as the Pentecostals, who are adamant in preaching that only those who acknowledge Jesus can be saved from hell fire.<sup>12</sup> In the 1990s, the multiplication of churches of different denominations continued apace, and several of my acquaintances in Rantepao who had been brought up within the Toraja Church had left it in favour of 'born again' Protestant Fundamentalist movements. A friend who is a born-again Christian, seeing my nostalgia for the lost rhythm of rituals which had once given shape to the village life I knew in the 1970s, urged me: 'You must understand: this is the age of transition (I.: *masa transisi*)'. For his part, to be saved (I.: *selamat*) must be the individual's most pressing concern; he sees the disappearance of Alukta as both inevitable and welcome, part of the move, already almost accomplished in Tana Toraja, toward a modern identity. His father's generation having experienced the initial rupture brought by Dutch colonisation, it is only a matter of time before the transition is completed. His children have never attended any *aluk* rituals, and showed a mixture of ignorance and fear about them. His son, who once accompanied me to a non-Christian funeral where I hoped to meet an elderly *to minaa*, refused to enter the funeral ground with me, but insisted on waiting outside. His daughters, educated in Java, hardly speak Toraja any more, and cannot name the mountains visible from their own front door. Indo' Rembon, another friend in whose hamlet I had often stayed while living in Saluputti, expressed her own changed relationship to the landscape in this way:

<sup>12</sup> An instance of this softening of perspective was the recent publication by Gereja Toraja's Centre for Study, Research and Development of Theology of a complete transcription and Indonesian translation of the text of the chants performed at the *Aluk Bua' Pare* (Sarira and Panginan 2000). The introduction to this work states that it is deliberately offered without commentary, 'purely as oral literature'. It goes on to add that people may well enquire why the Church should publish something having to do with the beliefs of the ancestors, and whether it is not dangerous to risk awakening old memories? But, the authors assert, too great a caution in this matter can also do harm; instead, authentic cultural riches should be used to help us develop our own theological ideas. Moreover, the Church can make a valuable contribution to the preservation of local culture, which might already be at risk of falsification if tourism were to be promoted irresponsibly (Sarira and Panginan 2000:i-ii). Regrettably, the *to minaa* who contributed their knowledge to this publication are not acknowledged.

Before, we were afraid to go out at night. The trees looked funny and we heard strange noises and were frightened. That doesn't happen any more. Now [the countryside] is 'clean' (*masero*).

In the history of monotheisms, the supernatural beings of older animist or polytheistic religions have usually been demoted and reclassified as demonic. A similar move in Toraja has meant that the *deata*, and even one's own ancestors, are commonly redefined by Christians as *setan* (demons).<sup>13</sup> Indo' Rembon, I believe, is talking of more than just a sweeping away of superstition, but sees a more literal disenchantment of the landscape as the old religion has declined. Another acquaintance mentioned that in the past, people were more afraid to visit the rock tombs (*liang*) than they are now, and that strange occurrences at these sites were more common experiences. In the past, dreams of deceased relatives would invariably be regarded as significant, and might require interpretation by a *to minaa*. If you dreamed of an ancestor coming to sit on your rice barn, bringing firewood, it meant that good fortune would come to you. Many people still believe that if you dream of a deceased relative beckoning you to follow them, and you go with them, it means that you will soon die. It was believed that ancestors would help you when you are sick, if you promise to make an offering upon recovering your health. One sincere but tolerant Christian told me that he always tried to avoid speaking harshly of traditional beliefs, and to answer reasonably the queries of those who had recently converted. If people expressed concern about their ancestors, he would say: 'Of course it's natural to dream about those who have died, because we are sure to think of them. Only they are not present any more, and you must not expect blessings from them.' It would appear that both the *deata* and the ancestors have retreated further and further, fading from the landscape as communication with them dies away.

On another occasion, Indo' Rembon talked about how her conviction as a Christian had grown over the years, and how she had attempted to win over some of her elderly relatives to the Church:

I went and talked to them once. I said, 'Why don't you become Christian?' They said, 'You don't think we're going to die just yet, do you?'<sup>14</sup> I said, 'That's not how it is. You have to put some effort into it, think about it before, not just wait until you're going to die! Look around you – who are the people who are getting

<sup>13</sup> For a fuller discussion of some of the emotional tensions generated by the need to reject the formerly intimate association with the ancestors, see Waterson (1984b).

<sup>14</sup> It is common for older people to make a cursory conversion late in life, either in hope of recovery from illness, or because their children, if already Christian, put pressure on them to avoid the embarrassment of having to conduct the full sequence of traditional funeral rites.

rich today? Who are the ones with education, the ones with good jobs? Who is in the local government? They're all Christians, aren't they? There's your proof that Christianity is the right path.

Her comments should not be interpreted as merely cynical. Within the traditional world view, wealth and prosperity are considered a sign of the blessings of the deities and ancestors; wealth, in turn, enables the prosperous to perform thanksgiving rituals, which will bring more bountiful blessing. Perhaps we may detect an unexpected parallelism here, since Calvinism is precisely that creed which had most successfully argued that wealth was a sign of grace. Yet, in other ways, there are such marked differences between the local specificity of Alukta, and the universalism of the Christian message, that we can hardly doubt that a major shift in worldview has taken place. With the protection granted by its official status, one might have expected a far greater security of numbers for Alukta, the more so with the growth of a tourist industry which has brought visitors from all over the world to demonstrate their interest in indigenous culture. But as the region has become increasingly open to the outside world, the pulls of modernity have been a powerful force, especially for the young. Perhaps, having been brought up as a Christian myself, I have too easily underestimated the novel impressions that Christianity (especially in the severe style of Dutch Calvinism) might have made upon young people. It was brought home to me when I asked Pak Banti (Papa' Mawiring) why, as a schoolboy growing up in the 1950s, he had decided to become Christian. His reply was unexpected: 'Actually we were attracted by the Christmas carols', he said. 'The young people used to get together at night with torches to sing these lovely songs, and there was the tree all lit up – that appealed to us very much.' The great increase in geographical mobility is another significant factor. As economic conditions and communications have improved, more and more young people leave Toraja, and not knowing how to practise Aluk To Dolo away from home, find it preferable to adopt a world religion. Those remaining at home, too, often express their sense of connection to a world community of Christians. Thus a growing majority of Toraja have entered enthusiastically into the task of constructing for themselves a new and modern identity as Christians.

All the same, I have met a number of individuals who, although they long ago embraced Christianity (or in a few cases, Islam), openly express their regret at the loss of cultural knowledge entailed in the collapse of Alukta. They disapprove of the fundamentalist Christian insistence that only those who acknowledge Jesus will go to heaven. This is a widespread position among Toraja Protestants (though not among informed Catholics, since the current Papal doctrine is that the good will be saved regardless of their allegiances). Pak Gemaria, a young lawyer who has sometimes worked on behalf



of the Parandangan Ada', had this to say about the intolerance shown by many of his fellow-Christians on the issue of salvation:

If I want to travel from here to Makassar, there are many ways to get there. Some may choose to travel by car, others by boat; some might go on horseback, others may walk. They will all get there in the end, but who knows what obstacles they might meet on the way? Those who go by car may have one kind of difficulty, those who go by boat may meet another, and so on.

In the same way, he concluded, all religions lead to the same end. Though some would agree with him, however, I know of no-one except Pak Kila' who has actually demonstrated the determination to return to the Aluk To Dolo after having once, for a brief period in his life, been a Protestant. No matter how much they might express their regrets, others declare the impossibility of reverting to the indigenous religion, for to change one's faith is not something to be undertaken lightly, and they fear that others would judge their behaviour as flippant. For his part, Pak Kila' has become increasingly disheartened over the years by the continuing decline of Alukta, and fears Toraja are losing their cultural identity. On one occasion he put it bluntly: 'Christians only know how to sing,' he expostulated, 'but they don't know their own culture any more. You can't say they are Belanda [European], you can't say they are Toraja either. But if I say this, they get angry with me!' Another acquaintance, an aristocrat who, although himself Muslim, is outspoken about the need to preserve Aluk To Dolo as an integral part of Toraja culture, insisted that what Alukta needed most urgently was a Book. His comment illustrates well the pressures toward routinization introduced by state regulation of religions. The perceived lack of a sacred text is one of those features that most obviously sets a localized religion like Aluk To Dolo apart from bureaucratically-defined *agama*. Young people, this man argued, needed to be able to refer to a text that would give a coherent account of the required beliefs and principles of Aluk To Dolo. They also needed an authoritative explanation of how it should be practised, both within and beyond the homeland, so that it could still be maintained by those who are living outside of Tana Toraja. Furthermore, it was his opinion that sooner or later people would become bored with Christianity and would come to realize what they had thrown away. By that time, today's remaining elderly *to minaa*, the priests who are the repositories of Alukta's oral traditions, would have died without being able to hand on their knowledge. Unless a book were compiled now to preserve some of their knowledge, those who might later wish to revive the religion would have nothing to go back to. He even proposed that I should be the one to write such a book, a task which I regretfully declined. But he is doubtless correct that if Alukta is to compete with the Religions of the Book,

then it needs a Book of its own. Clearly it would be impossible to produce such a text without doing considerable violence to the nature of Alukta. Its localized variations, its flexibility and its inconsistencies are a characteristic and inherent feature of oral traditions. Ironically, it is the heritage of oral poetry held in the memories of the *to minaa* that is perhaps the most elaborated art in all the Toraja cultural repertoire, a great cultural achievement that ought to be a source of pride. But many *to minaa* have already passed away without leaving anyone to take over from them. I know of none still alive today who has a successor in training, not even Tato' Dena', who is still comparatively young, and whose position as *to minaa sando* is of special significance. Questioned on this matter, he admitted that none of his children show an inclination to follow him, but holds on to the hope that a successor might eventually be revealed among his grandchildren. But the clash between two modes of knowledge, with their equally different styles of education, means that no young person today is likely to see a future in being a *to minaa*, or to feel inspired to take on the memorizing of thousands of lines of ritual verse that is part of that apprenticeship.

In striking contrast, Schiller's (1997) description of the ongoing routinization and 'institutional restructuring' of the Kaharingan religion, now more commonly referred to as 'Hindu Kaharingan', among the Ngaju of Central Kalimantan, suggests that there the process is already far advanced. Kaharingan is increasingly impinged upon by both Islam and Christianity, while Balinese transmigrants have also brought Hinduism with them to Central Kalimantan. All of these competing religions have contributed to the direction of developments within Kaharingan. Nearly a decade before they succeeded in winning government recognition, representatives of Kaharingan had already formed a 'Council of Religious Scholars of Kaharingan Indonesia', which made its first duty the production of a whole range of books, one recording a lengthy account of the creation myth, and others setting out the correct methods for propitiating supernatural beings, and for holding weddings, funerals, and other ceremonies. Still more remarkably, they devised a hymnal and prayerbook (Schiller 1997:122). In 1980, when their request to consolidate with Hinduism was granted, this body renamed itself the Majelis Besar Agama Hindu Kaharingan (Supreme Council of the Hindu Kaharingan Religion), continuing its vigorous efforts to rationalise ritual practice. Official recognition has led to elaboration of a Kaharingan religious bureaucracy, and secondary and tertiary educational institutions have been set up to train religious teachers for employment in the schools. Since 1981, Thursday evening worship services have become institutionalised, with collections taken up to support the Hindu Kaharingan Youth Association. The meeting is composed of hymns, a sermon (often urging thrift in ritual expenditure), prayers and a blessing. The opening prayer includes a confession of faith in 'the five

pillars of Hindu Kaharingan faith'. In villages, prayer meetings are commonly held in peoples' homes, but the town of Palangka Raya has a Hindu temple and a public religious hall. There are obvious parallels with a 'Protestant' style of religious practice, in that these meetings encourage a direct personal relationship with the deity, to whom one appeals on a regular basis for forgiveness (although older adherents remark that a notion of sin was not part of traditional practice).<sup>15</sup> Most importantly, they are popular with young people, offering as they do the same kind of opportunity for regular religious activity as the world religions do.

Ngaju, just like Toraja, attach great significance to mortuary rites. Currently, moves are being made to standardize one localised version of the important secondary burial ritual called *tiwah* as the dominant form even for other areas. Though not all adherents approve of the radical reshaping of a once diverse religious practice, the new level of organization has given Kaharingan a higher profile as a custodian of Ngaju culture and identity. It also gives it a prominent role in the development of strategies to promote tourism, since the chance to witness a *tiwah* festival is potentially the biggest draw for outsiders to visit the region (Schiller 2003). I quote the Ngaju example at some length since it provides such obvious parallels, but also sharp contrasts, with the Toraja experience. By comparison with Alukta, it is quite remarkable to note how far Kaharingan has gone in reshaping itself to conform to mainstream Indonesian expectations about what constitutes a 'religion'. Whatever distortions this may have required, there can be little doubt that by doing so, it has probably saved itself, above all because it is finding a way to keep its appeal to the young. In most societies today, faith has become a personal quest, with a marketplace of different religions to choose from. Within this marketplace, religions are obliged to compete with each other to attract adherents. Even Balinese Hinduism, which has the loyalty of most of the Balinese population, is not immune to new, rationalising movements intent on creating a fundamentalist orthodoxy.<sup>16</sup> No such radical transformation has been undertaken in Tana Toraja, and most remaining adherents of Alukta are older people.

In many parts of Southeast Asia, the choice of a new religion may sometimes be expressed in terms of judgements about their relative 'heaviness' or 'lightness', that is to say, how difficult are the demands they make in terms not just of prescriptions and prohibitions, but also in terms of ritual expenditure. Nina Kammerer (1996), for example, has written about the Akha

<sup>15</sup> That practice, just like Toraja Alukta, offered ritual means for restoring a cosmic balance disturbed by transgressions against prohibitions. The Ngaju term for prohibitions, *pali* (cognate with Toraja *pemali*), has been replaced in prayer meetings with references to the Indonesian term *dosa* (sin) (Schiller 1997:123-4).

<sup>16</sup> These movements are well described by Bakker (1993) and Howe (2001).

of northern Thailand and their conversion to Christianity. The Akha have a myth which explains the unusually burdensome nature of ritual obligations within their indigenous faith. They say that in the beginning, all peoples went with their baskets to receive the gift of customs from the deity. Most people went with old and broken, or loosely-woven, baskets to receive their shares, and on the way home, a large part of what they had been given fell out and was lost. Only the Akha took their characteristically strong, tightly-woven basket and safely carried home their entire burden of ritual requirements, without losing any of it. This myth is sometimes referred to in justification of conversion to Christianity, because the expenses of the traditional rituals are now felt to be too much to maintain. Toraja too sometimes talk of religions in terms of their comparative 'lightness'. For them, Islam is often seen as 'heavy' because of the fasting month, and by virtue of its requirement to dissociate from the pig, which is such an integral part of the domestic and ceremonial economy.<sup>17</sup> Christianity means a simplification of ritual, obviating the need to observe closely all of the numerous 'steps' (*lesoan*) of *aluk* rituals. In 1994, I talked with an elderly *to minaa*, Ne' Roya of Siguntu', who had recently decided to become a Catholic. He told me he had made his decision in an effort to improve his health (conversion because of illness is not uncommon in Toraja), while insisting that it was also a matter of inward conviction. Choosing a religion, in his opinion, was like selecting the best-looking fruit off a tree (*ditonno' bua kayu*). If you chose the one that suited you best, it would not be felt as 'heavy'; all the same, he did think that, in terms of the ritual responsibilities it imposed, Christianity was 'lighter' than the Aluk To Dolo. After so many in his community had left Alukta, and he himself had learned about Christianity, he had wanted to convert.

When I talked to villagers in Malimbong about their conversions, some of them commented that they could no longer afford to make all the offerings required by Alukta. There is more to this, I think, than just the matter of expense, and the need for a continual supply of small chickens. There is also the aspect of communal cooperation to consider, as well as the question of 'plausibility structures'. Plausibility has to do with how convincing any system of beliefs and practices appears to its adherents. If the system is the only or chief one in a relatively homogeneous society, then it is likely everywhere to be true that it will the more easily appear to its practitioners to be the necessary and right way of doing things – *doxa* in Bourdieu's (1977) terms. If, however, alternative systems coexist or are in competition with

<sup>17</sup> Circumcision, for men, might not be seen as an especially heavy requirement, since traditionally, Toraja have practised their own form of subincision at puberty or before. But that still leaves the matter of female genital mutilation (which is routinely carried out, though sometimes in a very reduced and residual manner, by Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia).

each other, then the possibility of choice is bound to raise questions about the relative rightness and desirability of available options. As the members of village communities gradually have drifted away from Alukta and toward Christianity, it becomes harder and harder for those who remain. Not only will it be more difficult to convince oneself of the necessity to maintain the cycle of offerings, with its accompanying expenditure of resources, but it becomes harder to arrange those occasions which formerly involved coordination within the community, such as the rice-harvest offerings, and even more so, the major rituals of the Eastern sphere. Close cooperation among neighbours, the *pa'tondokan*, is a hallmark of Toraja village life; the men in particular are accustomed to working together at tasks such as carpentry, the roofing of a new house, construction of temporary shelters for funeral guests, and especially in the work of butchering and cooking sacrificial animals. When everyone followed Alukta, such cooperation was part of the cohesiveness of community relations; where villages became split (as has been true perhaps of most villages in the past few decades), an element of division was introduced. More than that, since the children have tended to choose Christianity as a result of the powerful influence of teachers at school, there was increasingly a separation also between the generations. When finally, everyone in a community has converted to Christianity, an incidental but no doubt deeply appreciated benefit is that they can at last all join together again on ritual occasions. This came home to me when I returned to Buttang with my family in 1994, after an absence of eleven years. Sebo', my sister, now like me with children of her own, insisted that she would not be satisfied until we had slaughtered one of her pigs to feed a prayer meeting for the entire village. Watching the men of the neighbouring households good-humouredly working together in butchering and cooking the pig, it struck me that at least the community was once again united. Talking about the most recent conversions, my neighbours further explained that people had taken the decision 'because all of the children are Christian, and there's no-one to keep them company' (*tae' to nasolan*). I initially interpreted this to mean that they felt uncomfortable about not being unable to support their children in their new choice, and keep them company in church activities, though conversely, the phrase could also mean that the parents were missing the company of their children in carrying out the *aluk*. No doubt both of these feelings of dislocation had eventually played a part in the decisions to mend the breach and follow in their children's footsteps.

Once the decision is taken, there is a felt need for some ritual to mark the point of separation. What form this takes depends partly on the individual, with some room for improvisation. Ambe' Tasik, the last in his family to accept Christianity, lives in the village of Surakan on Mount Ullin. He is a carpenter and had been rebuilding his family *tongkonan*, performing the full

set of *aluk* rituals for each stage of construction. When at last it was finished, the drum of the house was beaten, and then two days later, a Christian ceremony was held, and the house was 'cleaned' by the removal of everything to do with *aluk* and the making of offerings. A local aristocrat from Pasang, who had been instrumental in pushing conversions to Christianity, had in the early 1990s finally rebuilt his family *tongkonan* (which had been burned down by TNI forces in retaliation for the coopting of some of the villagers into a Darul Islam guerrilla band in the 1950s). He had then celebrated a huge house ceremony (*mangrara banua*), which had been unconventionally combined with another Rite of the East, a *ma'buu' muane*, shorn of its traditional offerings to the deities. Together with this, a whole range of dances had been performed, bizarrely combining those of the East (*to manimbong* for men, *to ma'dondo* for women) with the men's war dance (*ma'randing*) which is only performed at very high ranking funerals. There were people playing a form of two-stringed violin (*to ma'geso*), normally associated with the *ma'pakorong* rite to ward off smallpox, to which were also added a band of children playing modern bamboo wind instruments (*to ma'bass*). In this mishmash of items, deritualised and drawn out of their original contexts, it is hard not to see both the transformation of culture into spectacle so trenchantly commented upon by Gregory Acciaioli (1985) in the context of Central Sulawesi, and a sort of dying gasp of Alukta rituals, most of which are unlikely to be celebrated any more in this community.

In the hamlet of Kata, on the hillside high above Buttang, Ambe' Baso' was the last to convert to Christianity, in 1997. A son of Indo' Teken, I knew him well, for he often dropped by the house in Buttang to chat. When he made the decision, he explained to me, the family called the last remaining *to minaa* for several districts around, the now very aged Uto' of Ulusalu, to help them perform a special ritual (*massuru'*). This is the name traditionally given to rites held to cleanse oneself of some fault or offence against the *aluk*, though in this case it is clearly something of an innovation. Uto' chanted (*ma'mammang*) to inform Puang Matua, the *deata*, and the ancestors that Ambe' Baso' was changing religions and would no longer be making offerings. And with the sacrifice of a pig and three chickens, the observance of Alukta in that village came to an end.



## CHAPTER XVII

# The making of ancestors

In spite of all the transformations that have taken place in religious beliefs and practices, there are two kinds of ritual that continue to occupy a special place in Toraja life. They are house ceremonies and funerals. Each has survived, but is now almost invariably celebrated in an adapted, Christianized form. No offerings are made, the services of the *to minaa* or other traditional functionaries must be dispensed with, and Christian prayers are added instead. House ceremonies (*mangrara banua*) are held to celebrate the successful rebuilding of an origin-house, a project the importance of which has already been discussed in Chapter IX. It is funerals, however, that remain the most prominent and frequently celebrated rituals in Tana Toraja. Secondary treatment of the dead is a distinctive feature of many societies of the archipelago; Toraja funerals for those of the highest rank are prolonged and divided into two stages, so that the culminating ceremony may take place months, or even years, after a person's death.<sup>1</sup> During the interval, while the heirs are gathering their resources for the event, the body is stored in the house and referred to as being merely 'sick' or 'feverish'. Funerals are such a conspicuous feature of Toraja life that they have already attracted a great deal of attention from ethnographers.<sup>2</sup> Simply to list all the details of ritual prescriptions, with their many regional variations, the sumptuary rules designed to restrict certain levels of display to the nobility, and the local differences in the precise mode of butchering and dividing meat, would be enough to fill several books. From the 1980s onward, it became more and more common for large funerals to be visited by guests from distant places. Volkman, Yamashita and Adams have all provided telling accounts of the more or less drastic 'editing' (Volkman 1990:103) and 'taming' (Adams 1997:315) of 'culture' for the benefit of external visitors, Indonesian government ministers as well as foreign tourists, which has become a feature of the largest and most ostentatious recent funerals. But no funeral ritual can be staged merely for the benefit of outsiders. What

<sup>1</sup> See Hertz (1960); Huntington and Metcalf (1979).

<sup>2</sup> See Koubi (1982); Nooy-Palm (1986); Yamashita (1981a, 1981b, 1983, 1997); Volkman (1979a, 1979b, 1987, 1990); Adams (1997); and Tsintjilonis (1993).

concerns us here is their continuing social importance to Toraja themselves.

Mortuary ritual is the feature most frequently mentioned by Toraja themselves as being the most essential expression of their cultural identity. This in itself represents something of a puzzle: the rites may require enormous expense, with the sacrificial slaughter of huge numbers of pigs and buffaloes. According to traditional beliefs, the putative purpose of these sacrifices was to provide the deceased with wealth in the afterlife. In fact, the whole point of mortuary ritual, in its many stages, as well as the further *pembalikan* rites that could be staged long after the death, was to assist the transformation of the dead into ancestors. Ne' Sambayang of Menduruk took pains to describe to me all the *tekkan aluk/lesoan aluk* ('steps' or 'joints' of the rites). Even a very simple, one-night ceremony (*dipasangbongi*), requiring a minimal sacrifice of one buffalo and five pigs, has nine separate offerings, carried out over a number of days and continuing for some time after the burial. The total number of pigs as he described it was actually nine; five, he said, was the barest minimum, which may be exceeded if the family desires it. The penultimate offering in this sequence is called *ma'palamban*, 'to cause to cross over', and is considered to mark the moment at which the spirit of the deceased is enabled to 'pass over' into Puya. In Sambayang's words: *malemo situru' tedongna, situru' baina; lasitiro to dolo lako tondok tangmerambu, banua tangdite'tekki api* ('S/he has gone, with her/his buffalo, with her/his pigs; s/he will meet the ancestors in the village without smoke, the house where no fire is lit'). At the concluding rite on the following day, called *kandean nande* ('to eat rice') rice was served instead of maize, ending the mourners' observance of food prohibitions. In a nine-buffalo funeral, the rites become divided into two stages, and the body will be kept in the house while preparations are made for the grand final ceremony. At that level, the 'joints' of the ritual are expanded to thirty separate offerings, requiring 33 pigs in all. They are spread out over the two stages, and continue after the burial. A complete set of these rituals was performed for the funeral of Essu, an elder of Kata, the hamlet on the hill above Buttang, when I lived there in 1978.

The procedure of helping the dead on their way to Puya was thought of as effectively replicating life's social inequalities in the hereafter, since high-ranking, wealthy people have the largest number of animals slaughtered for them. No idea of punishment for sins was involved in this view of the afterlife; on the question of hell, Bua' Sarungallo once commented drily, 'Hell is on earth, if you are poor'. But Christians brought up in the Calvinist tradition are not supposed to believe in Puya; conversion entails a quite different view of the fate of the soul. What is more, one is not supposed to be expecting blessings from the ancestors, or even entering into communication with them at all. What then is the point of the funeral sacrifices? What drives people to remain so committed to a system which many already regard as burden-

some, and which frequently forces them into debt? The Dutch were entirely unsuccessful in putting an end to a system which, as outsiders, they saw as shockingly wasteful, and which they likened to the potlatch ceremonies performed by the tribes of the Northwest Coast of North America. With the end of the colonial period, Torajans entered the troubled decades of the 1940s and 50s, with World War II and the Japanese Occupation followed by the years of struggle for Independence and the disruptions caused by South Sulawesi's Islamic guerrilla movements and the two Andi Sose incidents of 1953 and 1958. This was clearly not a time for ceremonial extravagance, but with a return to stability, the 1960s saw some resurgence of ritual activity, in spite of growing Christianization. In the decades of relative economic prosperity that followed, from the 1970s to the present, far from going into decline, there has in fact been steady inflation in the prices of livestock and the size of funerals. If funeral sacrifices are no longer supposed to be for the benefit of the dead, then we must look to their role in articulating relationships among the living in order to explain their continued significance today.

I have already written elsewhere about aspects of the organization and politics involved in mortuary arrangements (Waterson 1993). In this chapter, I intend to summarize the main features of the death rites, before taking a slightly different angle, and shifting my focus to the role of ceremonial exchanges in inheritance and the relations between kin. In my final chapter, I take a broader look at the ceremonial dimensions of the Toraja economy, in the context of both domestic production and links with the regional and world economies. The Toraja evolved a prestige economy, closely articulated with the system of rank, which in a characteristic Southeast Asian pattern was dominated and driven by the requirement to build and maintain status in what are commonly called 'feasts of merit'.<sup>3</sup> In this context, it is of comparative interest that high-ranking funeral feasts may include the dragging and erection of a standing stone (*simbuang batu*) on the funeral ground as a memorial to the deceased. We can certainly draw parallels between the Toraja uses of megalithic stones, and those of the people of Nias and Sumba, even though the latter's monuments are typically more elaborated. For the Toraja as for the Sumbanese, individuals are the actors in the ritual dramas by means of which status is accumulated, demonstrated and upheld; yet it would be more correct to say that ultimately, they are acting as members of origin houses. Every

<sup>3</sup> See Beatty (1992) on Nias and Geirnaert-Martin (1992) on Sumba, for some especially vivid comparative examples. Remarkable parallels may be seen in Fürer-Haimendorf's (1976) description of a graded series of feasts of merit, involving buffalo sacrifice and the dragging and erection of menhirs, among the Konyak Naga of Assam. Related themes of status-building and the seeking of 'blessing' through ritual feasts recur in many upland societies of mainland Southeast Asia (Kammerer and Tannenbaum 1996). Economic parallels may also be drawn with the gift-giving systems of Papua New Guinea (Gregory 1982).

feast held adds to the history of the house itself, and in the long term, it is the houses to which status accrues.<sup>4</sup> The parallel with Central Nias is of further interest because it is a region that has undergone a much longer and even more thoroughgoing Christianization than Tana Toraja; yet Beatty (1992:214) notes that in spite of this, the ethos associated with feasting (and the idiom of debt intrinsic to the ceremonial exchange system) remains deeply embedded in the social structure, and is even upheld by selective Biblical quotation. Schrauwers' (2000) recent work on the To Pamona of Central Sulawesi provides another example of the transformation and survival of an ethos derived from competitive feasting, albeit in greatly changed outward form, in the face of radical Christianization and social change.<sup>5</sup>

In examining the resilience of the Toraja system of ceremonial exchange, I hope to show something of the process by which money has slowly penetrated into this economy over the twentieth century. Every concept implies its opposite, however, so we should consider the possibility that the all too familiar yet phallogocentric image of penetration might be misleading. Should we rather pose the question, has money been absorbed into the ceremonial economy? Doubtless no example can be found today either of an economy based exclusively upon the gift, or one that is entirely commoditized. Comparative ethnographic examples would suggest that when money or commodities are granted a place in a 'gift' economy, their commodity value has often been subverted and subordinated to their use as another kind of object of display. One might, then, more accurately expect an interpenetration of the two types of economy. Gregory's (1982) landmark analysis of changes in the economies of Papua New Guinea societies already makes this clear. He shows how the advent of a colonial commodity economy, far from leading to an inexorable 'modernization' and demise of indigenous Papuan 'gift' economies, as predicted by neoclassical economists, has in fact had the

<sup>4</sup> Compare Geirnaert-Martin (1992:24-31) on the 'duty of feasting' in Laboya, West Sumba, of which she writes: 'by giving a feast, a host builds up his 'name' (*ngara*) by expanding his social relationships. At the same time, he contributes to building up the 'name' and the identity of the members of his *Uma* [house]' (Geirnaert-Martin 1992:24). She notes that gifts must be accepted because they are considered to contribute to the building up of one's vital force (*dewa*) throughout life, but adds that individuals are 'only temporary recipients of *dewa*', which ultimately accrues to the house (Geirnaert-Martin 1992:29-30). See also Waterson (2003), where the idea that the house offers the individual a kind of 'immortality' is further explored.

<sup>5</sup> Schrauwers (2000:179) notes that feasting for the To Pamona 'is a means of privileging certain kinds of activity and not a "rite" in itself'; for this reason, and because it was 'the only aspect of To Pamona ritualization compatible with Christian worship', it has been easily carried over into new, Church-related contexts. Since it also serves as a means of creating social hierarchy, at the same time as it reinforces competitive exchange relationships between kinship groupings, it continues to have far-reaching effects on the shape of social life, however. Just as for the Toraja, inflation seems to be an inescapable feature also of the Pamona system, and Schrauwers (2000:151-2) remarks on its 'striking resemblance to the *potlatch* of the North-West Coast'.

opposite effect. Instead it has enabled their 'efflorescence', as money and new commodities have been regularly transformed into gifts and fed back into the traditional ceremonial system. Subsequent work by writers like Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff (1986) has explored still more searchingly the possibilities for transformations along the gift-commodity continuum. In the light of this body of evidence, it is not so surprising after all to discover that, even in the face of religious change, ceremonial activity in Tana Toraja has in some ways intensified, leading to what Volkman (1985:43) aptly described as 'a simultaneous blossoming of both ritual activity and doubt'.

### *The journey to the afterlife*

According to the indigenous cosmology, the purpose of the funeral rites is to ensure the passage of the dead person's soul to the afterlife, Puya, which is thought to be in a high place, somewhere far to the south.<sup>6</sup> The south as the home of the dead in Toraja cosmology is symbolically opposed to the north as the place of the creator deity, Puang Matua. Life in Puya is envisaged as a shadowy replica of this life, except that there is no fire: the grave is characterised as the 'house without smoke, village where no fire is lit' (*tongkonan tangmerambu, tondok tangdukku apinna*). The buffaloes and pigs killed at a funeral are (or were) believed to follow the deceased on their way to the afterlife, to be used by them there. When a person dies, their breath (*penaa* – a word that also carries some of the senses of 'spirit', as well as being used in different contexts to convey aspects of mind and feeling) is considered to leave the body through the top of the head; but another aspect of spirit is the *bombo*, which looks exactly like the person, but has no substance.<sup>7</sup> It is the *bombo* that will travel to Puya and live there. Interestingly, the *bombo* is unlike a ghost, in that people never talked of sighting it after a person's death. Dreams of a deceased relative, on the other hand, are taken as a real communication, requiring interpretation.<sup>8</sup> Instead, some people do have the ability to see a person's *bombo* while they are still alive. They might see them in one place when it turns out they were really in another, for instance, and if this happens

<sup>6</sup> Kruyt (1923-24:170) was told that it was south of Duri.

<sup>7</sup> Uses of the term *penaa* include, for example, *misa' penaa*: 'to be in agreement, of one mind'; *masussa penaangu*, 'I feel troubled', *to melo penaanna*, 'a good (friendly, generous) person'. Hollan and Wellenkamp (1994:108) note that *penaa* features in a cluster of terms relating to the emotions.

<sup>8</sup> Stories of supernatural encounters were interpreted as meetings not with ghosts but with *deata*. For humans these occurrences generally have dangerous consequences. They may cause feverish illness, disorientation, or derangement, especially if one follows the apparition to his or her 'house' in the forest.

it is a sign that the person will very shortly die. Although most people desire to have a large funeral, by which they will be remembered among the living, the sacrificed buffalo is also referred to as *kinallo* – ‘food for the journey’ – and if one can afford only one buffalo, this will suffice to see the *bombo* safely on its journey. I recorded some differences of opinion about whether inanimate objects also have a *bombo*. Though some said they had not, it was not uncommon to see items such as a hat, or a plate, left at a grave site for the use of the deceased. Furthermore, others said that, as well as the buffaloes and pigs sacrificed at a funeral, the deceased person will have the use in Puya of the large quantity of cloths in which they have been wrapped, some of which may be decorated with gold leaf. In November 1982, on my second visit to Buttang, I arrived toward the end of a long drought, when an accidental fire had just caused the destruction of fourteen houses in the village. The ashes of the oldest and most important *tongkonan* in the village were still smoking, and *to minaa* Buttu of Simbulan in nearby Ulusalu had been summoned to perform a ritual over it. Although the focus was on this house, the rite was held on behalf of all the burned houses, whose owners (including those who were Christian) all contributed to the cost of the small buffalo that was sacrificed, along with a pig (donated by the woman in whose house the fire had started) and several chickens. Some people described this buffalo as *kinallo* for the *bombo* of the house, which would ‘feed’ it on its journey to Puya; others stressed that the rite was intended to ensure continuity, and to signal the owners’ intentions to rebuild the house, when they were able.

Traditionally, if the funeral was of sufficiently high rank to include the making of a *tau-tau* or wooden effigy of the deceased, the *bombo* was thought to hang around it and to be present at the final ceremony. Pak Kila’ commented that in the old days, the *tau-tau* would be placed where it could enjoy a good view of its sacrificial buffaloes when they were made to fight each other prior to slaughter. It would also be put in the centre of the circle of *ma’badong* dancers who stayed up all night singing songs about the deceased’s life and achievements. He thought that these beliefs about the *bombo*’s presence had now faded; as we have seen, Christians today have reconciled themselves with the making of a *tau-tau* by viewing it simply as a portrait of the deceased. But in the past, it was thought that once the corpse had been taken to its final resting place, then the *bombo* would finally depart on its long journey to the afterlife. Vivid descriptions of this journey are to be found in some of the *ma’badong* chants performed for high-status individuals (see Appendix C). The chants may be addressed to persons of either sex; their style has to do with rank, not gender. One of these describes how the *bombo* at first accompanies the corpse as it is borne in procession to the funeral ground, the great crowd flattening the grass underfoot. Then it travels on away from the village, through the distant vegetable gardens and out on to uninhabited



hillsides. In this wilderness, it is described as attending the market of birds and eagles, engaging in humanly meaningless transactions where sand is traded for pebbles. Finally, the *bombo* comes to two palm trees leading up into the sky and forming a bridge between this world and the next. The chant then concludes with a vision of the ancestor's deified state in the heavens, blessing the living with every sort of wealth. In another example, the dead person poignantly addresses the living, telling them not to dwell on their loss, but to let go of her, as one would release the plough at the end of a hard day's work in the rice fields.<sup>9</sup> The chant begins by describing the 'village where no fire is lit', whose inhabitants feed on insubstantial morning rain and mist, goes on to trace the journey south to the afterlife, and ends by depicting the deceased as a deified ancestor, cradled in the lap of the constellations and ensuring full harvests for those who have been left behind.

#### *The organization of a funeral*

There are a great many different degrees or levels of elaboration in the funeral ceremony, depending on the rank and wealth of the dead person. There is the ceremony lasting one night, with the sacrifice of one buffalo, that of three nights and three buffaloes, five nights and five buffaloes, nine or more nights and nine buffaloes, and so on. The poorest people may have a rite at which only a pig, or pigs, are killed. For the utterly poor who lack any relatives, or in desperate times (as during the great influenza pandemic of 1918), if not even a pig is available, a symbolic act of 'striking the pig-sty' (*didedekan pangkung bai*) may suffice to complete the obligation for funeral sacrifice.<sup>10</sup> For the most prominent and wealthy individuals, hundreds of buffaloes and pigs may be disposed of. Appendix D shows the levels of the funeral ceremony in Malimbong; like every other aspect of ritual, there are some variations in the exact prescriptions from district to district of Tana Toraja.

At any funeral of nine nights or more, the rite becomes divided into two phases, with some sacrifices taking place in the days immediately following the death, and then a delay of months, or years, while the relatives gather their resources for the final ceremony.<sup>11</sup> A person who is given a two-stage rite is

<sup>9</sup> Fox finds this theme of the dead addressing the living in funeral chants to be a widespread Austronesian feature (personal communication).

<sup>10</sup> As much as 10% of the Toraja population is estimated to have died in the pandemic of 1918 (Bigalke 1981:254). There was no health service at that time. Fritz Basiang, then a boy of thirteen, recalled: 'So many people were dying, you would bury someone in the morning, and by noon, someone else would have died; if you buried someone at noon, by evening another would have died.'

<sup>11</sup> A full list of the sequence of rites and offerings (30 for a nine-buffalo funeral) will be found



Mourners surround the corpse, wrapped like a bolster in many layers of cloth, at a funeral at Tondon, Talion, 2002

called *dipandan* ('one who is laid down, allowed to rest'). During this time the body is stored in the house, in a temporary coffin and with a few wrappings, traditionally being 'smoked' (*dirambu*) with a mixture of pine, citrus, and other aromatic leaves which are burned beneath the coffin for a month or two after death, while the mourners keeping company with the body politely ignored the smell of decomposition. Nowadays it is usual to inject preservatives into the body, although some people object that this makes the bones soft. The idea of cremation is abhorrent to the Toraja, since great importance is attached to preserving the bones of the deceased in one's own family tomb (*liang*). This is believed essential to ensure ancestral blessings.<sup>12</sup> The body is laid out east-west, the way living people lie down to sleep, and it is only when, as the final rite approaches, it is brought to the front of the house, and

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in Waterson (1981). Some Toraja at least are of the opinion that, if Christians want to hold a high-level funeral, they must still kill all the animals stipulated by custom to fulfil the 'steps' or 'joints' of the *aluk* (*tekkān aluk*; *lesoan aluk*); they will just refrain from making the associated offerings.

<sup>12</sup> Since individuals have allegiances to more than one house, and all origin houses also have their own tombs, there is always some question as to which tomb shall become an individual's final resting place. Instances where the two sides of a family may come to blows over the choice of tomb are not uncommon and have to do with the desire to ensure the deceased's blessing by having their bones in one's own *liang*. I have explored elsewhere this question, and the light it sheds on the boundaries of kinship groupings (Waterson 1995a).

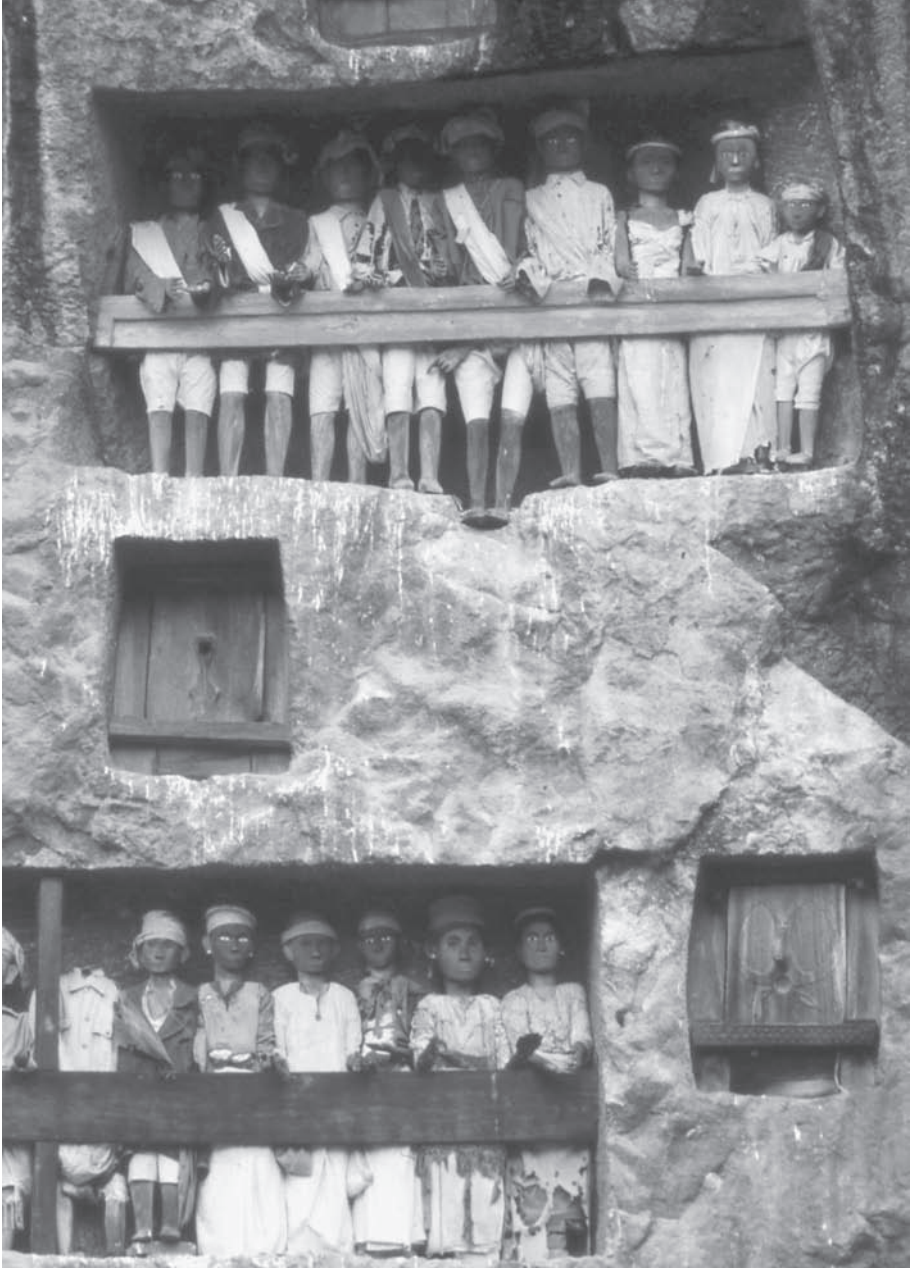
turned south-north, that it is treated as truly 'dead'. The head is placed facing to the south, to help the departed on his southward journey to Puya.

The final ceremony, if the rank of the deceased permits it and a sufficient number of buffaloes is available (in Malimbong a minimum of 16, in Kesu' 25 or more) takes place on a special funeral ground outside the village, called the *rante* or, in the Malimbong area, *padang ma'passonglo'*. *Rante* means a plain, or flat stretch of ground; the latter term means 'land to which the body is taken down'. The corpse is brought here and placed in a bamboo tower, the *lakkean*, and a high platform is erected, called *bala'kayan*, from which meat is thrown down and distributed. This very public part of the ceremony is a means by which rank and status is regularly demonstrated and upheld. It is traditionally carried out by a *to minaa*, who performs a special chant, which begins with the names of the most ancient and important origin houses to whom the hosts can trace a link, and who are the first to receive shares. Christians are not supposed to make use of the services of a *to minaa*, so the distribution is now more usually carried out by some other high ranking individual in the community.<sup>13</sup> The division of meat is complex and falls into several categories, well described by Donzelli (2003:287). Some shares are distributed as a means of reaffirming historical ties between *tongkonan*, others to settle past debts, and still others are presented to houses with which the deceased maintained close links in his or her lifetime. Particular cuts must be assigned to chiefs (*to parengnge'*) and leading nobles, other parts will be distributed to individual guests. Donzelli makes the significant observation that the atmosphere of tension that tends to build palpably as the time for distribution approaches, and the politics involved in its execution, is not only about who receives which cut of meat, or how much; the reproduction of the status order which it is designed to accomplish is also very much bound up in the question of who is seen to make the crucial decisions about how the distribution is to be effected. Minor local variations in the interpretation of relationships between houses, or the appropriate cuts to be offered to people of particular statuses, means that there is always some degree of contestability about how it should be done.

The very largest funerals involved the making of a *tau-tau*, a wooden effigy of the deceased, about two-thirds life size, which will be placed in a balcony beside the rock-cut tomb chamber after the ceremony; the erection on the *rante* of a memorial menhir or *simbuang batu*; and the holding of a cockfight.<sup>14</sup> Middle-level funerals may have a temporary *tau-tau* constructed of bamboo

<sup>13</sup> As was discussed in Chapter III, some of the history embodied in the *to minaa's* chant, especially where a recitation of the story of the 'Ancestors of the Same Dream' was involved, is at risk of being lost as a result.

<sup>14</sup> During the 1980s and 1990s, local government withheld permission for any cockfight, in an effort to prevent gambling, even though funerals of the highest rank are considered impossible to complete without one.



Cliff burials at Lemo, 1983. Permanent hardwood effigies (*tau-tau*) of aristocrats given the highest ranking funerals gaze down from galleries in the rock beside the small square doors of their maily tombs (*liang*).

and cloth, which is dismantled after the rites are over. The very highest levels of the rite are reserved for the highest ranking aristocracy, the *tana' bulaan*, while commoners and former slaves are not supposed to have more than the one-night ceremony, though they may 'purchase' the right to a three-night ceremony by killing an extra buffalo, half of which must be paid to the nobles of the village. Whereas the nobility, if they wish, may hold even a very low-level ceremony, the restrictions to do with rank are designed to prevent commoners and (former) slaves from holding the higher levels. What is at stake here is not so much the number of buffaloes to be slaughtered, but the different emblems of status involved, such as beating the drum or having a temporary or permanent *tau-tau*. In the past, the village nobles were the ones who had the power to enforce these rules; but they were never against encouraging people to kill as many buffaloes as possible, since the ensuing distribution of meat would mean larger shares for the community, and most particularly for themselves. Nowadays, they have much less power to enforce these restrictions, though many people never the less said that they would be ashamed to hold a ceremony to which they were not entitled. Others do hold them, in an attempt to improve their status. Volkman (1985:142) describes the case of a *to mebalun* (the former wrapper of corpses) who set out to free himself from his 'unclean' status by holding the highest level of funeral for his wife, largely funded by the new wealth of his children, who had left Tana Toraja to work in other parts of the archipelago. I, too, was told of a young man of slave descent in the area of Rantepao, who gained an education and went to work in Makassar. When he returned home with his savings, his father had just died, and the village nobles encouraged him to show his filial respect and gain honour in the community by holding a large funeral. All his savings went into the purchase of buffaloes. While this would seem to be a convenient way of pre-empting the accumulation of wealth by those of lower rank, members of the nobility often claimed that nowadays, slaves and those of low rank had become rich precisely because they did not have the heavy responsibilities of holding expensive ceremonies, while aristocrats were constantly having to dissipate their wealth in order to uphold their obligations. People I knew were divided in their opinions about funeral expenses; wealthy aristocrats are the ones most likely to maintain that tradition must be upheld, while those of moderate means feel sharply torn between the effort to fund their children's education, and the endlessly recurrent obligations to find pigs or buffaloes for mortuary occasions. Though many people may say that they would prefer only small funerals, it often happens that, especially when a parent dies, they will succumb to pressure to do the right thing and maintain the family honour in the eyes of the community.

When a person dies, the surviving children will have chief responsibility for deciding on the funeral arrangements, for they are to be the hosts at the event. This is how it was explained to me by Ne' Sanda, an elder of Paladan,





Funerals of the nobility, at which at least 3 buffaloes are killed, are entitled to a temporary *tau-tau* or effigy of the deceased. This will be dismantled after the funeral is over, Talion, 1979.



a village perched high up on a neighbouring hillside in Malimbong, whom I often visited in 1979. Firstly, the *pa'tondokan* or council of village elders, he said, had the job of ensuring that the level chosen was appropriate to the rank of the deceased. Supposing, he went on, that a man, one of four siblings, dies leaving five children. Immediately after his death, the children will gather for a meeting, and they may decide on a five-buffalo funeral – one buffalo each. There remains, however, the problem of the dead man's three siblings, who may also wish to contribute. Although they will not be inheriting any of his property, they wish to show their love and respect for him, and their contribution is called *kasirondongan* (*sirondong*: 'siblings'). This would mean a further three buffaloes, bringing the total to eight. But the children of the deceased may refuse, and propose instead, 'kill three of ours, and we will kill two', thus keeping the total down to five. Or they may make themselves responsible for buying all five animals, and simply kill three of them 'in the name of' the dead man's siblings. If, however, the siblings themselves make the sacrifices, it will be understood (though not stated openly) that they will expect repayment at their own funerals. Then, for the sake of the 'honour' of the deceased, the village council may encourage the heirs to add two more buffaloes to the total, to represent contributions from his own father's family and mother's family. These are called *tanda ambe'* and *tanda indo'* ('sign of the father' and 'sign of the mother'), or *tanda kanan* and *tanda kiri* ('sign of the right' and 'sign of the left').

Thus the total number of buffaloes might now be brought to ten (5 + 3 + 2), qualifying for a two-stage funeral; or, if the heirs still insist on sticking to five, things might be arranged as follows: two buffaloes to be sacrificed by the deceased's children, two by his siblings and one more by his relatives on father's and mother's side (half a buffalo each for the *tanda ambe'* and *tanda indo'*). Whatever the total decided upon, it will be represented in the final procession to the *rante* by a series of coloured flags (*tombi* or *laa*) on tall bamboo poles, one for each buffalo. As it winds its way around the *rante*, the funeral procession embodies a cosmic imagery, for all of its elements (buffaloes, flags, the mourners and widower, the *tau-tau*, the corpse, the attendants who serve coffee and cakes to the guests, a white cockerel with brown patches which is fastened on the roof of the *lakkean* tower), together are said to represent the progression of constellations across the sky.<sup>15</sup> The flags will be planted beside

<sup>15</sup> See Waterson (1989) for a more detailed account. *To minaa Uto'* of Tombang, Ulusalu, explained that the cock, which is not released until the end of the funeral, in flying upward, would cause all the rest of the funeral sacrifices to follow into the afterlife. The cock often appears as a symbolic mediator with the upperworld; it appears for instance surmounted on a sun-burst in carvings placed at the apex of the house façade. In a well known folk tale, Tulang Didi', a girl murdered by her father, has a cock whose crowing brings her back to life, and causes wealth to appear; eventually he flies up into the sky, becoming transformed into a constellation whose position is observed in order to mark the start of the agricultural cycle.

the tower in which the body is placed. However, although it is this total that determines the level of the funeral, many more animals than this core number will eventually be involved in the rite. Others will be presented to the hosts by their guests.

If the dead man himself owns buffaloes, these will be divided in half, half being for his widow, since spouses always have the right to half shares in any property acquired during the marriage. The other beasts may be used for sacrifice, or, if other relatives insist on contributing their own buffaloes, may be kept by the heirs as capital, to be used in future to repay their debts to these same relatives. They are then regarded as *mana'* – inheritance belonging to all the heirs jointly – and not the property of any one of them individually. According to the old traditions (*aluk dolo*), said Ne' Sanda, the children could not refuse to accept the contributions of their parent's relatives. This was one of the strategies by which people attempted to ensure themselves a large funeral, by building up credits with younger kin during their lifetime. The term for this behaviour by relatives, *manglatta'*, reflects the element of coercion involved. *Manglatta'* means 'to force', or 'to drive something into the ground with one's foot'. At the same time, if the children of the deceased are under age, then it is the duty of the relatives to manage the funeral for them. Here we find one of the main differences between the organization of funerals in the west of Toraja, and in the Rantepao and Ma' kale areas, where the practice of *ma'tallang* is followed. *Ma'tallang* is a competitive system whereby the division of property is carried out in proportion to the amount of each heir's funeral sacrifices. Whoever can afford to kill more buffaloes will inherit a correspondingly larger share of rice land, a system which inevitably disadvantages younger children and may deprive them of their shares of inheritance. Where *ma'tallang* applies, the heirs will generally do their best to prevent the participation of other relatives, unless they can be persuaded to declare publicly that their sacrifices are not intended as making a claim on the inheritance, but simply as an expression of their feelings for the deceased. Malimbong people reject the *ma'tallang* system, and have a tendency to take a less competitive view of funeral obligations generally. They are fond of saying, 'we care about each other' (*tasikaboro'*), or 'we don't force each other' (*tae' tasitukka'*) and part of what they mean is that they will not force this sort of expense on each other. Even in other areas of Tana Toraja, some shifts are occurring. A schoolteacher friend in Ma' kale commented in 2002 that one of the biggest changes he observed in the organization of funerals over the past few decades had been a shift away from the involvement of the dead person's siblings in the arrangements. He thought that this indicated the emergence of a narrower, more nucleated, view of the 'family' than had been usual in the past.

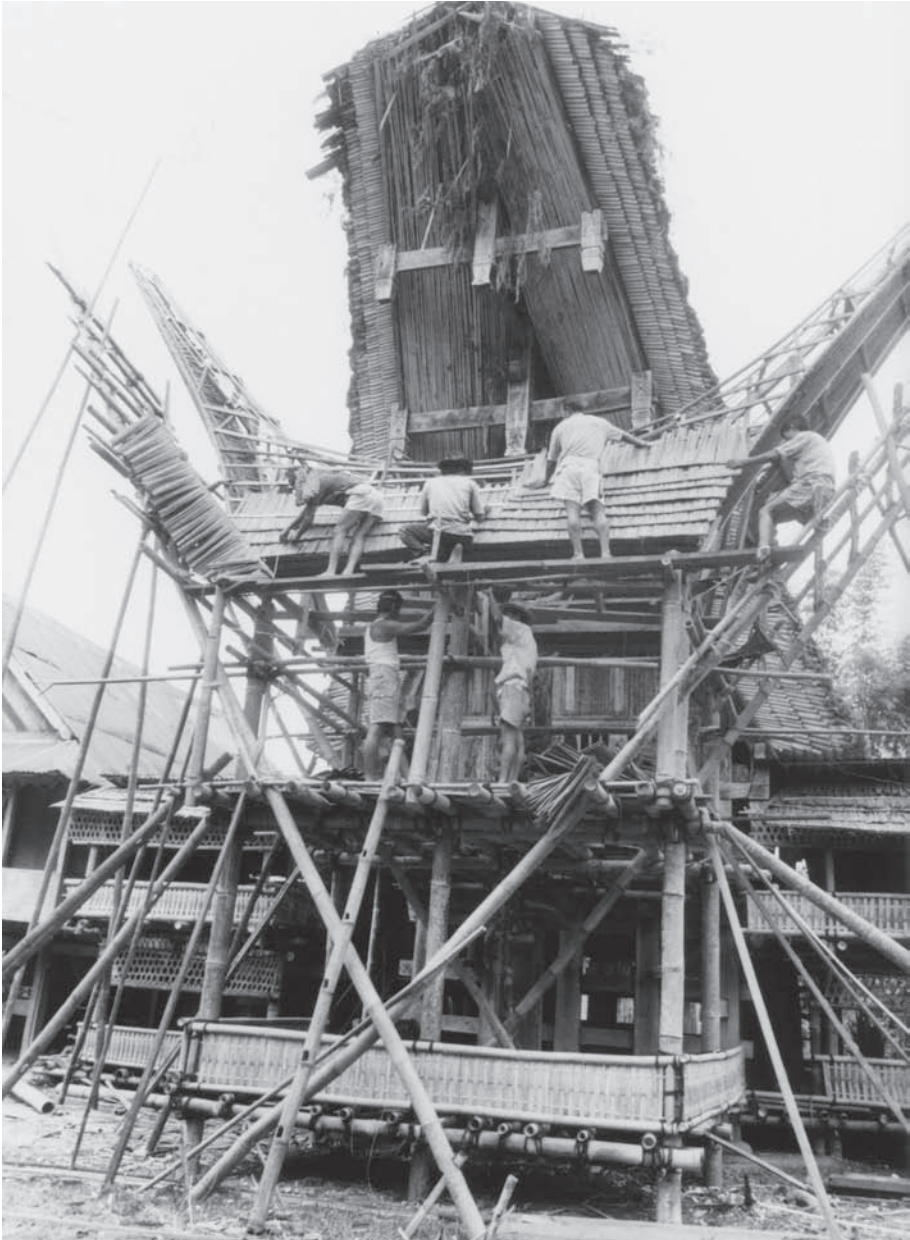
At any funeral, the group of close relatives who sacrifice buffaloes are called the *to ma'rara* ('those related by blood'). Each of them will take respon-

sibility for a certain number of groups of guests, composed principally of their affinal relatives. No invitations are sent out, but they know more or less whom to expect, and plan accordingly, organizing the building of *lattang* or temporary bamboo shelters to house their guests overnight. In this they have the help of their fellow-villagers, the *pa'tondokan*. They must ensure that their guests, when they come, are greeted with coffee, cigarettes and betel nut, and that they receive their due shares of meat and are well fed. Provision of cigarettes, coffee, cakes and rice for the guests is a relatively recent innovation, which has added significantly to funeral costs.<sup>16</sup> The widow or widower has rather little to do with all these arrangements. A surviving spouse is expected to sacrifice only a pig, not a buffalo; her, or his, relatives would attend the funeral as guests, not as hosts – which is to say in their role as affines, not consanguineal kin. Neither does any land derived from the deceased's side of the family pass to the widowed spouse in inheritance, unless she, or he, is looking after it on behalf of their children.

In the western regions a rule is strictly observed that Rites of the West must begin in the late afternoon, when the sun is moving toward the west. At the entrance to the funeral ground, a table is set up where slaughter taxes are collected by local officials. Each *rombongan* or group of guests arriving will pause at the table to announce what they are bringing, and to whom among the hosts it is to be presented. Eventually, the hosts end up with long lists of all the pigs, buffaloes and other gifts brought by the different guests, which will help them to keep track of their obligations later. (In earlier, less literate times, the information would have been held in memory.) After paying their taxes, the group will proceed into the *rante*, circling it so that all present may admire their numbers, their smart appearance (the women dressed in their finest dark sarongs and blouses, and wearing the huge Toraja sunhats of finely-woven bamboo), and the desirability and size of their buffaloes or pigs. As well as these, they may bring with them other gifts, such as jars or bamboo tubes of palm wine, or a group of uniformed *ma'badong* dancers to sing chants for the deceased.<sup>17</sup> These things, too, may be noted as debts to be repaid at some future date. They will then be greeted in a central reception shelter, to be served coffee, cakes, betel, and cigarettes, before retiring to a place prepared for them by their hosts, somewhere in the ring of bamboo guest structures that surrounds the *rante*. Of the pigs they bring, half of each animal will be given back to them, to provide their dinner later in the

<sup>16</sup> Marthen Luther Rammang of Kurra recalled that in the past, far from being served rice, guests used to bring their own 'mourning' foods of maize and cassava, and they served the hosts rather than the reverse (interview, April 1983).

<sup>17</sup> Malimbong people are well known for their skill at performing *ma'badong*, and nowadays sometimes form teams for hire to funerals in other areas, for which they will be well remunerated, sometimes even with a live buffalo as payment.



Villagers work together to construct a temporary bamboo tower (*lakkean*) in preparation for a funeral ceremony. The tower, erected in front of the deceased's *tongkonan*, will hold the corpse during the final stage of the rite. On either side, two-storey guest accommodation has been erected in between the houses, Buntu Lala, Sa'dan, 1996.





A party of guests arrives at a funeral in Tikala, 1983. The women are wearing finely woven bamboo hats called *sarong*. Some of the buffaloes have already been slaughtered, their meat awaiting distribution to the guests.

evening. They also bring rice with them, enough for their own needs, though their host will probably make sure that they also receive some from him. The rice is not regarded as a debt. The host may ask some of the guests if they would mind him saving up their pigs for use in the long sequence of offerings making up the 'joints' of the *aluk*, which will continue for days even after the burial has taken place. In this case, he will have to make sure that they are provided with meat to eat.

When the guests are assembled, the buffaloes will be made to fight against each other (*dipasilaga*) before being slaughtered. They will lock horns briefly, before one of them runs away, to the excited whoops and calls of the onlookers, who themselves will sometimes be forced to flee out of the way. This, as well as being originally intended as entertainment for the *bombo* of the deceased, provides a further competitive means of assessing the buffaloes' qualities, beyond their physical appearance. The women of the hosts' village will be kept busy organizing the continuous preparation of kettles of coffee for the teams serving new arrivals, and the cooking and distribution of rice. The men of a guest group may see to the slaughtering of their pig, though



At funerals and other ritual occasions, men take charge of the division and cooking of meat, Sa'tandung, Menduruk, 2004

its division is usually carried out by a member of the host's family or village. The men take charge of all the cooking of the meat that is to be eaten immediately. This ritual cooking by men, outdoors, which largely involves packing the meat into bamboo tubes which are roasted over an open fire, symbolically contrasts with the daily domestic cooking which is done indoors by women, and usually involves boiling. The men will also organize an auction of meat (*lelang*), in which portions will be sold to the highest bidder, with the proceeds going to the local church or village development fund. This is an innovation which, started in Dutch times, has become a regular feature. In effect, although intended as a modernising move, it has become still another means by which those of sufficient wealth may convert money into status and public acclaim by bidding high. As night falls, groups join hands to perform the circle dance and chant called *ma'badong*. While their elders were thus preoccupied, it was traditional for young people to take the opportunity to meet prospective sweethearts from other villages, or slip away into the bamboo groves for surreptitious rendezvous, celebrating life in the midst of death. The festivities will continue all night, breaking up the quietude and monotony of the normal daily round of village life. The morning after the celebrations, one final buffalo is killed and the body is taken to the family tomb which will be its





Women at the same funeral take charge of cooking the large quantities of rice necessary to feed the guests, Sa'tandung, Menduruk, 2004

final resting place. After this the guests rapidly disperse, though in a funeral performed according to the *Aluk To Dolo*, there remain a number of further ritual steps to be performed in the days to come by the family's close kin and neighbours, before the mortuary process is finally complete.

Most often, groups attending funerals are led by a man, but if an appropriate man is not available, a woman may do so. The fact that it is the men who tend to be named publicly as the leaders of the groups, and who in general assume a higher profile on these occasions, does not mean that their wives may not have contributed to the purchase of buffaloes or pigs – indeed, pigs represent the invested labour of the women who have raised and tended them. Women may also receive gifts of pigs and buffaloes in their roles as hosts. Thus, if a woman, as a child of the deceased, is acting as host, her husband's kin will come and present her with a pig; if her husband is the one bereaved, her kin will come and give him a pig. But whether it is the husband or the wife to whom a gift is directed, repaying the debt becomes a burden they will shoulder together. For as we have seen, both partners to a marriage are enjoined to pay equal attention to ritual obligations toward their own and their in-laws' families. Unfairly to favour one side of the family is called *barira sangpiak* ('[to build] a fence on one side [of the house only]'). It is even said

to be *mabusung* (liable to cause supernatural retribution) to do so; or, as Pak Tandıruru of Alang-Alang put it, in a more Christianized idiom, 'God will repay' anyone who acts in this way.

The guests themselves may be divided into two groups: the *pa'rapuan* (members of the deceased person's *rapu* or bilateral kinship grouping), and the *rampean*, or affines. The *pa'rapuan* comprise cousins or their descendants, perhaps as far removed as fifth or sixth cousins, who will each be accompanied to the funeral by their own group of relatives and villagers. Their gifts are called *petuaran*, a 'pouring out' of their feelings for the dead person, as one of their own kin. Rather than being presented to a named individual among the hosts, the pigs they bring are given as a gesture to the family as a whole. They are not considered crudely as debts, though in the long term, repayment is expected. Gifts presented by affines, on the other hand, are called *pamulle* (from *bulle*, 'to carry'). They are presented to specific individuals who, in accepting them, become obliged to repay the debt at some future funeral. The tax lists note in each case whether the animals are presented as *petuaran* or *pamulle*. The debts incurred between affines are not seen as a continuous chain, but as a sequence of pairs, repeated over time. When one pig has been received, another of approximately equal size must be given in return. If a person were to return a smaller pig, the recipient could refuse it, or else might agree to accept it only as the first half of a new pair, leaving the original debt still to be repaid. This pair of actions, creating and cancelling a debt, is referred to as *metua'* (again, 'to pour out') and *mangiu'* (a word with no literal meaning, but which is used to refer to various types of sacrifice intended to pay off debts in both Rambu Tuka' and Rambu Solo' ceremonies). Affines are always invited to attend feasts, but particularly funerals; in fact, these are the main occasions at which these relationships are given public expression. At these times their presence is felt as a moral obligation, whereas at house ceremonies they do not present pigs and their attendance is not compulsory. In an important sense, funeral attendance with its accompanying prestations is constitutive of these relations, since to refuse to take part in them, or to decline a gift, will be liable to cause a complete rupture. Affinal relationships are likely to be most competitive where spouses come from different areas and are unrelated to each other; in such cases, there is more pressure felt to outdo each other by giving bigger and better pigs or buffaloes.<sup>18</sup> To give a recent example, in a funeral held at Ge'tengan (Ma'kale) in 2002, plans were made for the sacrifice of 26 spotted buffaloes, supposedly the highest number ever recorded (although in the end, only 18 were slaughtered). The deceased

<sup>18</sup> Nooy-Palm (1979:28) similarly noted an element of competitive 'potlatch' in affinal prestations, not only at funerals, but even, less typically, at a *merok* feast (a Rite of the East) which she attended in the Sesean area in 1972.

on this occasion was a woman who had married a man from the northerly district of Sesean, who wished by this means to honour her, but doubtless at the same time was galvanising his relatives in order to enhance the prestige of his family in the eyes of their in-laws, who belonged to the old aristocracy of Ge'tengan. But where affines are already related (which, given the frequency of marriages to 'distant' cousins, is very commonly the case), there is less felt need to compete with each other.

It is important to note here that affinal relationships within the Toraja kinship system are not especially long-lasting, because the birth of children who will trace their descent equally from both mother's and father's kin means that within a generation, they will be converted to a relationship of consanguinity. The children will trace ties of 'blood and bone' (*rara buku*) to the houses of both their mother and their father, and will have rights of inheritance from both sides. The puzzle over at what point exactly affinal relations may be regarded as having evolved into consanguineal ones was finally explained to me in terms of ceremonial debts. At a minimum, one must incur and pay off a single debt pair before the next prestation can be converted from *pamulle* to *petuaran*. Years may pass before a debt is repaid, so that this process not infrequently may take more than a single generation. Since debts not settled in one's own lifetime are inherited by one's children, by the time they manage to pay off a long-standing debt, it is already time for the relationship to be re-evaluated.

The question of why Toraja should remain so attached to their ceremonial economy, even as it undergoes continuous and burdensome inflation, is one that requires multiple answers. My own view is that its vigour is due to the fact that it is deeply embedded in social life in so many different ways. First of these is its role in the expression of kin relationships, which accounts for the moral and emotional force that makes funeral attendance an inescapable social necessity. The chain of paired credits and debts thus engendered between affines, and constantly renewed, creates a public bond between them and forces everyone, in their role as debtors, to strive to meet their obligations. This means working hard to raise or purchase more livestock. Then there is the political contest involved in ritual display, by means of which men have traditionally built a reputation for themselves as being among those who are not afraid to 'sacrifice boldly' (*barani mantunu*). The public division of meat is likewise part of the means by which political and rank relations are constantly tested and reaffirmed. It is a characteristic feature of potlatch and other ceremonial economies that prestige atrophies if not continually upheld. Thus many descendants of high-ranking families feel reluctant to allow the dwindling of status that would inexorably follow upon any failure in their ritual obligations. And finally, there is today the heightened and self-conscious sense of ethnic identity, which also plays a part in the pride felt in the

maintenance of a unique and colourful tradition. Coville (1988:64) discusses this point in relation to *maro*, an important Rite of the East in the Sesean area, where she did her fieldwork in the early 1980s. As the Toraja world becomes increasingly disenchanting, many of the rituals once held to be vitally important to the maintenance of cosmological order and social wellbeing are transformed, she notes, into 'non-obligatory spectacles'. At the same time, there is a shift in meaning away from their former efficacy (the conviction that the ritual 'worked' in ensuring the deceased's passage to the afterlife, or the flow of fertility into the community and its farm land) toward a new concern with 'authenticity', their ability (even in their newly adapted and truncated forms) to function as dramatic emblems of 'Toraja' identity within the modern, multi-ethnic state, and even internationally, in the eyes of visiting tourists. Whatever the burdens felt in meeting ritual obligations, it is perhaps in the moment of performance that people may most vividly enjoy that sense of their own identity, as something to be held on to in the face of change. At a recent funeral in Uulusalu, I met a nobleman I had known for years, who was related by marriage to the deceased. As we were talking, he flung out his arm to indicate, in a sweeping gesture, the whole funeral ground with its towers for the corpse and the meat division, its standing stones to which huge buffaloes were tethered awaiting sacrifice, its flags and its guest houses, and its swarming crowds of guests. 'All this!' he declared with sudden intensity, 'We must never let it fade away.'

## CHAPTER XVIII

# Dynamics of the ceremonial economy

In this final chapter, I trace some of the changes that have transformed the Toraja economy over the course of the twentieth century. But, in spite of all the change, perhaps more of a puzzle is the striking continuities in ritual life. No visitor to Tana Toraja can fail to observe the impressive amount of energy and resources that are poured in to ceremonial exchange. Indeed, it is assumed if you are a foreigner that your main purpose in coming there is to witness a funeral ceremony, and suitable destinations will immediately be proposed to you. It seems that neither Christianization, with its attendant alterations of cosmology, nor the demands of educational expenses, nor monetary crisis have been enough to dampen Toraja commitment to the ceremonial economy. Is it possible to discern to what degree, as many people acknowledge to be the case, the system is undergoing inflation?<sup>1</sup>

Comparative ethnography reveals how far economic systems are culturally constituted, shaped by metaphors of human relations: relations with the cosmos, with animals, or with the land, relations between kin, between men and women, between the living and the ancestors, and so on. In this sense, far from being an isolable sphere, as neoclassical economic theory tells us, economies are embedded and implicated in every other sphere of social life. The economic models and metaphors of non-industrialised societies, Gudeman (1986:147) proposes, are as much integral to the constitution of the 'social self', as they are to the webs of exchanges between the self and others. I have talked to many people who, if asked what they see as the enduring elements of Toraja culture, will mention sacrifice at funerals as the quintessential social obligation. One might go so far as to say that the structure of the economy also involves a structuring of the emotions, which find their expression, and confirmation, in socially approved patterns of activity. Viewed in the light of the traditional cosmology, emotional energies were bound up in the efforts put into ritual in order to maintain relations with the deities and the

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Chris Gregory for his comments on an earlier draft of this chapter and his suggestions for tabulating exchange values in the Toraja economy (see Appendix E).

ancestors. The flow of accumulation and distribution of resources, of ritual prestation and counter-prestation, was not just a question of exchange taking place horizontally, between the living (reaffirming or pushing the boundaries of the status hierarchy in the process). It also bore the character of what Gregory (1980) has termed 'gifts to God(s)', an exchange with the unseen. As humans accumulated resources in order to stage celebrations, whether for ancestors or deities, they were at the same time living in 'expectation' (the recurrently expressed theme of the *ma'buu'*, and of house rituals, for instance) of the supernatural benefits, blessings, and prosperity which the successful performance of these rites would accomplish. Tato' Dena' cited the words of the ancestors, to the effect that buffalo sacrifice at funerals would bring blessing to the sacrificer:

<i>Sibu'tu kamarendengan</i>	It will bring us long life
<i>Sia kamassakkeran,</i>	Together with good health,
<i>Naden matua-tua induk</i>	And we'll live to be as old as the sugar palm
<i>Banu'-banu' karurungan.</i>	[Endure] like hardwoods and sugar palms. <sup>2</sup>

In considering these relations with the unseen, it is striking how frequently they are characterised as economic transactions. The ceremonial ground itself is symbolically likened, in ritual verse, to a marketplace crowded with people. The moment at which, in the climax of the funeral ceremony, the buffaloes are all tethered on the ceremonial ground prior to being made to fight each other, and then sacrificed, is sometimes called 'attending the buffalo market' (*ma'pasa' tedong*); people will then walk around and admire them all, appraising their qualities, just as they would in the marketplace. This is also referred to, significantly, as a contest between origin houses (*dipasiadu tongkonan*) – a phrase which reminds us that individual reputations built on the funeral ground also attach to their houses. Not only this, but all sorts of transactions with the deities are referred to in the idiom of purchase. Whatever humans desire from the deities must be paid for. Hence, before building a house on a new site, one must ask permission from the *ampu padang*, the spirit 'owner of the land', and this ritual is called 'buying the land' (*unnalli padang*). If a couple have been childless for many years, they may enlist the help of a *to minaa* to perform the ritual called 'buying a child' (*mangalli anak*), summoning the *deata* to receive offerings at a sacred spot, and requesting their blessing. In case of drought, one may climb the mountainsides to perform the ritual of 'buying rain' (*mangalli uran*). If people want to draw water from a new spring, they

<sup>2</sup> *Banu'-banu'* is a hardwood tree, and the trunk of the sugar palm is also very dense and hard; both provide timbers useful for house building.



must first perform the rite of 'buying the spring' (*unnalli kalimbuang*). Even the observation of mourning prohibitions (*marau*) is said to serve the purpose of 'buying health and good fortune' (*unnalli kamarendengan sia kamassakkeran*). Ancestors and deities are not expected to yield their blessings without an appropriate material exchange, and it is noteworthy that this is referred to as a payment, rather than by the terms used to talk about gifts or the ceremonial prestations between the living. The latter thus appear to stand apart within the transactional order, in their special role of expressing the binding (and essentially egalitarian) relations between affines. Still, it might be wrong to think that the imagery of 'buying' something refers to a commercial transaction as such, especially if we bear in mind the extremely limited use of money in the Toraja economy until very recent times. What characterises all these instances is that the payment is a form of respect, implying a hierarchical relationship; what is 'bought' in exchange is not necessarily an object, but rights of use (or, in the case of a child, not an actual child but the ability to conceive one). A parallel example among the living reinforces this interpretation. Commoners, who strictly speaking are entitled only to a one-night funeral, can buy the right to hold a three-night funeral by 'purchasing the drum' (*unnalli gandang*) and 'purchasing the bamboo' (*unnalli ao*'), with the presentation of one quarter buffalo for each item to the nobles of the community (or formerly, in the case of a slave, his master). This mark of respect to those of superior status entitles them to have the drum beaten and to build a meat distribution platform (*bala' kayan*), metaphorically referred to as 'bamboo'. The remaining half of the buffalo is eaten by the guests.

At another level, a kind of emotional exchange is involved: people say that they must find buffaloes for sacrifice because that is the proper way to demonstrate support for one's kin, or one's affines, in their grief. Buffalo sacrifices 'take the place of our pain/grief' (*sonda pa'di'ki*). People were shocked when I was obliged to admit that westerners did not kill buffaloes for a person who dies; did we, then, feel no grief, they inquired? Individuals are at the same time using the web of paired exchanges as a way to build up their own reputations as people who dare to 'sacrifice boldly' (*barani mantunu*). Rank, reputation and politics combine with kinship obligation, and the delayed reciprocity and indebtedness which it demands, to bind individuals into a social network that to a large degree defines the self. The system of ceremonial credit and debt is thus itself thoroughly embedded in a number of crucial dimensions of Toraja social life.

Emotional commitment also has to do with feelings of pride and family honour, which Toraja often express as *longko*'. *Longko*' is sometimes compared to the Bugis concept of *siri*', 'honour/shame', which in Chabot's (1996) depiction of village life in the region of Gowa (Makassar), focuses on sexual segregation and the need for a man to avenge insults to his honour, or that

of his female relatives, by stabbing. Millar's more recent ethnography (1989) proposes that a more pervasively relevant concept in the constantly evolving status hierarchy between individuals in Bugis society is that expressed in the Indonesian term, *harga diri* or 'self-worth'. The focus in this case is largely upon the individual, whereas when Toraja characterise their own distinctive *longko' Toraya*, they are all in agreement that it is essentially a family matter. Ambe' Kombong from Ullin put it this way:

AK: If it's just one person, what is there to be ashamed of? But if it is our relatives (*kasiuluran*) – supposing for example my relative (*siulu'*) is going to perform a ceremony, and I have no pig to bring, then I will feel shame. That is what creates *kalongkoran*. (RW: *But isn't it better just to go anyway, even without a pig, than to stay away?*) AK: Well, yes, it's better to go and just sit (*no'ko' bang*) than not to go at all.<sup>3</sup> (RW: *Supposing you married someone from another place, say Tondon, and then didn't have a pig?*)<sup>4</sup> AK: Oh, that would be worse. That would be even more deeply shaming (*la'bi mendalan malongkoran te'e*).

This response shows both the need to maintain one's reputation among one's kin, and the still sharper need to do so in front of affines, if they are unrelated and come from another place. I have been told many stories of the intensified competition this can produce. Another acquaintance stressed that *longko'* is a family concern, one that focuses most importantly on two things: the house, and treatment of the dead. Failure to rebuild or maintain the *tongkonan* is as much a source of shame as failing to repay a debt inherited from a grandparent. Above all, a person will take it very hard if his relatives criticise or reject him. Pride may also drive the aristocracy to keep up their ceremonial reputations, for it is a characteristic of this sort of economy that prestige will wither and be eclipsed if it is not continuously and actively upheld. Rich people, who have received and consumed many shares of meat, will feel ashamed if they fail to sacrifice a lot of pigs and buffaloes in return. In a more general way, people increasingly come to see the ceremonial system as an aspect of their distinctive and increasingly self-conscious identity as 'Toraja', within the multi-ethnic Indonesian state. It is said, in defence of continued funeral expenditure, 'Toraja honour cannot be done away with' (*tae' na bisa dipa'dei tu longko' Toraya*).

<sup>3</sup> 'Just sitting' is a common way of describing attendance at a funeral, without having any pig to bring. 'To clasp one's armpits' (*ma'koko kalepak*) (because one's hands are empty) is another way of expressing both the shame of not having a pig, and the more over-riding moral necessity to show social solidarity by being present.

<sup>4</sup> Tondon is an area known for the pride of its aristocracy, and the scale of its ceremonial expenditure.

*Economic domains and their intersections in the Sa'dan highlands*

In the broadest sense, the Toraja economy may be described as consisting of three interpenetrating domains. First, there is the domestic, subsistence economy, within which new households are constantly being formed, branching out from older houses, as couples set up new hearths and make a living from the land. The inalienable, non-commoditised character of the land, the bonds of kinship, and the potential immortality of the house over time, all underpin this potentially highly self-sufficient economy.<sup>5</sup> Still, it has for long also felt the influences of the market economy. Already in pre-colonial times, the trade links that brought valuable cloths and porcelain up into the highlands, the development in the later nineteenth century of the coffee trade, and the commoditization and export of humans as slaves, provide evidence of this. From Dutch times onward, throughout the twentieth century, the domestic economy has become more and more thoroughly linked into the wider, global commodity economy. Numerous factors are at work here: the inexorably increasing need for cash, the smallholder cultivation of cash crops alongside subsistence crops, the effects of education and the ever-increasing pressure of population on limited land, which draws young people out of the highlands to seek jobs elsewhere, and the development of tourism over the last three decades, have all played a part. In between these two spheres is embedded the ceremonial economy, drawing resources from both of them and defying all expectations of its demise.

Traditionally, the most important products of the domestic economy have been rice, pigs, and buffaloes. Thrift in the domestic economy enables surplus rice to be invested annually in chickens or piglets for rearing; larger pigs can be traded for small buffaloes; or the herding of a buffalo might be undertaken in exchange for eventual payment in the form of a calf. In this way the domestic household builds up and converts its surplus into forms that will help it to meet its ritual obligations. Sooner or later, livestock will be fed into the ceremonial economy, for, outside of the towns, animals still are hardly ever slaughtered except in a ritual context. Shares of meat then return to the domestic economy for consumption by the household.

The conjugal couple inherits land, as they also inherit unsettled debts from their parents. Family pride (*longko'*) encourages them to do their best to contribute to the maintenance of origin houses and to ceremonial gift-giving, at

<sup>5</sup> Gregory (1982:192), in his analysis of the perpetuation of gift exchange economies in Papua New Guinea, repeatedly makes the point that their endurance and 'efflorescence' rests upon the continued non-commoditization of land, which remains under clan control, preventing its takeover by the commodity sector of the economy. On the concept of inalienable property, and its far-reaching importance in Oceanic societies, see Weiner (1992).



House carvings depicting scenes of daily life and subsistence which underpin the ceremonial economy: a woman feeding a huge tusked boar (*bai tora*) of the sort much valued as a funeral sacrifice; feeding chickens; carrying home the harvested rice; a





piebald buffalo (*tedong bonga*), worth ten times an ordinary black buffalo for sacrificial purposes, with a fine spread of horns and auspicious markings including some that look like heirloom daggers. From an origin house at Pa'gasingan, Menduruk, 1999.

the same time as they attempt to make their own house a more solid structure over time. Fritz Basiang, recalling his childhood high on the slopes of Mount Ullin in the early decades of the twentieth century, described how as a small boy living with his grandfather, he had been given a puppy to tend. When the dog was grown up, he traded it to a man from Mamasa, receiving a small pig in exchange. He tended the pig until it was large enough to trade for a buffalo calf. He was in effect learning how to be an actor in the Toraja economy, as all the while, his grandfather kept a watchful eye on his progress. The extent to which the ceremonial economy has the power to siphon off domestic surplus was once brought home to me in a conversation with my friend Indo' Rembon, who lives in Talion. She once confessed to me with some exasperation that, in a lifetime of effort put into pig-rearing, she had never once been able to sell a single pig for cash, to pay for her children's education or other family needs; every time she had one big enough to sell, it would be needed to repay some ceremonial debt or other. At that time, she even said to me that, if she knew she were dying, she would prefer to go down to Makassar to stay with her daughter, because if she died away from home, her children would not be shamed into having an expensive funeral and possibly having to pawn the family rice fields to pay for it.<sup>6</sup> It is easy to see, then, how tightly the domestic and ceremonial economies are interlocked.

Even as late as the 1970s, the household economy of most villagers was largely self-sufficient, and only a limited range of goods (oil, salt, soap, kerosene, cigarettes, packets of instant noodles, biscuits, or monosodium glutamate) was available for purchase at tiny wayside stores. The weekly markets offered a wider range of goods, including kitchen ware, metal tools, clothing, sarongs, hats and sandals. Buttang villagers were usually short of cash for needed items, as well as to pay for school uniforms, school fees, taxes, bus fares and so on. Their main way of raising money was to sell surplus rice or coffee beans, or fish from ricefield ponds, or to bake cakes or collect *tuak* (palm wine) which could be sold on market days. All the same, some men seemed able to produce surprisingly large sums of money at the occasional illegal cockfight, held in inaccessible places in the hills. Cloves, although a valuable cash crop, were not so widely cultivated in Malimbong as in some other areas. By the 1990s, however, some noticeable changes had taken place in the village economy, which is not as self-sufficient as it looks. In fact land, rice, pigs and buffaloes are all in short supply in Tana Toraja. If standards of living have improved, this is due in large part to an increasing interconnec-

<sup>6</sup> Fifteen years later, she had changed her mind; she had stayed for some time with her youngest, married daughter, a school teacher, in Makassar, but found the heat didn't agree with her. Food lost its savour, she maintained: in the highlands, the cooler atmosphere improved one's appetite, and everything seemed tastier. She had given up the thought of moving to the city.



tion with the commodity economy. One source of new wealth from outside is remittances from migrant relatives working elsewhere. Population in the highlands has always been high relative to the rest of South Sulawesi, and as it grows it has brought increasing pressure to bear on land. A friend who has often taken tourists around commented how frequently outsiders remark on the beauty of the Toraja landscape and declare, 'It's a paradise!' But he replies, 'It's only a paradise to the eyes; otherwise, why would so many people leave?' In the 1970s, many young men went to Palu in Central Sulawesi, to work for logging companies; these days, a more popular destination is Kalimantan. Another development has been the growing importance of cocoa and, increasingly, vanilla, as new cash crops. Like other Indonesian farmers, Toraja had initially gained some benefit from the monetary crisis when, following Suharto's fall in 1998, his son Tommy's monopoly on chocolate prices had been lifted. This sent prices soaring from Rp. 2,400/kilo to Rp. 15-20,000/kilo, though by 1999 they had levelled off again at Rp. 5,000/kilo, and in 2004 had dropped back to under Rp. 4,000. Vanilla is difficult to grow – the flowers must be fertilized by hand during the night – but prices have risen sharply over the last few years. By 2004 it was fetching a price of Rp. 200-300,000/kilo in its fresh state, double the price of five years before; dried pods had been selling for as much as Rp. 1 million/kilo. Toraja is not self-sufficient in rice – its own production would only be sufficient to last the population for four or five months of the year – so substantial imports from the lowlands make up the difference. When I lived in Buttang during the 1970s, most villagers had insufficient land to keep them in rice for a year, and made up the shortfall by eating large amounts of cassava. But now, cassava has almost dropped out of the diet, as chocolate and vanilla profits have enabled people to buy imported rice instead.

Even coffee has been keeping up with the times. The best coffee in Toraja is grown on the slopes of Sesean, which offers favourably high altitudes exceeding 1000 metres above sea level. Here for many years a Japanese company, Toroako, enjoyed a virtual monopoly on contracts with smallholders. But Toroako now finds itself facing stiff competition from local buyers, sent up from Makassar by free-lance European and American coffee-buying businesses in order to buy direct from the farmers, offering slightly better prices. A similar company has been formed locally by Pak Ulia's eldest daughter and her husband, who market high-quality Toraja Arabica beans as a 'boutique' speciality to companies like Starbucks and Specialty Coffees of America. They travel regularly to Brazil and Johannesburg to study cultivation methods there, though they still maintain that Toraja coffee is second to none in quality. Thus the history of the coffee trade from the Toraja highlands has entered a new chapter, though growers here are not much more likely than any others in the world to share much of the profit from soaring global consumption.

Another noticeable change in the domestic economy is the value of work. It has become more difficult for the aristocracy to command the labour of others, and as the economy has become more monetized, cooperative work groups formed by village neighbours have ceased to be popular. There were no more *saroan* groups being formed by village men in Buttang by the 1990s, though women still sometimes worked garden land in groups. Mostly nowadays people prefer to work for themselves, and day wages have risen in line with inflation. By 2004, a day's wage was Rp. 15-20,000, together with food and cigarettes. In the past, agricultural labour was customarily paid in kind at harvest time. Bigalke (1981:394-5) notes that the first signs of a breakdown in this system appeared in the early 1950s, when left-wing organizations, mostly in the regions around the towns, pressed for wage labour as an alternative to the payments in kind which until then had served to bind clients to their aristocratic patrons. But payment in kind was still widespread throughout Tana Toraja at the end of the 1970s, and if cash was paid, the amount was equivalent to the market value of the rice. A day's ploughing was traditionally valued at ten bunches (*kutu'*) of rice, payment being deferred until harvest time.<sup>7</sup> This would yield about 2 litres of rice, barely enough to feed a family for a day. In 1978, the cash wage was Rp. 260, the market price of 2 litres of rice. Women who worked at planting and harvesting received one bunch (*kutu'*) of rice in every ten that they cut, and could also earn about ten bunches a day. Balusu (to the northeast of Rantepao) and Malimbong were the two areas where payment in kind continued to endure the longest, but by the 1980s it was already losing popularity, and labour shortages in some areas had forced up the value of a day's work. When staying in Talion in 1983 a young man there complained to me that he was sick of ploughing for a fee of rice, considering it far too much work for insufficient return. He had been to Palopo in search of paid work instead, and found a job on an agricultural development project. By that time, the daily wage if paid in cash was Rp. 1,250, enough to buy 5 litres of rice in the market, so the old forms of payment were falling behind in value, though they might still obtain among close relatives. Indo' Rembon, for instance, had a large number of brothers and sisters living close by, and she still called on members of their families, as well as a few unrelated neighbours, to help plough her fields. Her husband was often absent, since he had a job as a long-distance lorry-driver. She explained that although the old rate of payment in kind was worth less than cash payment, being close family they would still accept it: "They help me out, because they know I haven't got the cash." Nowadays cash has become the norm, and there is sufficient

<sup>7</sup> A *kutu' pare* is a small sheaf of rice, big enough for the stalks to fill a ring made by the harvester's thumb and index finger; the equivalent Indonesian expression is *ikat padi*).



A boy leads a prized black buffalo to graze in the early morning at Pokko', Malimbong, 1979. Herding used to be the job of children, but now that they are all in school, fewer households are keeping buffaloes today. To keep up with ceremonial demand, many must be imported from other parts of Indonesia.

shortage of willing labour for workers to be able to demand much better rates for jobs like harvesting. Sharecroppers, too, can now negotiate a much larger share of the crop for themselves. In 1978 the rate in Malimbong had risen to  $1/2$ , from the previous  $1/3$ ,  $3/8$  or even as little as  $1/4$  in the more distant past. But by the early 1980s around Rantepao the sharecropper could demand  $2/3$  of the crop. That change took a little longer to spread to Malimbong. It has become harder, too, for nobles to compel village support when they are making up an entourage to accompany them to funerals; members of a *rombongan* nowadays expect to be paid a wage in exchange for their time.

Another change in the subsistence economy is the decline of buffalo herding. These days in Malimbong, one sees fewer and fewer buffaloes; one of the reasons for this is that people find it troublesome to look after them. In the past, it was the job of children of both sexes, but especially boys, to tend the buffaloes. They would take them out onto the hillsides all day to graze them. The life of a herd boy was a phase of childhood which Hollan and Wellenkamp's informants looked back on nostalgically as a bittersweet time of hardship (often being hungry and out in all weathers, having to cope with fractious buffaloes and prevent them from getting into other people's

rice fields and gardens), but also of great personal freedom (Hollan and Wellenkamp 1996:50-6). Fritz Basiang recalled how he would call and whoop to other boys so that they could gather to herd their animals together and keep each other company, how they would sometimes help themselves to small amounts of maize from people's gardens (a legitimate practice), or bake buffalo milk for themselves inside a pumpkin coated with clay (Waterson 2007). In Buttang in the 1970s, buffaloes were an impressive, snorting presence within the village when brought in and tethered near the houses, and we occasionally would have cooked buffalo milk to put on our rice at breakfast. But now, children are in school all day and are not available for such labours; moreover, land use has intensified to the point where there is not enough grazing left for them. So buffalo-herding has virtually stopped being part of the household economy.

*Shifting measures of value: buffaloes and money*

In the commodity economy, money is the medium of exchange. But in the indigenous economy of the Toraja highlands, the buffalo was the essential reference point and standard of value. In the Toraja cosmology, older people explained, buffaloes, rice and humans stood in a special, triangular relationship to each other. If the emphasis in Rites of the East was upon rice, the highlight of Rites of the West was buffalo sacrifice. Both were essential to the completion of the ritual cycle. Buffaloes could be valued in rice, and the exchange of one for the other was highly ritualised. Within the local system, the tracing of equivalences is complicated by the fact that in the past, relatively few transactions had the character of a sale. Land, for instance, although valued in terms of buffalo, was an inalienable form of property that was almost never sold. Over the course of the twentieth century, the local economy, with its all-important ceremonial dimensions, has been thrown more and more into contact with a global, monetary economy, causing dramatic shifts in the relationship between these two measures of value, buffaloes and money. At the same time, more and more of life's daily economic transactions have assumed a commercial character. What has happened as these competing standards of value have been drawn into contact with each other?

Buffaloes are seldom used for ploughing in Tana Toraja. In many places the land is too steep, and the rice terraces too narrow, for anything but hand ploughing with an iron-bladed hoe; and in the past few years, the hire of small paddy-field tractors has become common. Instead of being made to work, buffaloes are cosseted and carefully tended until the day of their eventual sacrifice. The display of buffaloes at mortuary ceremonies fundamentally affects the way their value is calculated. Each animal chosen for a funeral is

still carefully assessed and appreciated in terms of individual features such as its colour and size, the length and shape of its horns, and the distribution of *palisu* (the whorls of hair such as humans have on the crown of the head) in favourable or unfavourable locations on its body.<sup>8</sup> Asymmetrical or downward-pointing horns diminish an animal's value. A complicated vocabulary exists for naming the different shapes and curves of the horns, and also their length. Measurements are based upon the human arm, starting with one joint of the finger progressing to the length from the fingertips to the centre of the palm, one palm's length and so on. A standard size by which the value of other buffaloes is measured is called *sangpala'* (literally, 'one palm'), meaning that the horns measure from the tip of one's fingers to a distance of one palm's breadth up the arm from the wrist. An animal of this size is usually about two years old. A length half way up the forearm is called *alla' tarin*, also often used as a standard. Black buffaloes are favoured, while grey or white ones have little value. According to myth, a white buffalo helped the wandering hero Laki Padada to ford a river, in return for a promise that his descendants would never eat the meat of white buffaloes, and the Toraja will not eat them to this day. 'Grey buffalo' (*tedong sambau'*) is a term sometimes used metaphorically to refer to a low-status person; at high-ranking funerals, the sacrifice of grey animals will be avoided. Buffaloes bred in the South Sulawesi lowlands have a pinkish colour; although plentiful there, they are never imported to Tana Toraja, where they are considered worthless as mortuary sacrifices. Most highly valued of all are piebald buffalo, the *tedong bonga*, a recessive variety found only in Toraja, which sell for ten to twelve times the value of a black animal of the standard *sangpala'* size. The value of these is based on their rarity, for it is unpredictable whether any particular buffalo cow might give birth to one, and there is no other source of supply. Their value in relation to the black *sangpala'* has held constant over time, in spite of the rapidity of inflation. As for pigs, they are also evaluated in terms of their size, by means of a girth measurement taken with a bamboo string around the stomach. The very largest pigs are equivalent in value to smaller buffaloes. As in other ceremonial economies, then, valuables are ranked in relation to each other, in this case principally in terms of meaningful differences such as size, colour, and other desirable personal physical features.<sup>9</sup> The qualities that affect the ranking of things are essentially aesthetic qualities that appeal to the emotions. This ranking or exchange-order contrasts in a fundamental way with

<sup>8</sup> See also Nooy-Palm (1979:184-9) for details on the measurement and shapes of horns.

<sup>9</sup> On the ranking of valuables in some Melanesian societies, compare Baric (1964) on Rossell Island, Campbell (1983) on the shell armbands and necklaces used in the famous Kula exchange system of the Massim region of southeastern Papua New Guinea, and Gregory (1982:47) for a general discussion of principles.

the monetary value or exchange-ratio of things in a commodity economy, which creates equivalences between things without affecting the status of the transactors. For rank order is of a qualitative rather than quantitative nature, and it will exercise an effect upon the ranking of the transactors themselves (compare Gregory 1983:109; Campbell 1983:246). When one incurs a debt, there is an obligation to repay with an animal of at least equal size to the one that was given. If a smaller one is offered, the recipient may decline to accept it as repayment of the original gift, allowing it instead to become the opening gift of a new exchange-pair. The original debt then remains to be settled.<sup>10</sup>

Dutch missionaries criticised the funeral sacrifices as wasteful, comparing them to the competitive destruction of wealth of the potlatch ceremonies of the Pacific Northwest Coast. The actual destruction of wealth was a rare and mostly late feature of the potlatch, but as I have discussed elsewhere (Waterson 1993), there are some interesting parallels between these societies. They both have rank systems, determining social positions, names, titles, ownership of property or ceremonial paraphernalia; in both, the ceremonies held at death (or on other occasions) involve large-scale distributions by which claims to rank are upheld and validated, while in both, prestige atrophies if it is not continually upheld; thirdly, one always potlatches to affines, with whom relationships are both reciprocal and competitive.<sup>11</sup> On this point, however, the Toraja case represents an inversion of the potlatch pattern. At a potlatch, it is the hosts who give to their guests, thereby indebting them, whereas as we have seen, at a Toraja funeral it is the affines, arriving as guests, who place their hosts in debt by presenting them with buffaloes and pigs.

Land has always been valued in buffaloes, but as we saw in Chapter XIII, although there were ways in which it could change hands, sale of land was almost unheard of. Traditionally the main way in which land has changed hands has been through pledging or pawning, in exchange for loans of buffalo. But in the past two decades, two new and partly connected factors have been significantly altering the value of land. These are the development of tourism, and the closeness of a plot to a main road. During this time many new buildings, including hotels, guest houses and restaurants, have appeared along the main road between Ma'kale and Rantepao. Land along this belt, as well as in and around the two towns, has shot up in value. The development of a commercial value for land and the increased possibilities for selling it

<sup>10</sup> This feature also bears comparison with Kula and other Melanesian gift exchange systems.

<sup>11</sup> Rubel and Rosman (1971) draw attention to these features in another Austronesian society, the Maori, which they suggest can be characterised as a 'potlatch society'; of particular interest to me is the fact that all three societies are also classic examples of 'house societies' in Lévi-Strauss's sense.



have begun to pull apart the age-old equivalences between land and buffaloes. Land that was pawned long ago for a certain number of buffaloes may now be worth many times more in cash. For this reason, the owner may be reluctant to allow redemption of the original debt. Some people say that for this reason, and because of the potential for disputes, people are now more reluctant to pledge land than formerly, if they can raise funds in other ways. Conversely, others point out that there is still considerable advantage to be had from making loans of buffalo in exchange for land in pawn. As the cash value of buffaloes continues to inflate, one stands to gain very high interest on a loan, or else the original owner may find it difficult to redeem at all. If land has been repeatedly pawned, then its value in buffaloes may also have risen. A schoolteacher's wife in Ma'kale described to me how she had recently sought to redeem a family rice field which had been pawned in exchange for two buffaloes in 1978. It had been pledged to a distant cousin, the wife of the Puang of Sangalla', but her children had subsequently pawned it again to a third party as security for the loan of a spotted buffalo, worth 14 ordinary beasts, which they wanted to sacrifice at her funeral. The current holder therefore refused to accept the offer of redemption at the original value of two buffaloes, and she had had to pay 14 buffaloes to get it back. But, as she explained, that rice field bore the name of a family ancestor, and the family would have felt ashamed not to redeem it. Such examples indicate that, even though the value of land may be changing in some respects, older attachments do not necessarily die away. The land itself retains its personal name and the qualitative value of its historical link to an ancestor.

Carpenters and stonemasons have traditionally been paid in buffaloes, and so the costs of building houses and barns, or hollowing out a stone tomb (*liang*), are customarily calculated in buffaloes. The carpenters' fees for construction of a house are typically 8 buffaloes or more, though within the past ten years it has become more common for them to take payment in cash. They prefer to be paid in buffaloes 'for fear of losing out', since the value of buffaloes has continued to rise so rapidly. If paid in cash, the money still stands for a fixed number of buffaloes, the amount being calculated at the going market rate, so payment has not departed from the buffalo standard. Currently, for construction of a traditional *tongkonan*, complete with carving, carpenters may charge Rp. 90-120 million, or up to 20 buffaloes of the *alla' tarin* size, worth Rp. 6 million each. In 2000, the cost of a *liang* was around 6 or 7 large buffaloes with horns as long as the distance from the tip of one's fingers to the elbow (*sangsiku*), each of which was then worth around Rp. 7 million. In a divorce, if a couple have built a house on new land and are to divide it between them, the one remaining in the house must pay to the spouse who leaves half of its value in buffaloes. In the past, various other luxury items, the privilege of the aristocracy, were always paid for in this way – gold necklaces (*rara'*), and

the long-stemmed wooden bowls (*dulang*) from which only the nobility used to eat, before the advent of cheap enamelware and china. Working through court records in Ma'kale, I even came across a case dated 1965, but referring back to a transaction made in 1947, which concerned a dispute over a sewing machine valued at four buffaloes. As a reflection of the sewing machine's monetary value, we may take this as an indication of the high value of Dutch currency against buffaloes, even at the close of the colonial era.

The penetration of money into the Toraja economy has been a very slow and long-drawn-out process which has continued throughout the twentieth century, with some signs of an acceleration just within the last few years. People who were very old in the 1970s could remember earlier times when little coinage circulated in the highlands, and its uses were restricted and partly ornamental. In pre-Dutch times, limited use had been made of Portuguese coins, which were called *oang* by the Toraja (cognate with I.: *uang*, 'money'). One dozen of these was called *sareala'*; two dozen (*duandiala'*) was equivalent in value to 1/8 buffalo, so that 192 *oang* equalled one buffalo. There were also copper coins bearing the image of a cock, called *doi' manuk*, a currency minted by the English for use in the Straits Settlements, and Dutch coins of the VOC period. Bigalke (1981:38) notes that, according to the account of Van Rijn (1902), just before the Dutch takeover of the highlands, trade in local markets was largely by barter, complemented by some use of Dutch coinage. Money, as a strange and scarce good, was as likely to be used for decorative purposes, or placed in a bowl of water to be drunk by a sick person, as it was to be used in commercial transactions (Volkman 1985:32). According to Pak Kila', Chinese, Portuguese or Dutch coins were 'all the same' to Toraja of the precolonial era, 'because they were not literate and couldn't tell the difference, and because they had no laws or government to organize such things'. His comment draws attention to the historical function of currencies as instruments of statehood, which as we have seen, was not a feature of Toraja politics in pre-Dutch times. Still, like other devices of the lowland states, this one too produced an echo in the highlands; according to Tato' Dena', wealthier members of the Toraja aristocracy sometimes produced their own imitations for trading purposes by pressing gold or silver into circular moulds to make coin-like shapes called *raga-raga*, which however lacked any distinguishing motifs. For about ten years after the arrival of the Dutch, people continued to use *oang*, as they were only gradually replaced by the Dutch coins known as *gulden* (later Rupiah) and *ringgit* (100 *sen* (cents) = 2 ½ *gulden* = 1 *ringgit*). Tato' Dena' recalled that the Portuguese *oang* was valued at 1 *oang* to 1 *dokko'* (a coin worth 2 ½ Dutch cents). Eventually, as more Dutch currency came into circulation, *oang* were then used to make necklaces, bracelets, anklets and to decorate the hems of special sarongs worn by noble ladies at certain ceremonies. *Ringgit* have also been used in this way since Independence in 1949 and the introduction of the Rupiah.

When they first came into circulation, 4 *ringgit* were worth one buffalo in Malimbong, though people in Rantepao and other areas recalled that a buffalo could be bought for 2 *ringgit*. Why the Dutch currency should have had such a higher value than the Portuguese, I was not able to discover; the Dutch coins were reportedly of heavier silver, but probably one must also look for an explanation in terms of the wider economic transformations triggered by Dutch takeover. The rates they set, however, remained stable until World War II. At first, older acquaintances recall, *ringgit* were in very short supply. The introduction of a head tax compelled a need for cash that had never existed before, but the only people who had ready access to it were the handful of clerks and teachers who worked for the Dutch and received wages, or the village chiefs who were put in charge of tax collection, and were thus able to siphon off a share of their takings for personal use. Other than these few, only those with large enough surpluses of rice to sell found it easy to obtain cash. Besides the *gulden* and *ringgit*, Dutch coinage also included coins worth 50 cents (*suku*), 25 cents (*setali*), and 10 cents (*ketip*), all of silver, a 5 cent nickel coin with a hole in the middle, which the Toraja called *to'tok tanga*, and copper coins worth 2 ½ cents (*dokko'*), 4 cents (*benggol*), 1 cent (*sen*), and ½ cent (*remis*). Church Minister Herman Rapa' of Pangala', whom I interviewed in 1999, recalled that in Dutch times, rice was still often used as a measure of value, with 10 *kutu'* being equal to 10 cents, or one *ketip*. He was one of the few Toraja to be admitted to higher education during the colonial period (he had attended the Dutch-language secondary school or MULO in Makassar in 1942) which enabled him to qualify as a school teacher. He recalled that his starting salary in 1947 was 85 *gulden* per month, a sum which the Dutch no doubt considered modest, but which in terms of local values had seemed to him a small fortune. Since at that time, the price of 1 *sangpala'* buffalo was 5 *gulden*, this was the equivalent of 17 buffaloes per month! This example provides a vivid indication of the peculiar relationship between local and 'global' values in the Toraja economy, at the very tail end of the colonial era. The purchasing power of money was disproportionately high in terms of a scheme of local values within which the buffalo still held pride of place. Or to put it another way, evidently the Dutch judged the value of buffaloes very differently from the Toraja. By way of comparison, a teacher's salary in the year 2000 was Rp. 1.2 million, while the price of a *sangpala'* buffalo was Rp. 3.5-4 million. The teacher's salary now has less than 2% of the buffalo-purchasing power that it did in 1947, or to put it another way, since that time the monetary value of buffaloes has risen by over 5000%!

Today, the buffalo's place in the local economy remains uniquely important. But it has become much easier to think of buffaloes in terms of their equivalent in money. Events in Indonesia have caused repeated drastic devaluations of the Rupiah, culminating most recently and dramatically in its collapse against

the dollar with the Asian monetary crisis of 1997. This is one reason why the money value of buffaloes has skyrocketed; but it is also a result of the continuing demand for animals within the ceremonial economy. Older people's recollections indicate that at one time, buffaloes as a measure of value were even more singularised than they are now. In the past, a certain equivalence was fixed between rice and buffaloes. The various restrictions surrounding the exchange of these two all-important items suggest that symbolic and ceremonial concerns dominated over instrumentalist ones in the economy. Buffaloes also had their equivalences in pigs. According to S.T. Mangesa' (Ambe' Pakiding), until around 1930, it was prohibited (*pemali*) to sell a buffalo for less than four pigs (or three pigs, for a very small one). In Rantepao and other areas, people recalled that a rate of 1,500 *kutu'* of rice to one buffalo was common, but in Malimbong it was over 4,000. If exchanging a buffalo for rice, one could not give a round sum, but had to add 100 to 200 extra *kutu'* as well, to be the buffalo's 'tail' (*ikko'na*). So not only was a very high value maintained for buffaloes relative to rice, but also the exchange required a sort of personification of the equivalent quantity of rice, animated by the addition of a 'tail'. Furthermore, exchanges had a peculiar, ritualised character, for on any occasion outside of a market place, when buffaloes were sold, or given over in payment of fines (for instance, as *kapa'* at a divorce), the recipient had to kill a pig and give four flat winnowing-trays full of cooked rice (*barang bo'bo'*) for each animal. If the beast was a good one, valued at, say, six ordinary buffaloes of the *sangpala'* size, then twenty-four trays of rice had to be presented. This mode of formalising the transaction was called *ma'tombang*. *Tombang* means 'a buffalo's wallowing-hole', to which the round winnowing-tray is compared; it is said that the buffalo is being *ditombang*, 'allowed to wallow'.

Pak Frans Dengen (Papa' Gory), a schoolteacher who lives in Ma'kale, recalled from his childhood days that large households, if short of rice for consumption, would sometimes use a buffalo to purchase rice from the grower in advance of harvest, while it was still in the field. Rice purchased in this way was termed *pare denne'* or *pare pa'tedongan*. During the 1940s and 1950s, this was done partly because transport was so difficult that it was hard to bring rice from areas outside of Toraja to meet a shortfall. Another common reason for such an exchange might be the need to have large quantities of rice to feed to guests at a funeral or other ceremony, or to feed carpenters building a house. Up till the 1950s, one buffalo was worth 1,500 *kutu'* of rice. According to Pak Banti (Papa' Mawiring), who comes from Sa'dan, the exchange of a buffalo for rice was not that common, and was more likely to be a form of loan. In the past, someone who found themselves short of rice might go to a wealthy landowner and ask to borrow rice to the value of 1,500 or 1,600 *kutu'*, with a promise to pay it back at the end of a year, and offering a buffalo as security. Another practice was to request a slightly smaller sum of 1,200 *kutu'*,

with a promise to repay by sacrificing one *sangpala'* buffalo at the funeral of a designated relative of the lender, say a parent. This was called *dipa'padio kale*, 'intended for the body'. Repayment might then be some years off, and if when the moment came, one could produce only a smaller beast, the lender would have little choice but to accept it anyway; moreover, more than half the meat of the sacrificed animal would be given back to its owner anyway. This sort of arrangement, while clearly from the lender's point of view a means to expand the size of funerals staged for one's parents, was rather advantageous to the borrower, and in Papa' Mawiring's view is an indication of the generosity of the wealthy in the past toward the poor. This he sees as having been characteristic of the northerly Sa'dan nobility, from which he himself derives, by contrast with the aristocracy of the south. In other areas, by contrast, I was told stories of aristocrats who in the old days found various means to commandeer the buffaloes of commoners, though such anecdotal evidence is very hard to assess. But it was certainly not impossible even for poor people to acquire buffaloes, since the payment for tending another person's buffalo cow was eventually to receive one of its calves.

In Malimbong, exchanges continued to be *ditombang* until around 1950, but the amount of rice required had declined. By 1978, at the time of my first stay in Tana Toraja, one *sangpala'* buffalo might fetch only 2,000 *kutu'* or a single very large pig, and Ambe' Pakiding told me he had once, when in urgent need of rice, even sold two buffaloes for as little as 3,500 *kutu'*. Sales by this date were no longer being *ditombang*, though once during my residence in Malimbong I did hear of this practice being carried out by a woman in Talion who was getting divorced. Her husband wished to remarry, and came to pay her the *kapa'* or divorce fine of a buffalo, and she killed a pig and prepared the trays of rice in exchange. Pak Pasang Kanan of Sangalla' commented that, up until the 1970s, rice was commonly sold in the market in its unthreshed state, as *kutu' pare*. Once rice mills became more common, it became more convenient to sell it as grain (*barra'*), off the stem, so the valuation of buffaloes in terms of *kutu'* has lost its relevance. By the 1990s, rice was almost invariably sold as grain, by the litre, so the equivalences between buffaloes and sheaves of rice have ceased to be relevant within the local system of values.

Inflation in the value of buffaloes has been remarkable. In 1978, at the time of my first fieldwork, a buffalo of *sangpala'* size was worth about Rp. 100,000 (then about £ 150 or US \$ 280), while a good spotted buffalo could fetch Rp. 500-600,000 (between £ 700-850, or US \$ 2800). Devaluation of the Rupiah in the latter half of 1978 brought its exchange value down to approximately Rp. 1,000/£ or Rp. 520/US \$. In May 1979, a record price of Rp. 1 million was paid for a spotted buffalo in the market at Rantepao. Three years later, in November 1982, an enormous funeral was held at Karassik, south of Rantepao, at which an equivalent of 789 *sangpala'* buffaloes was sacrificed (the actual total of beasts

would have been less, since this included all sorts of fine animals, including piebald ones, whose value was worth several *sangpala'* each). Exceptionally large pigs may be included in this calculation too, as being worth one buffalo each. The details were shared with me by Pak Ulia Salu Rapa' of Nanggala, who had paid the then highest price ever for a spotted buffalo, for presentation at this funeral – Rp. 3 million. His reputation for buffalo sacrifice was then unrivalled throughout Tana Toraja. At this time he explained to me that the cost of what he chose to describe as even modest funerals had risen to Rp. 50 million. He explained that, as a descendant of the ruling house of Nanggala, one of whose grandparents had had a funeral of 400 buffaloes, if he himself were to kill, say, only 10 for his mother, he would forfeit immediately all the accumulated status of the family and could expect public scorn. His mother, who had for years been regarded as the head of the family, did indeed receive large shares of meat at any ceremony she attended, but then, she herself and her ancestors had also sacrificed a lot. 'If I were to fail to hold a big funeral for her,' he told me, 'people would say to me: "All that meat your mother received has become your own flesh; why aren't you going to pay it back?"'. On the other hand, he explained, rich westerners or bureaucrats from Jakarta, who have often criticised the funeral sacrifices as wasteful, failed to take account of the socially redistributive dimension of the division of meat on these occasions. Such people, he commented, would be more likely to spend their money on a Mercedes, but they would never think of stopping to give the villagers a lift in it. Donzelli (2003:89) records a remarkably similar comment from one of her acquaintances, who expressed his moral obligation to repay the meat that his parents and he himself as a child had received, and which had become his own substance. This person went on to argue, in best anthropological style, that every culture has its own measures of value; Toraja are no more irrational in paying high prices for the buffaloes they deemed most beautiful, than westerners are in being willing to pay for diamonds, whose value is also in the eye of the beholder. One might go so far as to say that ritual here works to ensure the reproduction not only of a social system, but of persons themselves; a 'person of substance' (or more precisely, a family) is one who has eaten a lot of meat, and has thereby inherited the obligation to pay it back.

Later, in the 1990s, I visited Pak Ulia again, and found that he had become a born-again Christian, leaving Gereja Toraja to join a newer church, the Gereja Kasih Persaudaraan or 'Church of Brotherly Love', an offshoot of the USA's Church of Bethel, which now has the largest church building in Rantepao. Doubtless he has nothing more to prove in the mortuary arena; at any rate, he now talked less of the centrality of buffalo sacrifice in the Toraja way of life, stressing that the Christian faith requires humility. In any case, Pak Ulia's reputation as one who dares to 'sacrifice boldly' (*barani mantunu*) is already unassailable.



When I returned to Tana Toraja in 1994, after an absence of eleven years, I learned that a *sangpala'* buffalo was now worth Rp. 500,000 (around US \$ 230), and the top price for a spotted buffalo had risen to Rp. 10 million (then about US \$ 4,630). But acquaintances told me of a man in Ma'kale who had an animal for which he was asking Rp. 13 million; he had had an offer of Rp. 12 million but had turned it down, and it remained to be seen whether anyone was prepared to pay what he was asking. One might have expected that the financial crisis of 1997, which brought the Rupiah crashing to its lowest levels ever, might have put a check on Toraja enthusiasm for mortuary sacrifice, but the escalation of livestock values seems to have continued unabated. By 1999, the cost of even a *sangpala'* buffalo had soared to Rp. 3 million, and the best spotted beasts were fetching Rp. 40 million; in 2002, *sangpala'* buffaloes were worth Rp. 4 million, and prices for *tedong bonga* were reaching up to ten times that amount.<sup>12</sup>

People from Sa'dan like to claim that they are the ones who, in all of Toraja, are the most dedicated to buffalo sacrifice; that they will go to any trouble, not just to accumulate large numbers of animals, but a variety of beautiful, highest quality buffaloes with different kinds of desirable features. Returning to Rantepao from a visit to my Menduruk family in November 2002, I stopped by as I often did at the house of Papa' Mawiring. He was out, but Mama' Mawiring talked about the preparations being made for a large funeral at Sangkombong in Sa'dan, for Nene' Kala', a relative of his who had passed away the previous year. She lamented that I had not been with them a few days previously, when they had been to Sangkombong to inspect the buffaloes gathered there in readiness for the final mortuary ceremony. There were to be at least fifty buffaloes sacrificed at this ceremony, she told me, and it was a fine sight to see thirty of them already corralled in the house yard, all excellent, large beasts; as well as some spotted, they included others that were all black, or had huge horns, or favourably positioned whorls of hair (*palisu*) on their hides, or which were known to be good at fighting (*manglaga*), a feature that would add honour and excitement to the ceremony.<sup>13</sup> A buffalo with very large horns 'makes the funeral complete', she told me. Mama' Mawiring

<sup>12</sup> I have not given further conversions, since the weakening of the Rupiah meant that prices between these years remained roughly equivalent in sterling. The rate in 1994 was approx. Rp. 3,400/£; by 1998 it had risen to around Rp. 13,000/£, and in 2002 it was over Rp. 14,000/£.

<sup>13</sup> Before being sacrificed, the buffaloes are encouraged to fight each other in fallow rice fields beside the funeral ground. Like the men's kick-fighting bouts and the cock-fights which are also traditionally a feature of high-ranking funerals, this can be interpreted as a means of stirring up ritual 'heat' or intensity on the funeral ground. Kick-fighting has been more or less prohibited since the 1970s, however, since it sometimes escalated into real fights, and no permits were being issued for cockfights even at the highest ranking funerals during the 1980s and 1990s, in an effort to stamp out gambling.

could list with ease the names of half a dozen people (including her husband) who are well known in Sa'dan for their regular sacrificing of spotted buffaloes. Buffaloes with favourable features, she commented, bring good fortune to the one who sacrifices them, and to his or her descendants: '*Masakke-sakke lan katuonanna; maluna-luna utan nakalutte*', she added – 'they will be cool (enjoy good health) in their life; they will pick the juiciest vegetables (have good fortune)'.<sup>14</sup> If the *palisu* on an animal are not well placed, by contrast, bad fortune, poverty, or sudden death may be expected to follow.

Mama' Mawiring's comments indicate an aesthetic enjoyment in the buffaloes that take pride of place in the funeral rites; after a lifetime of pampering, they will be extra carefully washed and groomed on the day of the ceremony, and are often brought to the funeral ground with their horns decorated in coloured ribbons and gold tinsel. A few days later, Papa' Mawiring was at home, and he showed me his photo album. It was full of pictures of buffaloes he had taken to various important family funerals, as well as some of the largest pigs. Papa' Mawiring leads a modest life as a (now retired) secondary school teacher in Rantepao, but he and his wife are both descendants of Sa'dan's nobility, and he has not shirked major expenditure on the funeral ground. The heaviest economic obligation for most people is in dealing with the funerals of grandparents, and even more so their parents and their spouse's parents. A married couple share this duty, since it is understood that equal attentions ought to be paid to both sides of the family; as we saw in Chapter XI, the couple themselves sometimes refer to each other affectionately as a pair of buffaloes (*bali tedong; sangayoka*), who must pull together evenly if the plough is to run smoothly. Once these particular occasions have been accomplished, the burden of ceremonial expense will become lighter. In most parts of Tana Toraja (notably the southern Three Domains), where the competitive system called *ma'tallang* is followed, these sacrifices will also be the most crucial, since they secure one's right to a share of the inheritance. Rice lands will be divided in proportion to the extent of each child's sacrifices, a system which gives the ceremonial economy an extra competitive edge. The westerly Saluputti region differs in that here, *ma'tallang* is only resorted to when a couple die childless.

Papa' Mawiring has sacrificed spotted buffaloes on five different occasions, and as he recounted the details, it provided further evidence of inflation. The first one was in 1982, for the funeral of Mama' Mawiring's grandfather, who had been headman of Tampan village in Dutch days. For that buffalo he had paid Rp. 1,350,000. The second one was for her grandmother, Ne' Palimbu. In 1983, he had sponsored the holding of a traditional Alukta ceremony to move

<sup>14</sup> 'Picking vegetables' is a common metaphor for seeking a livelihood.

the remains of his mother's father and grandparents from their family *liang* or stone grave to a new, concrete tomb or *patane*. For this occasion he had sacrificed eight buffaloes. Also in the album was a portrait of a gigantic *bai tora*, a boar with tusks, so big it had practically lost the ability to stand up, which he had taken to a *merok* feast at Sangkombong in 1988. That had cost him Rp. 450,000 then, but would now be worth Rp. 1,500,000. At the funeral of his own mother, in 1990, he paid Rp. 1,750,000 for a *tedong bonga*, and Rp. 750,000 for a *tedong balian*, a steer with a wide span of horns, which he reckoned at current prices would be worth Rp. 11 or 12 million. Altogether, for his mother's funeral, he alone had sacrificed 19 buffaloes. In the year 2000, both his father and Mama' Mawiring's mother passed away; for the former, he bought a spotted buffalo for Rp. 16 million which by the time of our conversation, just two years later, he said, would be worth around Rp. 30 million. For his father he had sacrificed altogether six animals, including an all-black *tedong pudu'*, for which he had paid Rp. 4,700,000. That would now be worth Rp. 7,500,000, he said, while another for which he had paid Rp. 6,500,000 would have cost him Rp. 13 or 14 million in 2002. For Mama' Mawiring's mother he had also killed six buffaloes. So, in the space of four months, he had sacrificed 12 buffaloes, of which two were *tedong bonga*. This was the point at which his ceremonial expenditure had peaked. That in the meantime, his own house in Rantepao has remained for many years unfinished must be seen as quite in accord with socially approved priorities. Papa' Mawiring feels obliged to kill so many buffaloes, he explained, only because of his inherited position in the community. His ancestors have always sacrificed a lot, so he would feel ashamed not to. Would his children, I inquired, be able or willing to maintain this level of ceremonial activity? 'I have already told them', was his reply, 'after I am gone, don't go on with this, it will ruin you – you shouldn't cut more than six at a time!'

I cite these details because they enable us to trace a pattern of galloping inflation unique to buffaloes and pigs in the Toraja economy. In Appendix E I have tried to tabulate these values and their escalation, based on people's recollections of past transactions. Although the trend may have been exacerbated by Indonesia's monetary crisis of 1997, it can hardly be fully explained by that circumstance. It appears that prices have more or less doubled just in the last two years, and of all livestock, the rate of inflation is highest for *tedong bonga*. As Papa' Mawiring said, these days, for a spotted buffalo 'the seller can ask what he likes'. Prices for buffaloes have risen so fast that they have now pulled ahead of pig prices, breaking the long-standing equivalence between a *sangpala'* buffalo and a very large pig. Even the largest pigs now fetch only up to Rp. 3 million, which cannot match the Rp. 3.5-4.5 million price of a *sangpala'*. Regional Autonomy has a place in this picture, for there has been inflation too in the taxes on funeral sacrifices. Since the devolution of power

from Jakarta in 1999, central government now provides a reduced proportion of funding to the Regencies, which must raise their own revenues to cover the difference. There is no industry in Tana Toraja, and income from tourism has fallen off drastically over the past few years, as one disturbance after another scared foreigners away from holidaying in Indonesia. Hence, funeral taxes represent a major source of revenue for local government, and are likely to remain so in the immediate future. Between 2001 and 2002, slaughter taxes were doubled, from Rp. 25,000 per pig and Rp. 50,000 per buffalo in 2001, to Rp. 50,000 per pig and Rp. 100,000 per buffalo in 2002. In some districts (*lembang*), the charge is as much as Rp. 70,000 per pig, with a portion of this money going to the local government of the Kabupaten, another part to the *lembang*, and another part to the church. But sometimes, so I was told, people do their best to minimise expenses by declaring only a certain number of the animals to be sacrificed. For their part, local officials had for years been under suspicion of cooking the books and not entering all their takings, though I was told that the current Bupati had started an investigation and was now monitoring tax collections more strictly. For this reason, official statistics of the rates of slaughter at funerals in different districts of Tana Toraja are not a reliable source of information about trends in the ceremonial economy.

Today, the intensity of ceremonial activity has created a shortage of locally reared pigs and buffaloes. Pigs reproduce much more rapidly than buffaloes, but even so, local production is insufficient to meet ceremonial demand, and there is a steady demand for imported pigs from other parts of Sulawesi. The situation with regard to buffaloes is of special interest. Their extraordinarily high value in the past doubtless had much to do with their relatively slow rate of reproduction, and the livestock markets, in Rantepao and to a much lesser extent in other locations such as Rembon, offered few animals for sale. If one wanted a buffalo for a funeral, it would be more usual to look for one locally than to go to market; nowadays, the reverse is true. Today, the livestock trade has been centralised in the Rantepao market, which is constantly busy, with a large number of beasts for sale. Many of these are being imported, not just from neighbouring Luwu' or from Central and Southeast Sulawesi, but from as far away as Kalimantan, Sumbawa, Sumba, even Timor. Given the lower commodity prices of buffaloes in other parts of the archipelago, traders find it highly profitable to search out buffaloes in these areas and ship them back to Tana Toraja, where they can be sold at a much higher value determined by the mounting competition in the ritual economy. The escalation of sacrificial activity in Toraja can be seen to depend on this opening up of the ceremonial economy to a supply of livestock from outside, coupled with the ability to pay for it from new sources of wealth also being earned outside of the highlands. In the nineteenth century, as we saw in Chapter I, it was the village chiefs who were in a position to profit from their role as middlemen in the trade in coffee

and slaves, and convert new wealth to ceremonial purposes. The difference now is that today's new sources of income are much more open to all, and we may conclude that this democratisation of wealth is a driving factor behind the impulse to compete which fuels inflation in the system.

Since any debt incurred by the hosts of a funeral must eventually be repaid with an animal of at least the same size, inflation means that anyone repaying a debt, even in as little as two or three years' time, may find themselves having to pay double in order to purchase an appropriate animal. Yet people still express a high degree of commitment to their obligations. At the same time, a more mercenary attitude to debt repayment has surfaced, especially around Rantepao, straining the old morality of delayed reciprocity. In the past it was not done to press one's creditors, but even in the 1970s, the people of Rantepao were beginning to issue invitations to death feasts, which was tantamount to enforcing repayment of outstanding debts. This was regarded by people in Malimbong as being in bad taste. As it becomes harder and harder to repay debts at the current rate of inflation, some debtors (outside of the funeral context) are reportedly emboldened to offer a creditor a reduced sum of money in place of actual animals, claiming that they cannot afford to buy them; and the creditor, rather than wait indefinitely for repayment, might accept. By the mid-1990s, a remarkable new development had taken place, one which had been previously unheard of, and which seems to show that money has entered yet further into the heart of the ceremonial economy. What has happened is that, as the values of livestock have escalated, people (especially town dwellers) are beginning more and more often to arrive at funerals, not with an actual animal, but with an equivalent sum of money in an envelope. This has some social ramifications, because people of high rank arriving at a funeral customarily do not come alone, but bring with them an entourage of villagers (*rombongan*). The larger the group, the more prestige accrues to their leader, and it is they who help by leading the buffaloes, and carrying pigs trussed on bamboo poles or litters, along with other gifts such as pots or bamboo tubes filled with palm wine. But the leader also has the responsibility to make sure that the group is well looked after, and rewarded for their pains with the appropriate and customary shares of meat from the pigs they have carried. A growing trend over the past ten years or so has been to avoid actually sacrificing all the animals accepted at a funeral, but to keep some alive (*dipatorro tuo*) to be donated to the church or the *desa/lembang* fund for local 'development' projects.<sup>15</sup> On one occasion I heard people talking in disgust about a particular member of the Saluputti aristocracy who had summoned a large group to accompany him to a funeral in the Rantepao area,

<sup>15</sup> This development is also mentioned by Yamashita (1997:92).

and whose pig had been one of those not butchered. In such a case he should have ensured that his group received meat from some other source, but he had singularly failed to look after them. If he was not prepared to uphold his traditional aristocratic obligations, they said, he could not expect them to fall in with any future demands on their time. As the former relationship of obligation between nobles and commoners is eroded, it is becoming more common to have to pay wages to those who carry one's pigs to a funeral. Clearly, it is a lot less trouble for someone with a sufficient supply of cash simply to take an envelope to a funeral, than to go to the market, purchase a buffalo, and gather a group to accompany it to its destination. This changes the pattern of meat sharing, in that when money is given, no meat will be returned to the giver; whether the villagers who might once have accompanied him are consuming less protein as a result, or are now supplementing their diet from other sources, I am not able to say.

The presentation of envelopes can operate in different ways, however. The first time I heard of it, I was told that this substitution of cash for livestock was happening because prices had become so high that many people simply couldn't afford to buy whole pigs or buffaloes, so they made do with bringing a lesser sum, which could be used by the hosts to defray some of the funeral expenses, in whatever way they chose. At first, assuming that whatever sum was in the envelope would later be repaid with its exact equivalent, I thought this was a handy way to beat the problem of inflation. Tax lists from recent funerals in Malimbong show a significant proportion of envelopes, and I was told that the sums in them were commonly between Rp. 100-200,000 – considerably less than the cost of a pig. In the characteristically Malimbong way, people said they would not be too calculating about the amount returned (*tae' ta situkka'*, 'we don't force each other').<sup>16</sup> But people in the area around Rantepao insisted that the sum in the envelope was supposed to be presented as standing for the value of a buffalo or a pig, and that the recipient would later be expected to repay, not the same amount, but whatever might by then be the market rate for an equivalent buffalo. In that case, the money is being made to perform a metaphorical function as buffalo-substitute; far from becoming the universal measure of value, with the power to reduce everything to itself, it is being used to stand in for the animal that remains at the centre of an older

<sup>16</sup> Of 145 entries in the tax lists from the funeral of Indo' Teken, my adoptive mother in Buttang, in October 2001, 49 groups brought a pig, 28 brought an envelope (containing variable amounts of cash), and 68 were listed as bringing *pa'piong* – pork already cooked in bamboos. This is another novelty: instead of presenting a live pig, which, when butchered, would be divided in half between the host and the presenting group, it is now becoming common to kill the pig at home first. The guests, I was told, will then surrender less than half of the cooked pig to their host, keeping a larger share for themselves.



value system. Such an instance should warn us against falling prey to our own metaphors of 'penetration'; it would be more accurate here to say that money has been encompassed by the ceremonial system.<sup>17</sup> But, whatever the sum given, it is hard to avoid the effects of inflation. Papa' Mawiring confirmed that in Sa'dan, the amount given in an envelope need not equal the actual price of a pig or a buffalo, but even so, it is likely to be calculated and repaid in accordance with current livestock prices. In 1990, 'when money was still worth something', some people gave envelopes at his mother's funeral containing sums of Rp. 5,000 or 10,000; but if he were to pay them back now, he said, he would give Rp. 50,000 or 100,000 simply because the Rupiah is now so devalued. One envelope contained a sum of Rp. 75,000, which at the time he noted was equivalent to the price of a pig with a girth of one metre; when he wanted to repay this debt in 2004, he first went to market and priced the pigs. A pig of that size was now worth Rp. 650,000, so he asked his creditor in advance whether he would prefer to be paid in cash or with a pig. The man replied with a modest disclaimer about the need for any repayment at all, but knowing this was just a manner of speaking, Papa' Mawiring made his own decision, and brought his return gift in cash. In this instance, even though the initial gift was not specified as representing a pig of a particular size, the recipient on his own initiative nonetheless calculated its value as such, and judged his repayment accordingly, as being the only decent thing to do.

#### *Mortuary ritual and the constitution of value*

What then can we conclude about the true value of the buffalo? What does it mean to say that, according to Toraja ideas, this is the supreme embodiment of wealth? Its exalted role at the heart of the ceremonial economy suggests that this is the object that more than any other has the power to incite desire, and to move people to action. But one cannot say this without irony, since in order to realize its value in terms of social capital, the buffalo cannot be held on to, but must be given away and slaughtered. Or is this an irony only when viewed from the perspective of classical economic theory, where 'self-interest' is invariably defined in terms of the desire to accumulate things and hold on to them? These reflections bring us to a consideration of value itself, an issue that lies at the heart of theorising in economic anthropology. The most stimulating recent contribution to this literature comes from David Graeber (2001), who vigorously devotes his analysis to devising ways to escape

<sup>17</sup> For comparative examples of the 'taming' of money as it has been drawn into ceremonial economies in a range of Melanesian societies, see Akin and Robbins (1999).

the assumption, which permeates so much economic theory, that nobody ever does anything that is not designed to maximise self-interest, however defined. Graeber contrarily insists on the role that other moral values have to play in human affairs. He isolates three convergent 'streams of thought' in discussions of value. On the one hand, value can be defined sociologically, as what is considered good and proper in human life; on the other, it can be defined economically, in terms of what objects are viewed as desirable, and what others are prepared to give up to get them; and thirdly, there is value 'in the linguistic sense' (deriving from the ideas of De Saussure). This last refers to value as 'meaningful difference' (as De Saussure argued that words have meaning only in relation to each other); it implies that an object must be viewed as similar to, and yet different from, other objects with which it could be compared. This is especially relevant to considerations of rank value, where meaningful variations can be arranged hierarchically within a class of objects – for example, different denominations within a currency, different qualities of armshells within the Kula ring, or Toraja buffaloes of different sizes and properties.<sup>18</sup> Perceiving that objects achieve their value in relation to wider social projects, however, Graeber extends his discussion beyond these approaches to the value of things in themselves. He proposes that we reconfigure our thinking about value, and understand it in the broadest sense as having to do with the importance of actions. Even the idea of 'labour' can usefully be more broadly defined as 'effort', since if we trace our analysis far enough, many varieties of effort exerted by different actors may in reality be bound up in the 'labour value' of a thing. In his analysis, then, 'value is ultimately about how people portion out their creative energies' (Graeber 2001:189). Let us consider the value of buffaloes in this light.

If we compare buffaloes with other types of valuable, such as the armshells and necklaces used in Massim Kula exchanges, we can say that buffalo are somewhat similar in being ranked valuables, differing in their individual characteristics and admired for their aesthetically pleasing appearances. They have what Alfred Gell (1998:159), in his analysis of art styles, calls 'psychological salience' within the context of Toraja culture. The salience has to do with collectively held notions of excellence and with culturally significant activities (in this case, what you can do with a buffalo, which is to give it away in a highly public context where it can be duly admired by as many people as possible, and then sacrificed). I interpret 'salience' also as attaching to something that gives rise to pleasure of a socially approved kind.<sup>19</sup> Graeber notes how

<sup>18</sup> Even in the world of mass-produced commodities, such differences exist or if necessary must be created through advertising: the difference between Pepsi and Coke, for instance.

<sup>19</sup> Campbell (1983:241) notes that even hearing the names of the highest-ranking *vaiguwa* necklaces in the Kula ring is said to make men's bodies shake with desire.

frequently valuables, in different cultures, are simultaneously items of adornment. As such, they become extensions of the self. The magnificent specimens whose photos adorn the pages of Papa' Mawiring's album might be seen in this light, also. But buffaloes differ in an important respect from such items as Kula shells, whose value lies not just in their beauty, but in their being distinguished by their own personal names and histories. Buffaloes cannot accrue value by accumulating history, since they are perishable and destined for sacrifice. In this sense, their value has a 'terminal' quality, in Kopytoff's (1986:75) sense. They are purchased at one moment as commodities in the market, only to be redefined as ceremonial gifts, but sacrificial dismemberment is the intended outcome of this moment of glory. In the process of the meat distribution, their heads will be presented to one or another *tongkonan*, reinforcing long-established links with the hosts' own origin house. The horns, their only enduring part, will end up gracing the front post of the receiving house. In this sense, although their own individuality as valuables will be erased, they do at least assist the accumulation of history and glory of houses, while helping to reinforce the relations between them.

We could say that there are two contrasting social dimensions to the funeral ceremony. On the one hand, there are the many ways in which it serves to express social hierarchy and status competition; but there is also that other emphasis on the essentially egalitarian relationships of cognatic kinship and the expression of solidarity between affines, helping each other by sharing their grief. Arguably, it is this that provides the most pressing compulsion to continue the duty of ritual expenditure, and the threat of shame that makes it so hard for anyone to withdraw from their continuing obligations. In my analysis of the *ma'bu'a'*, I proposed that that was the rite which most sharply contrasted in its messages with mortuary ritual, being the one in which undifferentiated benefits were sought for the entire community. Now I want to go further, and point out how, even within the funeral itself, the two contradictory dimensions of hierarchy and equality are played out together. If there is a paradox here, it is one that is also embodied in the social structure at large. In earlier chapters, we saw how the potential for harmony and balance in cognatic relations is amply exemplified in the expressed desire for equality in marital relationships, in the lack of hierarchical differentiation between siblings (either as older/younger or as male/female), or in the reciprocal links between parents-in-law (*baisen*), with their mutual interests in their grandchildren. The paradox is that this structure coexists with the structure of rank, with its ideology of naturalised and irreconcilable differences of birth between *tana'*. That these two dimensions of structure and ideology can clash is illuminated by some remarks of Tato' Dena' on the difficulties engendered by a marriage between people of different ranks. Parents-in-law, he said, must not be unbalanced [in observing their ritual obligations to each other] (*baisen*

*tae' na ma'din tongka*), because if one side were to be more diligent and generous in their contributions to the other's ceremonies, this would cause them to quarrel. This is most likely to happen when the families are of unequal rank. The low ranking family is more likely to expend effort in maintaining face, while the high-ranking (or wealthier) family may not bother making much effort at all. Then the rich will get richer while the poor get poorer. Or as Tato' Dena' expressed it: 'The long is made longer, and the short is cut even shorter' (*kalando disambung, kondi' dile'to'i*), or 'What's half full is spilt, while what's full to the brim is not poured out' (*la penanga tisebok, ia lempan tangtisebok*). These are ironic inversions of phrases more customarily expressed the other way around, to convey a desirable state of harmony and balance in human affairs. In an unequal match, the poorer family is at risk of venturing beyond their means, while being slighted by the wealthier family if the latter disdain to respond to their overtures, rather as in a culture of honour one may insult a challenger deemed unworthy by refusing to duel with him.

What exactly about the social order is being reproduced, then, in mortuary ritual? Apparently, both the (ideal) equalities expressed in the bonds of kinship, and the inequalities of rank (equally idealised, by some), are being enacted. If this gives rise to contradictions, different regions of Toraja seem to deal with them differently, too. While southern and central areas are generally held to be the most aggressively competitive, in Saluputti with its more egalitarian social ethos, people may seek to resolve the paradox by upholding kinship bonds over status. At one level, one shows one's feelings for one's affines by presenting them with highly valued livestock for sacrifice. But at the same time, people in Saluputti strive to moderate the agonistic aspects of the exchange. They claim to show their affection for each other by refraining from driving each other too hard in their ceremonial obligations. Hence the oft repeated comments, 'we are fond of each other' (*tasikaboro*); 'we don't force each other' (*tae' tasitukka*). They would rather a relative attend a funeral, even if only 'holding their armpits' because empty-handed, than not attend at all. After all, exactly when a debt must be repaid is never specified. If it is not possible on one occasion, it may yet become so at some future date. Two things can sever a kin relationship altogether: either rejecting a gift, in an effort to break out of the system and avoid becoming beholden to the giver, or else explicitly demanding payment of a debt outside of the ceremonial context. A debt called in in this manner is said to be 'demanded raw' (*dipalaku mamata*) or as we might say, in cold blood, and it is never done except as an extreme insult, explicitly designed to effect a severance of the relationship, as a result of some other quarrel.

If following the proper paths of mortuary exchange is the very image of sociality in Toraja eyes, this mention of rawness may prompt a consideration of contrasting, negative images of antisocial behaviour. We have seen

already that the hoarding of wealth or its private expenditure on consumer goods brings little kudos in Toraja eyes. A more dramatic traditional image of antisocial consumption is that of the *batitong*, a person who at night becomes transformed into an evil, blood-sucking spirit who creeps about underneath the floors of other people's houses, sucking and devouring their entrails while they are asleep, thereby causing sickness and death. Before the advent of modern medicine, illness used sometimes to be attributed to a person's having been 'sucked by a *batitong*' (*nasussu' batitong*). The emphasis on sucking metaphorically inverts the ideal of generosity and the 'pouring out' of prestations on the funeral ground which by contrast embodies the ideal of social solidarity, while the lust to eat raw human flesh clearly represents the very antithesis of civilized behaviour. In fact, eating anything raw is so powerfully associated with uncontrolled appetites and a negation of culture that even old ladies sharing their betel nut would sometimes laugh and jokingly remark, 'Look! We're eating something raw!' as if to apologise for a questionable indulgence.<sup>20</sup> Another belief that surfaced sometimes in conversation in the village was that some forms of illness may be the result of human agency (*saki to lino*), being caused by others maliciously trying to poison one. This is giving, but of a sort intended to destroy. Lurid as they may appear, these images have salience as imagined inversions of sociality, the very opposite of the ideal of being generous (*mabalele*) which, again in Tato' Dena's poetic words, will bring its own rewards:

<i>Malabo-labo silambi'</i>	Spend your wealth freely, and others will do the same for you
<i>Manengkeng mambala tama</i>	If you are stingy, it will sap your own strength
<i>Nekke'-nekke' dolo pura</i>	Meanness will cause things to be finished sooner
<i>Malabo undi maserong</i>	Be generous, and good fortune will come to you in return

Fulfilling one's ritual obligations certainly demands a continuing willingness to remain engaged in the web of kin relations, with its related outpouring of ceremonial expenditure, while for the ambitious at the same time it offers the possibility of using this activity to build a public reputation. Let me return for a moment to the idea of an economy of emotions which I raised in the beginning of this chapter. What would this economy look like? Pleasure, desire and satisfaction are emotions which, Graeber (2001:21) suggests, deserve a more thorough consideration in economic analysis. A theory of value is needed 'to

<sup>20</sup> Fruit is eaten raw, but rarely. It is usually considered to be kids' stuff, and given to the children. Tiny tomatoes, grown in vegetable patches around the house yard, are pounded with chillies to make a condiment for rice, which makes them count as food even though not cooked; but my occasional longing for a tomato salad definitely met with disapproval.

bridge the gap' between society and human purposes, 'to move from meaning to desire'. Desire, in turn, needs to be seen as something bigger than self-interest, and value as the way people represent the importance of their own actions to themselves. If the buffalo is an object of desire, what is it that is desired more, enough to cause its owner to want to give it up? As in other prestige economies, making a name for yourself is the individual player's reward, a goal that clearly implies the necessity of recognition by others. For the Kwakiutl, prototype of the 'potlatch' economy, giving things away could be seen as 'a defining action' (Graeber 2001:202). But it is an action which requires an audience to be effective; the giver requires his gift to be witnessed by 'a (demanding but appreciative) public'. 'If there ain't no audience, there ain't no show', as the saying goes, and we can see that ceremonial economies involve a strong element of display. They seem to be very effective in harnessing desire and effort, culminating in moments of public spectacle, when the results of one's efforts will be put on display for all to see. Just as for potlatch or the Kula, a persuasive argument can be made that Toraja people sink their efforts into the staging of mortuary prestations because it is a challenging and absorbing game. If one inherits from one's own house and ancestors the obligations, in the form of livestock already received, and meat already consumed, that create the compulsion to continue the cycle of giving and receiving, one is also at the same time planning how to create sufficient credits to ensure that one's own funeral will be celebrated in style. And since individuals must thus face the prospect of their own mortality, they will at least have the consolation of knowing that their efforts ultimately become part of the ritual history of their family group and its origin houses. In the returning of shares of meat, too, statuses will be reaffirmed or challenged. And in the process, society itself witnesses its own renewal.

The darker side of this emotional construction is undoubtedly the sense of anxiety that must sometimes accompany the burden of debts, with its attendant possibilities of future shame and humiliation if they cannot be repaid. People worry not only about meeting their own debts, but about whether their children may be pressed into pawning the diminishing shares of land they inherit in order to pay for their parents' funerals. It is hard not to surmise that anxiety over meeting ceremonial debts must lie behind the comments Wellenkamp (1987:8) records from one of her acquaintances, Nene'na Tandi:

I always tell [my wife], 'Let's not think long, we must instead think of the time just ahead – tomorrow and the next day. If we think at length, we'll be ruined. We, ourselves will be ruined, everything will be ruined. Thus, we must be quiet.' If you look at people who are thin, that arises from thinking. Anyone who is thin, thinks too much.



Yet, somehow or other, obligations will usually be met. Pak Sarira from Malimbong reflected:

I myself have experienced how we think we won't be able to find the money [to repay ceremonial debts], yet somehow when it comes to it, something will show up. That is because Toraja will always help each other out. We want to stage a ceremony of reasonable proportions, and our relatives will feel that they must make reasonably generous contributions, too. There is status competition (I: *genssi*), but you can't really call it that, because that sounds negative. It's a matter of self-respect (I: *harga diri*). We respect each other and respect ourselves, and individual self-respect can't be separated from that of the family [...]. Because a funeral will be held at the *tongkonan*, other relatives will say, 'Oh, that's my *tongkonan*; I must contribute somehow.' The rest of the family won't criticize him openly [were he not to], but he will feel it inside.

The characterisation of funerals as a form of potlatch tends to focus the attention on the agonistic dimension of the ritual activities, and the idea of status competition (the Indonesian word *genssi* is often used by Toraja in this context, as in the example above). In this sense, funerals might very well be classified, in Appadurai's terms, as 'tournaments of value'.<sup>21</sup> In the past I have also tended to emphasise that dimension. But still I have to conclude that this is not the whole story. One must take account of the fact that Toraja themselves often claim that, though this is one part of the drama, it is not after all the heart of the matter. As some of the comments already quoted suggest to us, old noble families have to work at maintaining the status already accumulated. If asked why people continue to spend their wealth on funeral sacrifices, a common reply is that they are afraid that if they do not, others will deride them as poor people (*to kalala*). Or, as Tato' Dena' commented, *noka' disanga to tangpalambi'mo* ('they refuse to be labelled as people who can no longer afford it'). It's not surprising, then, if those who in the past have been accustomed to being derided as poor seek to translate new wealth into an enhanced ceremonial standing by conspicuous spending in the ritual arena. In a similar vein, Papa' Mawiring commented that, if a rich person refuses to sacrifice, people will say that he is 'afraid of falling' (*matakku' latobang*), in

<sup>21</sup> Appadurai 1986:21. He writes: 'Tournaments of value are complex periodic events that are removed in some culturally well-defined way from the routines of economic life. Participation in them is likely to be both a privilege of those in power and an instrument of status contests between them. The currency of such tournaments is also likely to be set apart through well understood cultural diacritics. Finally, what is at issue in such tournaments is not just status, rank, fame, or reputation of actors, but the disposition of the central tokens of value in the society in question. Finally, though such tournaments of value occur in special times and places, their forms and outcomes are always consequential for the more mundane realities of power and value in ordinary life.'

other words, of losing his wealth, and that the poorest guest would be more appreciated than this one. Conversely, we can say that it is fear of a fall in social esteem that causes the wealth to be ceremonially expended. As we have seen, if buffaloes remain the supreme measure of wealth, still the social capital to be gained from them cannot be realized without publicly sacrificing them, just as Kula ornaments cannot be kept too long, but bestow fame on their owners only by remaining in circulation.

But Papa' Mawiring went on to add that, at any funeral in Tana Toraja, people are 'very social' (I: *sangat sosial*). They will contribute, they will eat together, and these days the hosts will not sacrifice all of the livestock brought but will set some animals aside to be sold and used for other purposes: to fund new roads and churches, for instance. Money is raised for these projects also by auctioning (*ma'lelang*) the meat from some animals instead of distributing it.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, sacrificers of livestock must pay tax on each beast to the government. Ever since Dutch times, Church and government, unable to put a stop to funeral expenditure, have instead found ways to derive revenue from it for purposes they deemed more rational, and to fund development; Papa' Mawiring's commentary indicates how far this form of contribution has become integrated into the broader picture of social life. As host, he said, if you do not uphold your status by sacrificing, people will say, 'What's the point of your being rich? What do you contribute to the family? To the community? Or to the government?' This comment certainly reflects a modernised conception of sociality, one that includes commitment to wider institutions beyond the immediate group of one's own kin or dependents, as well as to a new ideal of ethnic identity. In this formulation, wealth is pointless unless expended in mortuary rites, precisely because, far from wasting it, this is seen as a means of distributing it through the community. Toraja people will typically not be impressed by other forms of conspicuous expenditure, for example an ostentatious modern house. But, Papa' Mawiring noted, anyone who is known to help the Church, or educational institutions, or who engages with Toraja students outside Toraja and helps them with their fees, of such a person people will say: 'He still knows he's Toraja, and would help us if we needed it.' He went on to reflect that in the past, people stuck together, and kinship relations were very strong, because they stayed in one place and did

<sup>22</sup> A detailed discussion of meat auctions (*lelang*) is provided by Donzelli (2003). As she has pointed out, this is a dimension of the funeral proceedings that has been neglected by most ethnographers. Intriguingly, she observes that although the goals of *lelang* are apparently entirely rationalistic, people sometimes bid disproportionately large sums for unprestigious cuts of meat, thereby reintroducing an element of competitive display into this part of the event. This is only possible because of the greater amounts of cash now circulating in the economy, yet it remains evidence of an older way of thinking.

not travel much; whereas in today's world, people spread far and wide and rarely see each other. He sees Toraja society as poised at a point of transition in which kinship commitments might easily be eroded. Yet since the means of communication are now so various, people today have many ways to stay in touch with each other. Thus he chose to conclude optimistically, that in spite of these separations, there is still a chance for the bonds of kinship to survive.

Another friend, whose outlook in many respects is distinctly modernist, and who for his own part has rather detached himself from ceremonial competition, nonetheless expressed his thoughts in a way that says a great deal about the idea of value as creative effort. His verdict cunningly reclaims the work ethic from the capitalist system, and locates it securely within the ceremonial one:

A lot of people say it's a waste, and from the outside it looks like that. But from a broader point of view, it isn't really. Our ancestors were clever when they ordered their descendants to make these ceremonies. If not for that, there would be nothing here in Toraja. It's this that forces people to strive and work hard, because they feel they simply have to find a buffalo or a pig for a ceremony. Torajans will die to keep up their good name. They must keep up their name within the family too. If a person feels rejected by the rest of the family, he'll take it very hard. And then again, it's funerals that make tourists keen to come here, and that brings money into the economy too. So, from a narrow point of view, you could say it's wasteful, but from a wider one, it isn't.

I began this chapter by setting out to trace how the ceremonial economy, interlocked as it is with the domains of the domestic economy on the one hand, and the global market economy on the other, has responded to changing circumstances and the introduction of money over the course of the twentieth century. We can conclude that, in spite of all the transformations which highland society has undergone, and the drastic alterations in cosmology and world view that this has entailed, Toraja economy and social life can still be seen as being essentially underpinned and driven by the ceremonial system – or what is left of it. Though the overall balance between the great rites of East and West may have collapsed, what is left still manifests a surprising vigour. A powerful social consensus continues to hold that it is the giving and receiving of buffaloes and pigs, whether to ease the pain of mourning or to celebrate the renewal of origin houses, that is the true and proper expression of the bonds of kinship and sociality. I have often heard Toraja voice their belief, in this context, that as a people, their own system of kinship and feelings of social solidarity are stronger than other people's. Ritual provides the structure and the occasion for the practical enactment of those emotions, while at the same time offering the opportunity for individuals (or couples,

since it is really the joint efforts of spouses which are invested in these prestations) to convert their own efforts into social value through their actions on the ceremonial ground. As Papa' Mawiring put it, 'Ritual is the trunk (basis) of everything here in Toraja' (*Garonto'na tu pesta inde te'e Toraya*) – a sentiment with which, whatever their personal feelings about it, I believe most Toraja would agree.

## Conclusion

The fall of Suharto from power in 1998 swept away the certainties and the constraints imposed by his New Order regime and ushered in a period of radical transition. Political life in Indonesia since then has been marked by a curious mixture of hope and disappointment, elation and horror, the peaceful restitution of democratic process and freedom of debate, as well as the sinister rise of religiously-motivated political violence. Considering how catastrophically violent the previous two transitions of power had been, in 1945 and 1965, and how doggedly Suharto had avoided planning for his succession, there was good reason for anxiety about how this transition would unfold. Yet in some ways the process has gone remarkably well, even if the initial euphoria of Reformasi has given way to some cynicism as the country continues to struggle with the inherited problems of endemic corruption and a weak judiciary.

Since the millennium, questions of ethnic and religious identity have thrust themselves to the forefront of Indonesian politics, and wider national and international events have again reverberated in Sulawesi. The ethnic massacres of 2000 in Ambon and Central Sulawesi brought refugees fleeing home to Toraja. The uncovering of Jemaah Islamiah terrorist training camps in the jungles around Poso (Central Sulawesi) in 2001 and 2002, the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002, the subsequent bombings in Makassar in early December, and bomb threats just before Christmas that year against churches in Rantepao and Ma'kale, have all been deeply disturbing. In June 2005, Central Sulawesi was disturbed by new bomb attacks in the formerly peaceful and predominantly Christian town of Tentena, and three Christian schoolgirls were gruesomely beheaded on their way to school by a Muslim fanatic. There are strange threads of continuity here, for memories of Kahar's Darul Islam movement remain vivid in the South Sulawesi lowlands (Bakti 2005); moreover the terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiah is a twisted offshoot of it, at least two of its founding leaders, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Bashir, being former members of Darul Islam (*Straits Times*, Friday July 8, 2005).

Less noticed in the international press have been attacks against Toraja migrants in Luwu' over the past few years, representing an intensification of

isolated incidents of violence which had already occurred from time to time during the 1990s. Numerous Toraja have settled in formerly under-cultivated areas around Palopo, such as Mangkutana, and also in northern Luwu', where they opened rice fields and have done well from the cultivation of cocoa and other cash crops, arousing the jealousy of local inhabitants. As usual, economic competition and resentment here underlies what is too often simplistically cast as a religious conflict. Pasande (2002:166 note 53), drawing attention to the continuities in memory between current events and those of earlier decades, and the dangers of 'opening old wounds', notes that it is 'not a coincidence' that many Toraja settlers came to these areas in the 1950s while fleeing the depredations of Kahar Muzakkar's guerillas in remoter parts of the Sa'dan highlands. Others had moved more recently because of land constraints in Tana Toraja, when during the New Order period both voluntary and organized transmigration schemes were strongly promoted by central government.

Since 1998, historians and ordinary people all over Indonesia have seized the opportunity to reinterrogate the past. In his brief and largely chaotic tenure as President, Abdurrahman Wahid gave his blessing to such moves, even proposing an end to the demonisation of communism, and lifting the taboo on discussion of the events of 1965, about which so many questions still fester. At the fall of a régime, such a resurgence of history is entirely typical, as could be seen across the former Soviet Union in 1989. As old narratives fail, new ones offer redress to those parts of the past that have been suppressed, while in their turn inevitably occluding other potential stories. The addressing of the past, and the reshaping of social memory, is as urgent a concern as dealing with the future, in fact it has an essential part to play in just how the future is to be confronted. In the face of the horrific events in Maluku, people in other parts of Indonesia have struggled for ways to draw upon the past in positive ways, to prevent the escalation of tensions and to reaffirm a mutual commitment to peaceful relations (Acciaioli 2000).

At the same time, devolution of power from central government to individual provinces and regencies has created a new fluidity in political life which offers both positive and negative potentials. In Tana Toraja there has been a fresh resurgence of anxiety about the possible ambitions of other parts of the province to seek once again a means to dominate Toraja economically, or to impose an unwanted Islamization. Such perceived threats, whether real or imagined, are only exacerbated by the evidence of Sulawesi's involvement in the network of Islamic terrorism in Indonesia and beyond, and the regrettable ambivalence of many moderate Muslims in Indonesia over the activities of militant organizations like the Laskar Jihad and Jemaah Islamiah. Given the integral role of conspiracy theories in Indonesian politics, it is not surprising that rumours abound about the possible financial support coming from prominent Muslim politicians of South Sulawesi for these organizations. Anxieties are



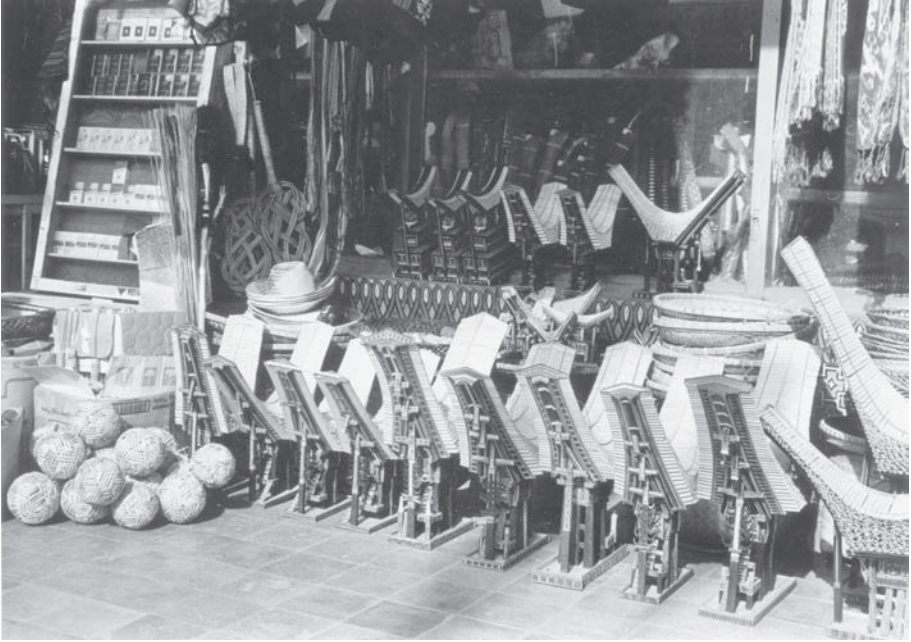
still manifested, too, about Andi Sose, who remains notorious in Toraja collective memory. This concern is expressed in regular rumours about Sose's desire to extend his mosque-building programme to the highlands. He has pursued an active programme of philanthropy in South Sulawesi, building a hospital and a Muslim university (the Universitas '45) in Makassar and founding the 'Andi Sose Association' (Yayasan Andi Sose) whose programme is to 'build 100 mosques', and which has financed hundreds of pilgrimages to Mecca.

Even at the level of local politics, whenever a new Bupati is to be elected, the first question many Toraja ask themselves about any potential candidate is whether he has any known links with business interests in the lowlands, and specifically with Andi Sose. This was the case in 2000, when tensions mounted as irregularities were alleged in the electoral process. Many people were disconcerted by the fact that the winner transpired to be an individual, J. Amping Situru', who had lived for years in Jakarta, was little-known locally, whose wife was a Muslim, and who appeared to be taking a hard line against the preservation of some aspects of Toraja custom. Those most vocal in disputing the result formed a committee which they initially named Forum Komunikasi Pembela Aspirasi Masyarakat, roughly translatable as 'Forum for Communication in Defence of the Aspirations of the People'. After deciding that this portentous-sounding title was too cumbersome, the group renamed itself *To Pada Tindo*, in still another conscious reference to the Ancestors of the Same Dream. While some of its members did indeed claim descent from the original Nene' Pada Tindo, others were new to local politics. In this new era, who will ultimately establish the best claims to represent the 'people's aspirations' remains to be seen. In June 2005, the people of Tana Toraja went to the polls again, to vote in the first ever direct election of Bupati across Indonesia. The same individual was returned to power in a result which many held to be irregular but which was eventually upheld.

In this book I have tended to speak of 'Toraja' as a people, perhaps too unproblematically at times; though I hope the historical picture presented, and the occasional comparisons drawn between different districts within Tana Toraja, have been sufficient to give some context to the still emergent quality of that identity, and to emphasise the variations that exist across the highlands today. Roth (2004, 2005) and Ramstedt (2004) provide salutary historical documentation and discussion of how dramatically different the content of the identity label 'Toraja' might have turned out. They discuss the fortunes of a failed project, dating back to the Dutch colonial period but now rarely and only discreetly recalled, for a 'Greater Toraja' ('Grooter Toradja' in Dutch, later 'Toraja Raya' in Indonesian), which would have united all those peoples to whom Kruyt and Adriani had originally given the name 'Toraja': not only the Sa'dan and Mamasa Toraja, but also Rongkong and Galumpang to the north, and beyond that, the 'East' and 'West' Toraja of Central Sulawesi

(see map in Roth 2004:161). The original Dutch motivation for this idea (which seems to have originated with Kruyt in his Poso mission) was to consolidate a vast geographical area of thoroughly Christianized subjects throughout the mountainous centre of Sulawesi. This would have been more than a buffer against spreading Islamization, but an ambitious plan to define a whole new region and claim it for the mission (Roth 2004:164). In the 1940s-1950s, the idea had an urgent appeal of a different kind to local politicians in Tana Toraja. They saw it as a means to reduce population pressures and the mounting social conflict caused by unresolved grievances over land and landlessness, by providing *Lebensraum* (their own curious, and in retrospect less than fortunate, choice of term) for expansion. The postcolonial period thus saw the beginnings of Toraja migration to sparsely populated Luwu' on a scale that Roth (2004:167) describes as 'massive'. He also notes how quickly Toraja had gained an advantage from the quality of education they were getting from the mission schools established by the Dutch, as a result of which they dominated the administrative hierarchy in Luwu'. However, this migratory trend, and the historically close relationship with Luwu' generally, were disrupted by the outbreak of the DI/TII Rebellion from 1952. From then on, the movement for Toraja autonomy gained the ascendancy. When this was granted in 1957, and Luwu' and Tana Toraja finally became organized as separate Kabupaten in 1959, few Toraja politicians saw it as a regressive move (Roth 2005:502). But as some of Roth's interviewees pointed out, by separation they were cutting themselves off from the large number of Toraja-speakers in Luwu' (where many, even in the lowlands, had always spoken Toraja and traced their descent from the highlands), as well as the room for expansion that might have solved tensions over land shortages within Tana Toraja itself. For their part, many Bugis politicians resented Toraja dominance in the Luwu' administration, and saw the 'Toraja Raya' project as a definite threat. Though lobbying for a separate province of LuTat (Luwu-Tana Toraja) continued into the mid-1960s, it was fiercely resisted by the lowland elites. Efforts at a formal agreement having failed, sizeable Toraja migration to Luwu' continued through the 1970s-1990s in a 'silent' and informal form (Roth 2004:176). Continuing sporadic attacks on migrants there, such as mentioned above, are an indication of the potential tensions and competition over resources to which this population movement has given rise.

One way to view Tana Toraja, then, as Roth and Ramstedt are both at pains to stress, is that it is merely the final, restricted outcome of a political scheme that potentially could have shaped an emergent 'Toraja' identity and administration on a far more grandiose scale. In the process, the historical links between highland Toraja and lowland Luwu' were severed. We have seen how 'Toraja' identity emerged under the impact of Dutch missionary activity and schemes for modernisation, later becoming more emphatically Christian



Rows of miniature houses on sale to tourists at a souvenir shop in Rantepao, 1983. The distinctive shape of the *tongkonan* has become a marker of Toraja ethnic identity.

in reaction to DI/TII. But Bugis identity was itself being simultaneously reconfigured, during the 1950s and 1960s, under the impact of modernist Islam and the democratizing trends within both Darul Islam and the national government (Ramstedt 2004:192). If the two regions had been held together largely by the links between their feudal aristocracies, perhaps the relationship was bound to be viewed sooner or later as anachronistic. Roth and Ramstedt present a corrective picture of the modern 'Toraja' identity as much more contingent and fragile than perhaps many Toraja themselves are accustomed to assume. Yet we still have to ask ourselves why it should have been precisely in Tana Toraja that the political consciousness of a 'Toraja' identity caught hold, while in Central Sulawesi that label conspicuously failed to stick. Was it because Dutch efforts at social engineering in the latter region had been so drastic and disorientating, perhaps more radical than anywhere else in the archipelago (Aragon 2000; Schrauwens 2000)? In that case, why shouldn't the people there have grasped at the notion of a new 'Toraja' identity to fill the vacuum thus created? Yet it was in Tana Toraja that new ideas were vigorously seized, organizations for social progress and advancement were most enthusiastically formed, and the doomed idea of 'Greater Toraja' appears to

have found the warmest reception. The stability eventually imposed by the New Order gave people in Tana Toraja a welcome respite from decades of turmoil and a chance to benefit from some measure of economic progress, and during those three decades the thought of further territorial change must have steadily receded.

Since the advent of devolution and the new policies of Otonomi Daerah (Regional Autonomy), however, people throughout Indonesia have been given fresh opportunities to remap local boundaries and reconfigure their own identities. Considerable powers, and also financial responsibilities, have been devolved from Jakarta not just to provincial but to *kabupaten* (regency) and even *desa* level. The people are thus called upon to make their own decisions about the kind of local administration they want. The general idea is to allow people in different areas to return to more 'traditional' modes of governance, in place of the Javanese model of community organization that had been uniformly imposed across the country by Suharto. Needless to say, this invitation to search for more 'authentic' units of administration is bound to be problematic, when older institutions in most places had already undergone profound alterations during the colonial period. However, from 2000 onward, some Toraja *desa* or *kelurahan* (units of local administration devised by the previous government) have taken the decision to reconfigure themselves as *lembang*, going back to an older, indigenous term for local territories. The *lembang* now have to raise their own funds, and their leaders, though elected, are not salaried civil servants.

The suddenness of decentralization has brought with it a destabilizing sense of flux. In Tana Toraja, discussions have arisen over numerous proposals for fission (I: *pemekaran*) within the regency, or union with other neighbouring portions of Sulawesi, giving rise to a level of politicking which Donzelli (2003:33) characterises as 'fragmentation fever'. There are both outer and inner pressures behind these proposals. Some have suggested that Tana Toraja should be divided into two regencies, North and South, while, not to be outdone, a few proposed a separate regency for the West as well. Some have inclined to a union with Mamasa to the west, others (in a revival of the lost agenda of the 1950s) with Luwu' to the east, though neither of these latter regions have shown themselves keen on the idea of a merger. Some Luwu' politicians responded by pointing out that it was Torajans themselves who had already broken the bonds with Luwu', which cannot now be mended. The surfacing of these lines of fissure remind us that rivalry between north and south was also a feature of the politics of the 1950s, only exacerbated by the two Andi Sose incidents described in Chapter V. The immediate and declared motivation behind the idea of dividing Tana Toraja into multiple regencies is to secure more funding from central government; though this is to overlook the inevitable costs that would be involved in multiplying bureaucracies. But northerners fear that, once divided, the southern domains would

be drawn back into a historically close relationship with adjoining Muslim areas, and perhaps become susceptible to increased influence from the powerful politicians of the South Sulawesi lowlands who, it is always suspected, still harbour ambitions to open the highlands to further Islamic influence. A longer term strategy is that, once a sufficient number of new regencies have been formed (perhaps including Mamasa, which recently achieved a long-desired autonomy from Polewali), these (predominantly Christian) regencies could justify making a request to form a new Province, thereby detaching themselves from the dangers of an over-enthusiastic revivalist Islam in South Sulawesi, which in recent years has even seen the beginnings of a movement (admittedly not very popular) for the introduction of Shariah law.

Although most of these possibilities probably have the support of only small minorities of the population, and some seem to have evaporated almost as fast as they were proposed, they were still at issue in the Bupati elections of 2005. The incumbent Bupati, running for re-election, declared himself in favour of a north-south division, while one of his opponents had a different idea: that Tana Toraja should remain united and instead apply for status as a Daerah Istimewa ('Special Area'), as already enjoyed by Yogyakarta and Aceh, on the grounds of its unique cultural heritage; this move was to be combined with an application to UNESCO for Tana Toraja to be recognised as a World Heritage site. It is not hard to see that the outcomes of any of these new envisionings would entail shifts in the sense of what it means to call oneself 'Toraja'. The former among them have some potential to erode the sense of ethnic identity forged in the past fifty years or so, which might then be shown to be more fragile than is commonly assumed. By contrast, the latter would surely have the effect of crystallizing it, even if ironically at a time when, as I have shown, some of the most distinctive features of Toraja culture, such as its indigenous religion, are already almost extinguished.

One observable change in everyday life is that people at the local level are much freer to act independently. In the first years of restored democracy, some people admittedly found it difficult re-learning how to take their own initiatives. To give a small example, a schoolteacher in Ma'kale explained to me that formerly, the dates for the beginning and end of school terms were decided for the whole nation in Jakarta; now, schools can make such decisions themselves. In 2000, on one of my visits, he himself had already made the decision for his high school, and they had broken up, while some of the other schools were still carrying on because no-one had had the courage to make a decision and they were still hoping for a directive to descend to them from Jakarta. But in Malimbong I could see that villagers had started taking more independent decisions about the sort of development they wanted. For instance, in Menduruk the villagers had decided that, rather than wait for the government to lay water pipes from a mountain spring, they would do it



themselves. They clubbed together to contribute to the cost of the plastic piping, and shared the labour of digging the trenches to lay the pipes. Now, they told me with satisfaction, they had no obligation to pay monthly charges to the administration as other villages were doing. The people of Saluputti have a reputation for fine singing of the traditional *ma'badong* songs performed at funerals, so the men of Menduruk have formed a group which hires itself out for funerals in Rantepao or other areas. They will be rewarded for their all-night performance with a buffalo (albeit usually an old one), which they can sell to pay for expenses such as the matching outfits they wear. They had put some of their earnings toward the opening of a new road from Menduruk to Uluvalu, and the local government, approving this initiative, had agreed to match their contributions. In the oppressive atmosphere of the past New Order administration, with its militarization extending down even to the level of security officers appointed for every single hamlet, it would have been impossible to imagine people taking such autonomous initiatives without arousing the suspicion of local administrators. But now, local communities can take more decisions for themselves. In acting together, they are able to draw on long traditions of cooperative labour, while making some of their own choices about how they want to change.

In October 2006, an entirely new event was celebrated in Tana Toraja. This was a ten-day festival of reunion for all Toraja working outside of the homeland. It was given the poetic name, *Toraja Mamali'*, Sule Sangtorayan (roughly, 'Toraja, Longing for Home, Return to their Fellow-Torajans'). All sorts of events and entertainments in both Ma'kale and Rantepao drew not only those who returned in droves from Jakarta, Kalimantan, Irian and elsewhere within Indonesia, and even from countries overseas, but also people from the villages who came to enjoy the festivities. A huge new statue of the mythical Laki Padada was erected in the middle of the large pool in Ma'kale's town centre, inaugurated by the guest of honour, Deputy Prime Minister Jusuf Kalla' himself, as a thousand schoolchildren performed the traditional *ma'gellu'* dance around the water's edge. A variety of Toraja performers and pop singers also gave concerts, raising money to build up education and agriculture in Tana Toraja. In their speeches both Jusuf Kalla' (who comes from Bone) and the Governor of South Sulawesi (who comes from Gowa, and whose wife is descended from lowland royalty) acknowledged their own descent from Laki Padada, and thus laid claim to Toraja ancestors. To coincide with the festival and the return of migrant family members, all sorts of other rites were celebrated, including funerals, house ceremonies and Christian 'thanksgiving' rites (*ma'kurre' sumanga'*), driving up the prices of buffaloes and pigs to more unprecedented levels than ever. The event was widely declared a success, and plans are in process to repeat it in future. All this would seem only to confirm the present reality of a sense of identity focused on the territory of Tana



Toraja. It is also suggestive of the powerful influence that emigrants can have on this still evolving sense of identity, with their active participation in rituals and generous contributions to development within that territory.

Toraja people today face many new challenges in a rapidly changing Indonesia. One of these is the inherited culture of corruption that has been such a regrettable legacy of the Suharto era. In the new atmosphere of democratic freedoms, not the least challenge is to evolve an effective and accountable local government that can rise above immediate personal interests to serve people well. Another is to stand firm against the efforts of those malignant forces in Indonesian society that presently seek to stir up destructive hatreds and undermine the country's honourable and centuries-old traditions of religious tolerance. Those projects will require Toraja to put to use their most deeply-rooted ideals of social solidarity and generosity.

While documenting the extent of transformation in Tana Toraja over the course of the twentieth century, I have tried to show how certain powerful cultural continuities have been preserved. As the river of time tumbles onward, knowledge from the past is handed on and endures, in the poetic Toraja image, 'like river stones touching each other' (*dianna' batu silambi', disedan karangan siratuan*). No matter how many stones are washed away by the water, the river bed is never bare. Yet it must also be remembered that the very idea of a distinct ethnic identity as 'Toraja' is still relatively new, and it will surely develop further, perhaps in as yet uncharted and unexpected directions. Meanwhile the paths into and out of the highlands stretch further and further, as people journey in search of livelihoods in ever more distant places. But here I have traced the rivers and pathways of my own account as far as I can. It has taken me a long time, but whatever its shortcomings, I hope that Toraja will recognise themselves in the story I have told.



## APPENDIX A

### PASSONDE-SONDE

Prayer recited after the ritual of *ma'tetean bori'*, (interpretation of dreams) at the conclusion of the house ceremony

Recited by *to minaa* Buttu of Simbulan, Uluvalu, January 1983

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Kumapu'mo bonginna, Puang<br/>Pasapa' madaruma'mo makaruenna,<br/>To Pagaragai</i> | The night is already far advanced, O Lord<br>Evening has turned into night, O Creator                             |
| 2 | <i>Ma'din matangai lalan mo matindo<br/>Maeru' kalambunanmo mamma'<br/>maya-maya</i>  | They <sup>1</sup> may be half way through their dreams<br>Almost there, crossing over into deep sleep             |
| 3 | <i>Uppemandappi' lepongan tondok<br/>Uppemareke' pa'kalemba to bunga'</i>             | Approaching the circle of the village<br>Striking the path that leads to the place [of<br>prosperity]             |
| 4 | <i>Lasitodo' tappo diongmai batu<br/>Dantalasia siapi' bala batu</i>                  | Rows of stones support the rice field dyke<br>Tough grasses have been laid in between the<br>stones <sup>2</sup>  |
| 5 | <i>Ladisolan dokko mamma'<br/><br/>Ladirondong dokko matindo</i>                      | They will be sleeping close together down in<br>their dreams<br>Dreaming all together down there, side by<br>side |
| 6 | <i>Ta ma'tindo lan tangana bongi<br/>Mangimpi lan pesekong malillin</i>               | We shall dream in the middle of the night<br>Dream in the darkest part of the night                               |
| 7 | <i>Unnorongi ki' tasik mapulu'<br/>Tindona uma kadoke-dokean</i>                      | We shall swim in an abundant sea<br>Dream of a rice field full of <i>doke-doke</i> plants <sup>3</sup>            |
| 8 | <i>Mamma'na ma'kambuno lumu'<br/>Ma'pata'dung doke-doke</i>                           | We shall dream that it is full of water weeds<br>Covered all over with <i>doke-doke</i> plants                    |

<sup>1</sup> 'They' refers to the descendants of the house.

<sup>2</sup> This is done to strengthen the dyke.

<sup>3</sup> These plants grow in fertile fields, and are often fed to pigs.

*Appendix A*

- 9 *Batu ma'dandanan dio biring tasik*      Stones in a row at the edge of the sea  
*Tindona patuku ma'dandan*              To dream of them means you will have rows  
of rice-stacks<sup>4</sup>  
*Sola lappo' sielongan.*                      And heaps of newly-harvested rice all in a  
row.

<sup>4</sup> The harvesters pile the bunches of cut rice into tall heaps on the rice field banks as they work.

## APPENDIX B

### CHANT FOR THE MA'BUGI' RITUAL

Recited by Ne' Tambing of Sa'dan, June 1996

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | <i>Bugi' dio randan langi'<br/>To dio lelean uran</i>                               | Bugi' from the edge of the sky<br>From the place where rain begins  |
| 2  | <i>To naboko' raka allo<br/>To tangnakitta' masiang<br/>Tangnalombang bayo-bayo</i> | One from a place behind the sun<br>One who never sees daylight<br>Where there are never any shadows           |
| 3  | <i>To tangdikitta' dadinna<br/>Tangditiro dikombongna</i>                           | No-one witnessed his birth<br>No-one saw how he was created   |
| 4  | <i>To dadi lan sa'pak batu<br/>Kombong lan batu laulung</i>                         | He was born from a cleft in the rocks<br>Created within the granite boulder                                   |
| 5  | <i>Limanna manna ditiro<br/>Sola tuntun tarunona</i>                                | Only his hand was visible<br>And the nail of his index finger   |
| 6  | <i>Kurapak allo nanai<br/>Sumpak bulan naesungi</i>                                 | He dwells where the sun began<br>He sits where the moon originated  |
| 7  | <i>To tangkumande makula'<br/>Tanglumintok bura-bura</i>                            | One who doesn't eat cooked food<br>One who doesn't taste the foam <sup>1</sup>                                |
| 8  | <i>Uran allo nanasui<br/>Ambun napa'pareso'i</i>                                    | He cooks the early morning rain<br>The dew is his cooking-pot   |
| 9  | <i>Manasu nairi' angina<br/>Re'de nasimbo darinding</i>                             | The wind blows on him as he cooks<br>As his water boils, the breezes caress him                               |
| 10 | <i>Marassan mo la memanuk<br/>La megarente lo lalan</i>                             | He is looking out for omen-birds <sup>2</sup><br>He is listening for the songs of omen-birds<br>along the way |

<sup>1</sup> Of fine cooking.

<sup>2</sup> To determine a good day to set out.

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 11 | <i>Maelo tongan manukna</i><br><i>Sampa' tongan garentena</i>                                 | He has chosen a good day <sup>3</sup><br>An excellent day for departure   |
| 12 | <i>Tonna ke'de' diomai</i><br><i>Tonna lo sambali mai</i><br><i>Bu'tu lamban diongmai</i>     | As he climbs up from that place<br>As he crosses over from there<br>He comes into view as he crosses over                             |
| 13 | <i>Tae' gamara narangi</i><br><i>Tae' langkan kumadakak</i>                                   | He hears no voice<br>No eagle's cry   |
| 14 | <i>Melale' batunna todo</i><br><i>Karangan ma'giling-giling</i>                               | As he trips on a stone it laughs<br>The pebbles rattle as he passes   |
| 15 | <i>Sa dio-diona mai</i><br><i>Sau' untangana lalanna</i>                                      | He is getting closer<br>Half way on the road from the south   |
| 16 | <i>Ma'kulambu tuntulu lalan</i><br><i>Ma'rinding lako-lakoan</i>                              | He stops to rest on the road<br>He puts up a mosquito-net several times<br>along the way  |
| 17 | <i>Ma'kulambu tangkulambu</i><br><i>Ma'rinding tangea rinding</i>                             | A mosquito-net that's not a mosquito-net<br>A curtain that isn't a curtain  |
| 18 | <i>Ma'kulambu sura' maya</i><br><i>Ma'rinding lengko busirrin</i>                             | A mosquito-net with a pattern like <i>maa'</i><br>cloths <sup>4</sup><br>A curtain with the <i>lengko busirrin</i> motif <sup>5</sup> |
| 19 | <i>Sa dio-diona mai</i><br><i>Sau' untangana lalanna</i>                                      | He is getting closer<br>He is half way on the road from the south   |
| 20 | <i>Sae mengkannai tasik</i><br><i>Mentunanga' ri uai</i>                                      | He has come to the ocean<br>He arrives at the water's edge  |
| 21 | <i>Sa layan-layanna mai</i><br><i>Sae mengkannai Tapping</i><br><i>Mentananga' ri Lebukan</i> | He is getting closer and closer<br>He arrives at the harbour<br>He reaches Lebukan <sup>6</sup>                                       |
| 22 | <i>Sa layan-layanna mai</i><br><i>Sae mengkannai Ala'</i><br><i>Mentunanga' ri Palopo</i>     | He is still coming closer<br>He arrives at Ala' <sup>7</sup><br>He has reached Palopo   |

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'truly his omen-bird is good'.

<sup>4</sup> Heirloom cloths used in rituals.

<sup>5</sup> A design of ant-figures at the edge of some *maa'* cloths (*busirrin*: 'smelling of ants').

<sup>6</sup> An island near Palopo.

<sup>7</sup> An ancient name for Palopo.



- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 23 | <i>Sikutana sangdatunna</i><br><i>Sikuan sangkaraengna</i>   | He converses with the Lord of Luwu'<br>He is talking with the ruler  |
| 24 | <i>Sikutana sangke'deran</i><br><i>Sikuan sangtiangkaran</i>   | Still in conversation, they get up to leave<br>Still talking, they depart together   |
| 25 | <i>Tallu ratu' sangke'deran</i><br><i>Sangsa'bu sangtiangkaran</i>                                   | Three hundred take their leave together<br>One thousand depart together  |
| 26 | <i>Tallu ratu' bayananna</i><br><i>Sangsa'bu sambo boko'na</i>                                       | Three hundred are their porters<br>One thousand are their entourage  |
| 27 | <i>Tibaen lusau' Songka'</i><br><i>Latuppa' natidukkunni</i>   | They are arriving there at Songka'<br>Latuppa' is their destination <sup>8</sup>   |
| 28 | <i>Sa diong-diongna mai</i><br><i>Sae mengkannai Tempe'</i><br><i>Mentunanga ri To' Sarre</i>        | They are getting closer and closer<br>They arrive at Tempe'<br>They have reached To' Sarre                                       |
| 29 | <i>Sa diong-diongna mai</i><br><i>Sae mengkannai Tandung</i><br><i>Mentunanga' ri Nanggala</i>       | They are getting closer and closer<br>They arrive at Tandung<br>They have reached Nanggala <sup>9</sup>                          |
| 30 | <i>Tabang kumombong ri Tandung</i><br><i>Lendu' kisa'pek daunna</i><br><i>Kire'to menggulasingna</i> | There are many <i>tabang</i> plants at Tandung <sup>10</sup><br>They pluck the leaves as they pass<br>They pick the young shoots |
| 31 | <i>Na po pedampi to Bugi'</i><br><i>Na po tamba' to Balanda</i>                                      | To make medicine for the Bugi'<br>To chew and rub on the wounds of the<br>Dutch <sup>11</sup>                                    |
| 32 | <i>Ke den masaki ulunna</i><br><i>Madaramban beluakna</i><br><i>Ramman bulu saratu'na</i>            | If they have a headache<br>If their heads are hurting<br>If their whole body is in pain  |

<sup>8</sup> The port at Palopo.

<sup>9</sup> Easterly Toraja villages.

<sup>10</sup> *Cordylone terminalis*, a red-leaved plant used in rituals. Application of the leaves to wounds incurred while trancing is supposed to heal them immediately.

<sup>11</sup> In *ma'bugi'* chants, there is a clear association of the sickness-causing deity Puang Bugi' with the Bugis people, and references to 'Bugis' and 'Balanda' (Dutch) are often paired. The idea of epidemics as being introduced by foreigners may possibly reflect historical experience. Nooy-Palm (1986:139) notes that 'the terms *bugi'* and *balanda* are used to designate that which is considered to be abnormal, extraordinary or eccentric', as well as 'creatures who can bring disease with them'. She mentions yet another dangerous, white spirit honoured in the *ma'bugi'* who is called To Paragusi, or 'Portuguese'. See also Waterson (1995c) on images of the smallpox-causing deity, Puang Ruru'.

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 33 | <i>Tibaen lusau' Suso'<br/>Sinaji na tidukkunni</i>                               | They arrive there at Suso'<br>They have reached Sinaji <sup>12</sup>                                |
| 34 | <i>Tau lampung lo' ri Suso'<br/>To tayan lo' Sinaji</i>                           | There are wild, forest people at Suso' <sup>13</sup><br>There are spirits on Sinaji                 |
| 35 | <i>Ularanna' lutturanna'<br/>Palola pasuleanna'</i>                               | They run after me, chase me,<br>Pursue me, drive me back  |
| 36 | <i>Ba'tu to apa sanganna<br/>Ba'tu to minda to minda<br/>Ungkalaran sae Bugi'</i> | What is his name?<br>Who can it be?<br>Who comes bringing Bugi'?                                    |
| 37 | <i>Ba'tu to umpanglaya tedong<br/>To mangkambi' karambau</i>                      | It's probably the buffalo herdsman<br>The herder of the buffaloes                                   |
| 38 | <i>Ungkalaran sae Bugi'<br/>Umpopa'tete Balanda</i>                               | Coming to bring the Bugi'<br>Coming to bring the Dutch  |
| 39 | <i>Kalo' lempan ri Sinaji<br/>Ungkalaran sae Bugi'<br/>Umpopa'tete Balanda</i>    | Crossing the irrigation ditches on Sinaji<br>Coming to bring the Bugi'<br>Coming to bring the Dutch |
| 40 | <i>Tibaen lusau' Tampo<br/>Marinding na tidukkunni</i>                            | Arriving there in the south at Tampo <sup>14</sup><br>Arriving at Marinding                         |
| 41 | <i>Sa lao'-lao' na mai<br/>Sae mengkannai Limbu<br/>Mentunanga' ri Tadongkon</i>  | Getting closer and closer<br>Coming as far as Limbu<br>Arriving at Tadongkon                        |
| 42 | <i>Sa lao'-lao'na mai<br/>Sae maengkannai Kesu'<br/>Mentunanga' ri Malenong</i>   | Getting closer and closer<br>Coming as far as Kesu'<br>Arriving at Malenong                         |
| 43 | <i>Sa lao'-lao'na mai<br/>Sae mengkannai Rante<br/>Mentunanga' ri Pasele'</i>     | Getting closer and closer<br>Coming as far as Rante<br>Arriving at Pasele'                          |
| 44 | <i>Tibaen lulian Limbong<br/>Saruran natidukkunni</i>                             | Reaching as far as Limbong <sup>15</sup><br>Arriving at the water-spout                             |
| 45 | <i>Sa diong-diongna mai<br/>Sae mengkannai tondok<br/>Mentunanga' ri Pangleon</i> | Getting closer and closer<br>Coming into the village<br>Arriving at Pangleon                        |

<sup>12</sup> A mountain far to the south in Mengkendek district.

<sup>13</sup> In other words, the spirits.

<sup>14</sup> A village in Mengkendek.

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 46 | <i>La rampo inde mo te'e</i><br><i>La tasik mengguliling mo</i>                           | He is coming right here<br>Surrounded by a sea of people   |
| 47 | <i>Diballaran mo ko ale'</i><br><i>Dirante-rantean tuyu</i>                               | The mats are already laid out<br>The mats have been spread   |
| 48 | <i>Mu nai torro ma'pangan</i><br><i>Unnesung ma'lea-lea</i>                               | For you to sit and chew betel<br>To sit and refresh yourself with betel  |
| 49 | <i>Kaliling nasolan torro</i><br><i>Rangking nasang paningoan</i>                         | Stay here with people all around you<br>All these baskets of betel offerings are just for<br>your pleasure     |
| 50 | <i>Kuli' kalosinna Bugi'</i><br><i>Limbong berakna Balanda</i>                            | The areca nut husk of the Bugi'<br>The spat betel-juice of the Dutch   |
| 51 | <i>Kuli' kalosi pasondok</i><br><i>Limbong berak diorongngi</i>                           | The areca husks lie as deep as our waists<br>We are swimming in betel-juice <sup>16</sup>                      |
| 52 | <i>Iri'ko iri'ko angin</i><br><i>Simbo ko simbo darinding</i>                             | Blow, winds, blow<br>Blow, breezes, blow   |
| 53 | <i>Pangiri'ko da'mu mandu</i><br><i>Da'mu lulun daun kayu</i>                             | Wind, don't blow too strongly<br>Don't toss the leaves too hard <sup>17</sup>                                  |
| 54 | <i>Pangiri' rekke ko buntu</i><br><i>Simbo rekke ko tanete</i>                            | Blow toward the mountains<br>Blow away to the hills <sup>18</sup>  |
| 55 | <i>Daya banuanna Bugi'</i><br><i>Daya tondokna Balanda</i>                                | Go up there to the house of the Bugi'<br>Up to the village of the Dutch  |
| 56 | <i>To mebanua ditoke'</i><br><i>To metondok dianginni</i><br><i>Disedan lanmai langi'</i> | The one who has a hanging house<br>The one whose village is windswept<br>House which is suspended from the sky |
| 57 | <i>Mebanua tangdilelleng</i><br><i>Metondok tangdila'bo'i</i>                             | House which came into being by itself <sup>19</sup><br>Built without using a bush-knife                        |
| 58 | <i>Lalan uasena Bugi'</i><br><i>Lalan bingkungna Balanda</i>                              | The way of the Bugi' axe<br>The way of the Dutch adze  |

<sup>15</sup> A place near Rantepao, known for its spring, which is said to be inhabited by spirits.

<sup>16</sup> Owing to the great numbers of people all chewing betel together (betel chewing causes copious salivation of a bright red colour).

<sup>17</sup> The 'wind' here metaphorically means 'illness'; the illness is asked not to be too severe, not to make everyone sick.

<sup>18</sup> The sickness is invited to leave.

59	<i>Lalan uase manikna</i> <i>Lalan bingkung bulaanna</i>	The way of the fine axe The way of the golden adze
60	<i>Pataro-taro bingkungna</i> <i>Pasulellen uasena</i>	Much noise of carpenters working with axes The noise of many adzes at work
61	<i>To mebanua dileko'</i> <i>To metondok dipauang</i>  <i>Dipopemba'ba lurekke</i>	One whose house is turned back to front One whose village is oriented toward the east <sup>20</sup>  With a window facing to the north
62	<i>Daya na' tonna i bangun</i> <i>Tonna dipatama rinding</i>	I was up there when it was built When the walls were put in place
63	<i>Anna le'ke' tamantelang</i> <i>Diosok petuo tanga</i>	When the upper beams were installed When the central post was erected
64	<i>Tangpepori peporinna</i> <i>Tangue pepamarra'na</i>	Its bindings are no ordinary bindings Its cords are not of rattan
65	<i>Dao bulan peporinna</i> <i>Bintoen pepamarra'na</i> <i>Allo peba'na-ba'nana</i>	The moon is used to bind it The stars are its cords The sun holds it together
66	<i>La sipassakke ma'bugi'</i> <i>La sibenmo' tuo-tuo</i>	We shall be cured of our illness We shall all be well again
67	<i>Umbudai ra' kollongku</i> <i>Unnalli na' penaangku</i>	My appetite has returned We make offerings because I have recovered
68	<i>Kande mati' pemala'ku</i> <i>Pempala' patomalingku</i>	Please eat my offering I hold it out to you with both hands
69	<i>Balanda suleko lako</i> <i>Bugi' lokkon ko lalanmu</i>	Dutchman, go home Bugi', be on your way
70	<i>Banuammu raka te'e?</i> <i>Tondoknu raka te mai?</i>	Is this your house? Is this where you belong?
71	<i>Ammu la torro ra inde</i> <i>Laumbulisu-lisu ra?</i>	That you should want to stay here Going round and round the village?

<sup>19</sup> Literally, without the felling of trees.

<sup>20</sup> The deity's house faces in the opposite direction to Toraja houses, which must always be oriented north-south. This was also explained as being connected to the fact that the Bugi' is described as arriving from the east, and then turning toward the north on its journey.

- 72 *Keallo pa ta sitammu*  
*Ta sitammu lan di lembang*  
*Siduppa lan di orongan*      Another time, we'll meet again  
We'll meet again in the village  
We shall see each other again in the settlement
- 73 *Mukianak kukiampo*  
*Anakmu disanga Daeng*  
*Ampoku disanga Rimpung*      You shall have a child, and I shall have a  
grandchild  
Your child shall be named Daeng<sup>21</sup>  
My grandchild shall be named Rimpung<sup>22</sup>
- 74 *Ammu daeng-daeng sugi'*  
*Angku rimpung bala tedong.*      So that you shall have all kinds of wealth  
So that I shall be rich in buffaloes.

<sup>21</sup> A Bugis title, here implying wealth.

<sup>22</sup> A Toraja word meaning 'to gather together', here implying abundance and prosperity.





## APPENDIX C

### VERSES OF TWO MA' BADONG CHANTS FOR THE DECEASED (*ossoran badong*)

1. Recited by Bua' Sarungallo of Kesu', 1979
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Tiromi tu tau tongan</i><br><i>Tu to natampa deata</i>                                   | Look at the great one <sup>1</sup><br>The one created by the deities  |
| 2 | <i>Nalulun padang naola</i><br><i>Umpasilongsean riu</i><br><i>Umpamampu' padang-padang</i> | Whose path (to the funeral ground) is cleared<br>Who causes the grass to be flattened <sup>2</sup><br>Who causes even the tough <i>padang-padang</i><br>grass to be destroyed |
| 3 | <i>Ma'ti tombang naeangngi</i><br><i>Umpakarangkean tasik</i>                               | Who dries up the buffalo's wallowing-hole <sup>3</sup><br>Who makes the sea dry up  |
| 4 | <i>Untengkai kalo' dua</i><br><i>Unlamban pasala-sala</i>                                   | He has crossed over two ditches <sup>4</sup><br>He crosses over rapidly   |
| 5 | <i>Lamban lian peambongan</i><br><i>Sambali' petanantian</i>                                | He has passed through the vegetable gardens <sup>5</sup><br>Far away where the <i>tananti</i> grows   |
| 6 | <i>Nabala dambu ma'dandan</i><br><br><i>Nasapa' mengkini-kini</i>                           | The boundary formed by a row of <i>jambu</i><br>trees <sup>6</sup><br>Far away, beyond view   |
| 7 | <i>Unlambi'mo pasa' langkan</i><br><br><i>Tammuanna manuk-manuk</i>                         | He has already arrived at the market of<br>eagles <sup>7</sup><br>The meeting-place of the birds  |
| 8 | <i>Umpobaluk-baluk bungin</i><br><i>Umpobalanta karangan</i>                                | He sells sand<br>And purchases pebbles  |

<sup>1</sup> A person of high rank, either man or woman. The chants may be performed for either gender.

<sup>2</sup> So great is the procession bearing the corpse.

<sup>3</sup> Owing to the people leaping up and down as they carry the body.

<sup>4</sup> Setting out on his journey to the afterlife.

<sup>5</sup> On hillsides at the edge of the village.

<sup>6</sup> *Tananti*: a wild vegetable; *dambu* (I: *jambu*): a wild fruit, *Eugenia squeea*).

<sup>7</sup> Beyond human habitation, on the wild hillsides.

- 9 *Bendan kaluku mi lolo'*  
*Lama' induk tumayangmi* The coconut palm is standing there  
There grows the *tuak*-bearing sugar palm<sup>8</sup>
- 10 *Lanaola langan langi'*  
*Natete langan batara* He will ascend them to reach the sky  
He will use them as a bridge to the heavens
- 11 *Kombangmi to Palullungan*  
*Laditulak mira langan*  
*Ladipenombai mira* He will become one of those who protect us  
We will honour him up above  
We shall put our trust in him
- 12 *Anna bengki' tua' sanda*  
*Palisu sanda mairi'.* So that he will provide us with all our needs  
With every kind of wealth.<sup>9</sup>

2. Recited by *to minaa* Buttu of Simbulan, Ulusalu, 1983

- 1 *Sangbanua mo' nene'ku*  
*Sangtondok mo' to doloku* I have gone to the house of my grandparents  
To the village of my ancestors
- 2 *Sangbanua tangmerambu*  
*Sangtondok tangsiapi-apian* To the house without smoke  
To the village where no fire is lit
- 3 *To upa'nasui allo*  
*To uppa'to' bura-bura* Where they cook by means of the sun  
Where they put foam to boil instead of water
- 4 *Uran allo napodea'*  
*Salebu' napettinosa-nosai* They satisfy themselves with early morning  
rain  
And eat their fill of morning mist
- 5 *Nakua kadanna lolo'*  
*Randan pudukna sambali':* She says from down there  
Her words from the other side:
- 6 *Da'na aku mo muanga'*  
*Mudete' mukilalai* Please don't yearn for me  
Recall me, remember me
- 7 *Sangbanua mo' nene'mu*  
*Sangtondok mo' to dolomu* I have gone to the house of your grandparents  
The village of your ancestors
- 8 *Rappanan tekko mo aku*  
*Tibe samban marapo mo* Let me go as you would release the plough  
Throw me down as you would the yoke that  
is worn out

<sup>8</sup> *Tumayang*: *tuak*, palm wine; *induk*: sugar palm (*Arenga saccharifera*).

<sup>9</sup> *Palisu*: literally, the whorls of hair on a buffalo's hide, which, if in favourable positions, are thought to bring good fortune.

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 9  | <i>Iko o ri to iti'na</i><br><i>To kuboko' daya mai</i>                                     | You are the only ones still there <sup>10</sup><br>You whom I have already left behind  |
| 10 | <i>Den o upa' mupoupa'</i><br><i>Paraya mo muparaya</i>                                     | May you enjoy good fortune<br>May you enjoy prosperity  |
| 11 | <i>Muna'sappe membuya</i><br><br><i>Dao lattang laenammu</i>                                | So that you can stay there like chickens<br>roosting<br>In your own house there on earth  |
| 12 | <i>Undaka' rokkoan kollong</i><br><i>Sola taman barokomu</i>                                | Making your living<br>And earning a livelihood  |
| 13 | <i>Ladiapapi dilambi'</i><br><i>Didete' dikilalai?</i>                                      | There's no need to remember me<br>What's the good of recalling me?  |
| 14 | <i>Lolo' mo' Rattena Tungga'</i><br><i>Tikaladunna Endekan</i>                              | I have gone south to the Plain of Tungga'<br>To the region of Enrekang  |
| 15 | <i>Berakna manda mo lolo'</i><br><br><i>Sola eteng kalosinna</i>                            | Only the red stain where I spat out betel-juice<br>can be seen there <sup>11</sup><br>And the husk of the areca-nut I chewed      |
| 16 | <i>Naundu-undui bu'ku'</i><br><i>Narusinni manuk-manuk</i><br><i>Se'ke' upparra matanna</i> | The pigeons hesitate to eat it<br>The birds fix their eyes on it <sup>12</sup><br>The <i>se'ke'</i> bird sings its mournful song. |
| 17 | <i>Takkedaun mo kaluku</i><br><i>Takkepalapa mo induk</i>                                   | The coconut palm has no more leaves<br>The sugar palm has lost its stalks   |
| 18 | <i>Lendu' natoto daunna</i><br><i>Nabongsoran palapanna</i>                                 | She passed there and stripped them of leaves<br>She pulled down their branches  |
| 19 | <i>Nabongsoran naporaki'</i><br><i>Napo orongan to mali'</i>                                | She pulled them down to make a raft<br>The one who is gone used them to cross<br>over <sup>13</sup>                               |
| 20 | <i>Naporaki' to male</i><br><i>Sola to ma'puduk lappak.</i>                                 | The one who has left used them to make a raft<br>The one with swollen lips. <sup>14</sup>   |

<sup>10</sup> In other words, you must think of yourselves.

<sup>11</sup> Where I stopped to rest on the road.

<sup>12</sup> Looking for something worth eating.

<sup>13</sup> *To mali'*: 'the exiled one, one carried away by the water'.

<sup>14</sup> In other words, because she is dead.

- 21 *Lamban lian mo sepangna*  
*Samba'i mo karanganna* She has already crossed over to the other side  
Her boat is on the far bank
- 22 *Ladiapa pi dilambi'*  
*Ladidete' dikilalai?* It's no use to remember her  
To recollect, to recall her
- 23 *Nakua kadanna dio*  
*Rappanan pudukna sambali'* From the other side she says  
Her words from the other side:
- 24 *Rappanan tekko mo aku*  
*Tibe samban marapo mo*  
*Komba' tang dipoapa mo* Let me go as you would release the plough  
Throw me down like the yoke that is worn  
out  
Like a bracelet no longer valued
- 25 *Dadi lombu mo ra' inde*  
*Kombong tai tedong mo' ra* I am already turning into mud  
Becoming buffalo excrement
- 26 *Samale-male na' lako*  
*Sauttanga na' lalanna*  
*Sama' erun-erunanna* I'm going further and further  
More than half way on my journey  
Looking just like a small dot on the horizon
- 27 *Ullambi' mo to tangmamma'*  
*To tangra'ba bulu mata* I've reached the place of those who never  
sleep  
Those who never close their eyelids
- 28 *To uttara-tara tanduk*  
*Uttappa amba muane* Those who have the power to shape  
And give form to a handsome man
- 29 *E, diong o naboko' allo*  
*Tang nakabirro masiang* At last she is down there behind the sun  
Where the daylight never reaches
- 30 *Tindak-tindak mo sarira*  
*Umboyang mo tara ue* The rainbow is already stretching upwards  
The rainbow curves upward<sup>15</sup>
- 31 *Napolalan langan langi'*  
*Naola langan deata* She climbs it up into the sky  
She goes up it to the deities
- 32 *Dao mo nakatea' Lemba*  
*Nasalukkung Bunga' Lalan* She is up there in the arms of Lemba<sup>16</sup>  
Cradled by Bunga' Lalan<sup>17</sup>
- 33 *Na Manukna Lapandek*  
*Londongna Pong Tulang Didi'* And the cock of Lapandek  
The rooster of Pong Tulang Didi'<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Tara ue*: literally, 'rattan creeper', a metaphor for the rainbow.

<sup>16</sup> Orion's Belt (literally, 'the carrying-pole').

<sup>17</sup> The Pleiades (*bunga' lalan*: literally, 'leads the way'; the position of this constellation is observed to determine the start of the agricultural cycle).

<sup>18</sup> Another constellation, named after a magical rooster who crowed the heroine of a well-known folk story back to life, and brought her wealth with the sound of his voice.

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 34 | <i>Nakua kadanna dao<br/>Randan pudukna sambali'</i>                           | She says from up there<br>Her words from the other side   |
| 35 | <i>Da'na aku mo muanga'<br/>Mudete' mukilalai</i>                              | Don't yearn for me<br>Recall me, remember me  |
| 36 | <i>Dadi dewata mo' inde<br/>Unnisung Kapuangan mo'</i>                         | I have become a <i>deata</i> up here<br>I am sitting together with the deities                                  |
| 37 | <i>Inde mo' nakatea' Lemba<br/>Nasalukkung Bunga' Lalan</i>                    | Here I am in the arms of Lemba<br>Clasped in the arms of Bunga' Lalan   |
| 38 | <i>Na Manukna Lapandek<br/>Londongna Pong Tulang Didi'</i>                     | And the cock of Lapandek<br>The rooster of Pong Tulang Didi'  |
| 39 | <i>Kurapak allo kumesok<br/>Na bulan kuisungi</i>                              | I guard the passage of the sun<br>And dwell upon the moon   |
| 40 | <i>La mutiro langan mai<br/>Ke upparokko ko banne<br/>Ussea' tallu bulinna</i> | You will look up to them<br>When the time comes for sowing the seed<br>When you scatter the 'three ears' (rice) |
| 41 | <i>Muambo' tangsala ambo'<br/>Musea' tangsala sea'</i>                         | You will sow the seed at the right time<br>Scatter it at the proper moment                                      |
| 42 | <i>Mukuppang tama riu<br/>Mu ka kumbaya-baya</i>                               | You will be full of hope for your crop <sup>19</sup><br>You will be expecting a good harvest                    |
| 43 | <i>La nakande rika dena'<br/>Tangnakaritto balao</i>                           | No <i>dena'</i> finch will eat it<br>No mice will nibble it   |
| 44 | <i>Siappa' sippona dena'<br/>Takkeisinna balao<br/>Takkebuang baraninna.</i>   | The finches will have no beaks<br>The mice will have no teeth<br>They will have no strong molars.               |

<sup>19</sup> Literally, 'you will lean toward the crop'.

## APPENDIX D

### RANKED LEVELS OF THE FUNERAL CEREMONY

	Name of ceremony/ meaning	No. of nights/ no. of sacrifices	No. of stages	Effigy ( <i>tau-tau</i> ) or other status markers	Rank permitted to hold ceremony
1	<i>Disodangan</i> (meaning obscure)	1 night; 1 pig; 1 chicken	1 stage; corpse treated as 'dead' immediately	No <i>tau-tau</i>	<i>Tana' kua-kua</i> (also babies, but 1 buffalo killed for babies of <i>tana' bulaan</i> )
2	<i>Dibu 'buk</i> (meaning obscure)	(a) <i>dibu 'buk bai</i> – 2 pigs (b) <i>dibu 'buk tedong</i> – 1 buffalo, 3 pigs	1 stage; corpse treated as 'dead' immediately	No <i>tau-tau</i>	<i>Tana' kua-kua</i>
3	<i>Dipasangbongi</i> (‘given a one-night ceremony’)	1 night; 1 buffalo, 5 pigs (minimum)	1 stage; corpse treated as 'dead' immediately	No <i>tau-tau</i>	<i>Tana' kua-kua</i> / <i>Tana' karurung</i>
4	<i>Dipatalung bongi</i> (‘given a 3-night ceremony’)	3 nights; 3 buffaloes, 10 or more pigs	1 stage; corpse treated as 'dead' immediately	Temporary <i>tau-tau</i> ; drum beaten 3 times to announce level of funeral; <i>bala' kayan</i> [meat distribution platform] built	<i>Tana' bassi' / bulaan</i> ( <i>Tana' kua-kua / Tana'</i> <i>karurung</i> may purchase right to hold)
5	<i>Dipalimang bongi</i> (‘given a 5-night ceremony’)	5 nights; 5 buffaloes, 20 or more pigs	1 stage; corpse treated as 'dead' immediately	Temporary <i>tau-tau</i> ; drum beaten 5 times; <i>bala' kayan</i>	<i>Tana' bassi' / bulaan</i>



Name of ceremony/ meaning	No. of nights/ no. of sacrifices	No. of stages	Effigy ( <i>tau-tau</i> ) or other status markers	Rank permitted to hold ceremony
6 <i>Dipakasera</i> (‘given a 9-night ceremony’)	Minimum 9 nights; 9 buffaloes, 30 or more pigs	2 stages; corpse treated as ‘sick’ until funeral ceremony	Temporary <i>tau-tau</i> ; drum beaten; <i>bala’kayan</i>	<i>Tana’ bassi’/ bulaan</i>
7 <i>Mellao mellambi’</i> (to go in the morning [taking the corpse to the <i>rante</i> ])	No fixed time limit; 16 buffaloes, many pigs	2 stages, including final ceremony on <i>rante</i>	Temporary <i>tau-tau</i> ; drum beaten; <i>bala’kayan</i> ; also <i>lakkean</i> [tower in which corpse is placed]	<i>Tana’ bassi’/ bulaan</i>
8 <i>Dipekka’ do’i</i> (‘to be given breakfast’ – guests stay overnight on <i>rante</i> before main ceremony)	No fixed time limit; 18-24 buffaloes, many pigs	2 stages, including final ceremony on <i>rante</i>	Temporary <i>tau-tau</i> ; drum beaten; <i>bala’kayan</i> ; <i>lakkean</i>	<i>Tana’ bassi’/ bulaan</i>
9 <i>Tedong tallung lesa</i> (36 buffaloes)	No fixed time limit; 36 buffaloes, many pigs	2 stages, including final ceremony on <i>rante</i>	Permanent <i>tau-tau</i> ; drum beaten; <i>bala’kayan</i> ; <i>lakkean</i>	<i>Tana’ bulaan</i> only
10 <i>Tedong limang lesa</i> (120 buffaloes)	No fixed time limit; 120 buffaloes, many pigs	2 stages, including final ceremony on <i>rante</i>	Permanent <i>tau-tau</i> ; drum beaten; <i>bala’kayan</i> ; <i>lakkean</i>	<i>Tana’ bulaan</i> only

## APPENDIX E

TABLE OF EXCHANGE VALUES AND INFLATION OVER  
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Date	Spotted buffalo ( <i>tedong bonga</i> )	Medium black buffalo <i>sangpala'</i>	Very large pig	Rice in bunches ( <i>kutu'</i> )	Portuguese silver <i>oang</i>
Precolonial times (pre-1905)		1  1 <i>alla' tarin</i> (bigger than <i>sangpala'</i> )	(Trading of pig for rice not usual, except piglets for rearing)		192 (8 x string of 24 coins)  200-250 coins
1920s-1930s		1 <i>sangpala'</i>	1	1,500	
1938	1	10		350-500	
1940s		1 <i>sangpala'</i>	1	1,500 (Rantepao)	
1945				500	
1947			small sow for rearing (exchange between households, not at markets)	300  150	
			Male piglet	up to 250	
1950-1951				10 (or 1 litre)	
1953				10	

Dutch silver <i>ringgit</i> (1 Rgt = 2½ gulden)	Indonesian Rupiah (post-1949)	Indonesian Rupiah index	US dollar exchange rate	Price of gold in US dollars
				Stationary since 1879
4 (Malimbong) or 2 (Rantepao)			Not available	1920s: 20.67 1933: 32.00 1939: 35.00
40 1				
2			Not available	1940: 35.00 1945: 37.00 1947: 43.00 1949: 41.00
1 1 (value of Dutch Rgt remained stable till WWII; paper money also introduced by late 1940s, but still little used)				
	3 1½ 5		Not available	1950: 40.00 1953: 36.00

Date	Spotted buffalo ( <i>tedong bonga</i> )	Medium black buffalo <i>sangpala'</i>	Very large pig	Rice in bunches ( <i>kutu'</i> )	Portuguese silver <i>oang</i>
1970s		1 <i>sangpala'</i>	1	2,000 (Malimbong)	
		1 <i>inanna</i> (bigger than <i>sangpala'</i> , horns longer than forearm)		4,000 (Pangala')	
1978	1	10-12			
		1		1,500-2,000  (by late 1970s, rice production and imports increase; rice more plentiful and buffaloes no longer traded for)	
1982	1	10-12		-	
1994	1	10-12		(rice now threshed and sold by litre; as <i>beras</i> , has always had \$ equivalent, but never traded for buffalo)	
				1 litre	
1997 (Dec)					
1998 (mid July)				1 litre	
1999				1 litre	

Dutch silver <i>ringgit</i> (1 Rgt = 2½ gulden)	Indonesian Rupiah (post-1949)	Indonesian Rupiah index	US dollar exchange rate	Price of gold in US dollars
	100,000			1970: 39.00 1978: 208 1979: 459
	5-600,000 (record price, 1979 = 1 million)		1390-1670  2,800	
	100,000	100%	280 calculated at \$ 1 = Rp. 360)  (late 1978: 50% devaluation, \$ 1 = Rp. 540)	
	3 million	300%	not available	447
	12 million	1200%	5556 (\$ 1 = Rp. 2160)	383
	Rp. 1,000			
			(\$ 1 = Rp. 5,000) (monthly average)	287
	Rp. 3-4,000		(\$ 1 = Rp. 15,600) (point of maximum devaluation of Rp.)	289
	Rp. 2,000			289

Date	Spotted buffalo ( <i>tedong bonga</i> )	Medium black buffalo <i>sangpala'</i>	Very large pig	Rice in bunches ( <i>kutu'</i> )	Portuguese silver <i>oang</i>
2002	1	10-12			
		1			
		1 <i>alla' tarin</i> (buffalo no longer equivalent to largest pig)	1		
				1 litre	



Dutch silver <i>ringgit</i> (1 Rgt = 2½ gulden)	Indonesian Rupiah (post-1949)	Indonesian Rupiah index	US dollar exchange rate	Price of gold in US dollars
	30-50 million	5000%	3208-5348	310
	3.5-4.5 million 6 million		374-481 (\$ 1 = Rp. 9,350)	
	3 million (max.)		321 (\$ 1 = Rp. 9,350)	
	Rp. 2,500			



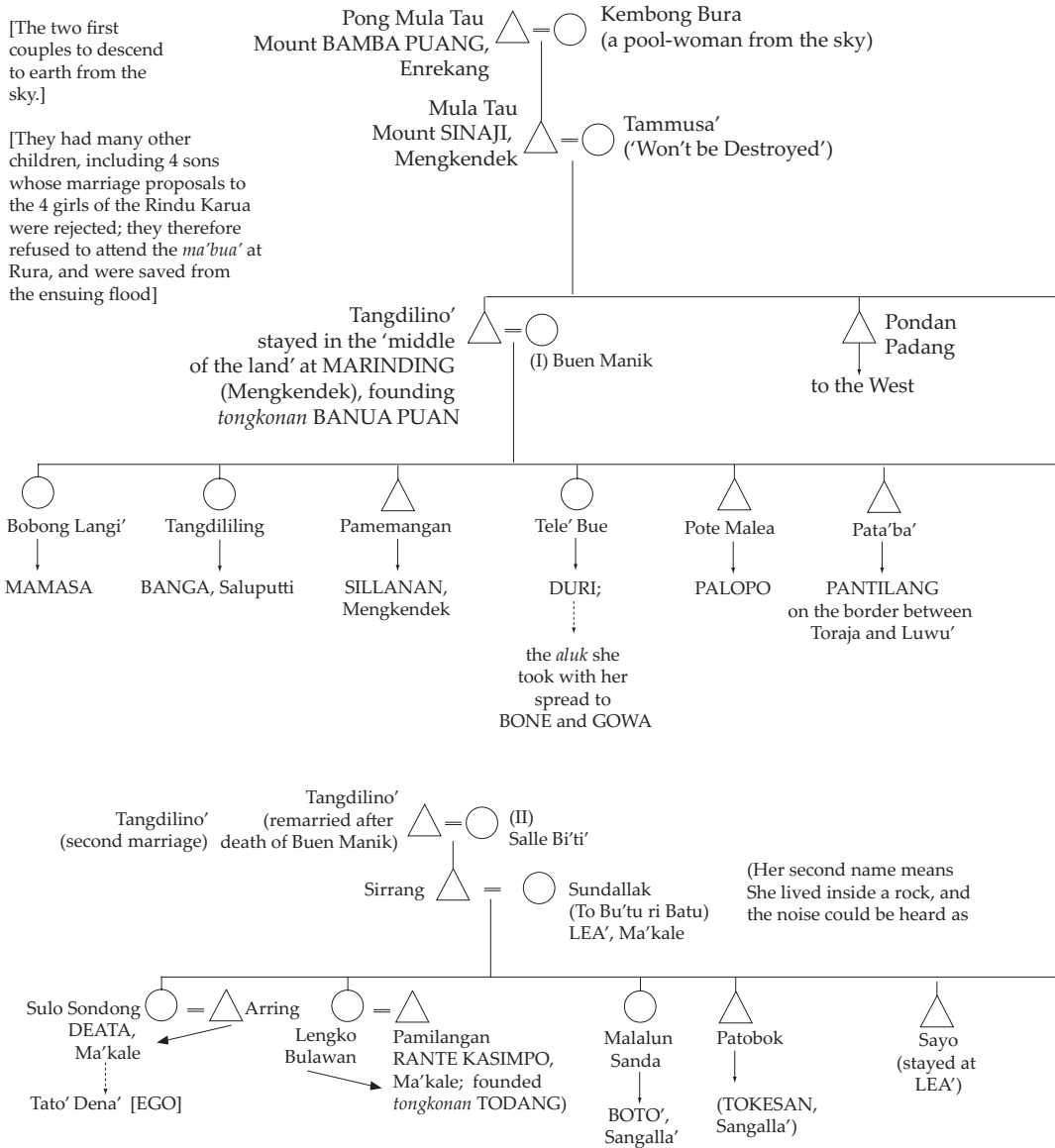
**APPENDIX F**

**Genealogies**

Genealogy 1. Tato' Dena's genealogy of Tangdilino' and his numerous children, who spread out from Banua Puan to found new houses in different parts of Toraja

[The two first couples to descend to earth from the sky.]

[They had many other children, including 4 sons whose marriage proposals to the 4 girls of the Rindu Karua were rejected; they therefore refused to attend the *ma'bu'a'* at Rura, and were saved from the ensuing flood]



Londong di Langi' (a.k.a. Londong di Rura)  $\triangle = \bigcirc$  Sa' pang di Galeso (a pool-woman from the sky)

RURA, Enrekang



The Rindu Karua, 4 sets of twins who married each other at a *ma'buu'* rite in Rura, causing Puang Matua to send a flood to destroy them.

$\triangle$  Passontik

to the East

Each took a share of the *aluk* with them

$\triangle$  Palanna'

LEBANE', near Buntao'

$\triangle$  Parange

BUNTAO'

$\bigcirc$  Bangkudu Ma'dandan BANUA PUAN  
She stayed to 'guard the seedbed of umbilical chords' (*ungkumpai panta'nakan lolo*)

$\triangle = \bigcirc$  Pabane (travelled north along the ridge of Mount SARIRA, marrying several times)

(I) To Uran Allo BUBURAN, Sangalla' (descendants settled in BEBO' and BALIK)

(II) Marrin di Gandang GANDANG, Ma'kale (descendants settled in RORRE and ANGIN-ANGIN)

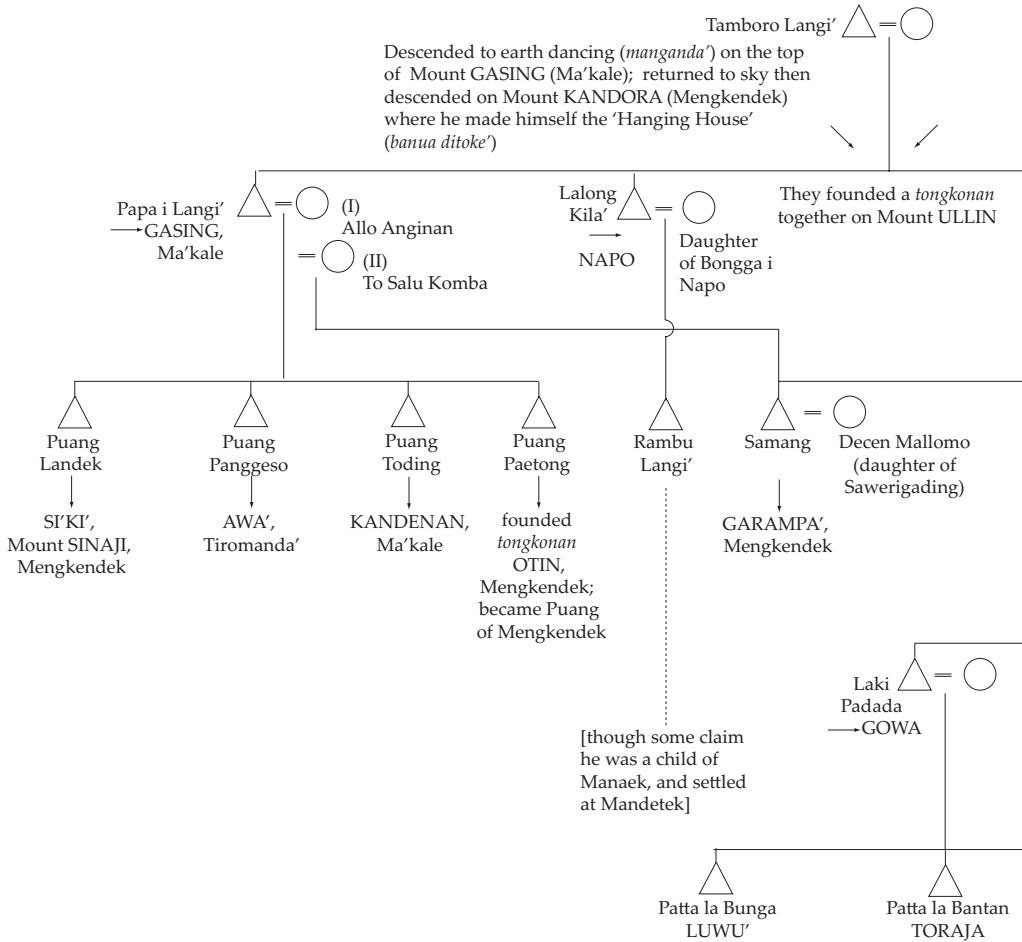
(III) Ambun di Kesu' KESU' Polo Padang

'One Who Appeared from the Stone'. when she slammed the door, far as Sesean)

$\triangle$  Kanuku Bulawan

PANTILANG

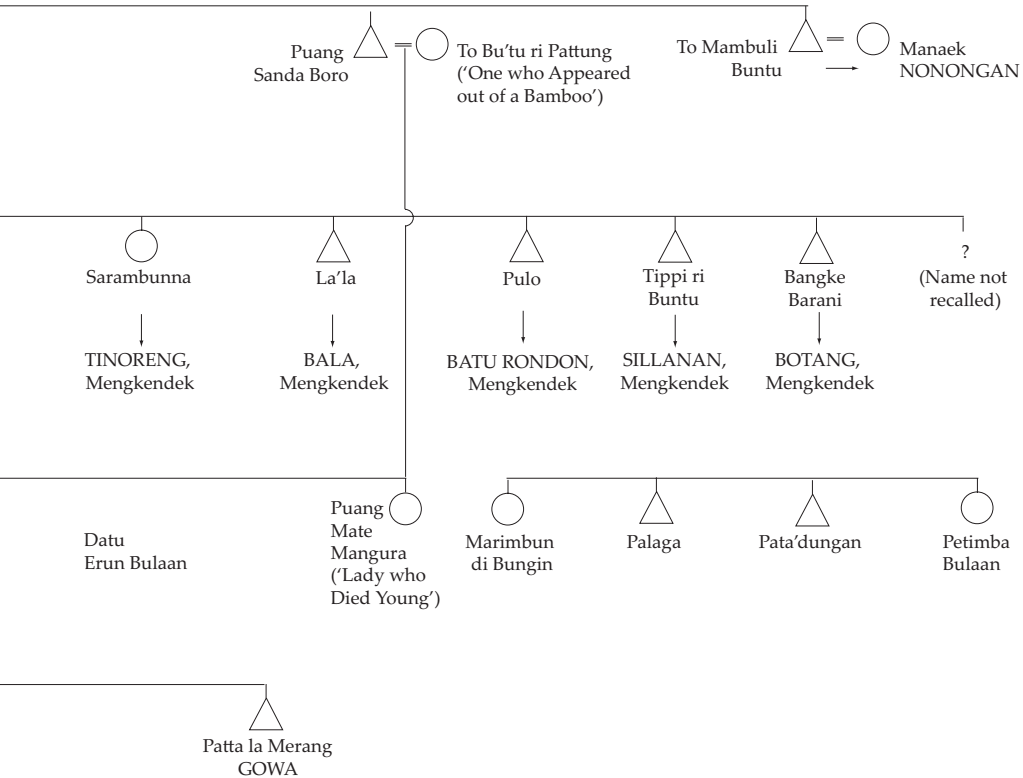
Genealogy 2. Tato' Dena's genealogy of Tamboro Langi', a widely recognized *manurun* ancestor. He and his wife Sanda Bilik founded their *tongkonan* on Mount Ullin in Saluputti. Their great-grandchild Laki Padada went in search of eternal life and married a princess of Gowa; their three sons ruled in Luwu', Toraja (Sanggalla') and Gowa respectively. This story is the most important of those linking Toraja to the lowland kingdoms.





Sanda Bilik  
(To Bu'tu ri Liku)  
BATU SAPA', Saluputti  
Emerged from a river pool at Batu Sapa',  
and had her house under the water

They had 8 children in all,  
but 2 returned to the sky  
and 2 returned to the water,  
leaving 4 sons on earth





## Glossary

All words are Toraja unless otherwise specified (D = Dutch; I = Indonesian)

<i>Ada'</i>	(I: <i>adat</i> ) custom, tradition, customary laws; closely linked in the traditional scheme of things with <i>aluk</i> , or ritual, though missionaries did their best to separate the categories
<i>Alang</i>	Rice barn
<i>Aluk</i>	Ritual, religion, ceremony; the rituals associated with a particular part of life, as in <i>aluk pare</i> (rice rituals), <i>alukna rampanan kapa'</i> (marriage rites), and so forth; literally, the 'way' or manner of enacting a rite, or of behaving correctly
<i>Aluk Rambu Solo'</i>	'Rites of the Smoke of the Setting [Sun]'; funerals and other rituals associated with the West, pertaining to the dead or to ancestors
<i>Aluk Rambu Tuka'</i>	'Rites of the Smoke of the Rising [Sun]'; all those rites associated with the East and with life and fertility
<i>Aluk To Dolo</i>	'Way of the Ancestors', the name now given to the indigenous Toraja religion
<i>Alukta</i>	'Our Way', another name for the Aluk To Dolo
<i>Ambe'</i>	Father; often used as a form of address to adult men, or to refer to the leading men of the village ( <i>ambe' lan tondok</i> ) who make up the village council or <i>kombongan ada'</i>
<i>Banua</i>	House
<i>Banua pa'rapuan</i>	House regarded as an origin house by a particular grouping of bilateral kin
<i>Bua'</i>	A group of villages, formerly a ritual unit which celebrated the <i>ma'bua'</i> rite together
<i>Bupati</i>	(I) Governor of a <i>kabupaten</i> or sub-provincial unit
<i>Camat</i>	(I) Government official in charge of a <i>kecamatan</i> or sub-district within the <i>kabupaten</i>
<i>Controleur</i>	(D) Dutch colonial district officer
<i>Datu</i>	Ruler (title of the ruler of Luwu')
<i>Deata</i>	Deities
<i>Desa</i>	(I) Administrative unit under Indonesia's New Order government, consisting of a number of <i>kampung</i> or villages; several <i>desa</i> make up one <i>kecamatan</i>

<i>Gereformeerde Zendingsbond</i>	(D) The Missionary Society of the Dutch Reformed Church, which began work in Tana Toraja in 1913
<i>Indo'</i>	Mother; leader
<i>Indo' Padang</i>	'Leader of the Land', descendant of a noble origin house who coordinates the rites associated with the agricultural cycle in the Aluk To Dolo
<i>Kabupaten</i>	(I) Regency, a sub-provincial administrative unit governed by a Bupati
<i>Kampung</i>	(I) Village; in Tana Toraja, usually a scattering of hamlets. Several <i>kampung</i> make up one <i>desa</i>
<i>Kapa'</i>	A fine of buffaloes payable by the offending party on the occasion of a divorce
<i>Kecamatan</i>	(I) Administrative sub-district within a regency
<i>Kepala Desa</i>	(I) Government administrative official who is head of a <i>desa</i>
<i>Kombongan ada'</i>	Village council, with the power to settle disputes and traditionally, to witness marriages.
<i>Kutu'</i>	A small sheaf of rice, big enough for the stalks when bound to fill a circle made by the thumb and index finger; the unit in which the productivity of Toraja rice fields is measured (no. of <i>kutu'</i> /year).
<i>Lembang</i>	Literally, 'boat'; traditional name for a district composed of several <i>bua'</i> . Under Regional Autonomy since 1999, some but not all of the former <i>desa</i> have reconfigured themselves as <i>lembang</i>
<i>Liang</i>	Family tomb chamber carved out of granite boulder or cliff face and closed with a small wooden door
<i>Ma'badong</i>	Circle dance and chant performed at funeral ceremonies in honour of the deceased
<i>Ma'bua'</i>	Ceremonies performed at long intervals by a <i>bua'</i> community, in expectation of, and thanksgiving for, the prosperity and fertility of all participants
<i>Ma'dika</i>	'Free', 'independent'; title of the aristocracy in Western regions of Tana Toraja
<i>Mangiu'</i>	To maintain one's obligations to relatives at various ceremonies, chiefly funerals, by the giving of pigs or buffaloes to the hosts
<i>Ma'paundi'</i>	'To send after'; a ceremony which may be held some years after a person's death in order to send more buffaloes for their use in the afterlife
<i>Ma'tallang</i>	A competitive form of inheritance whereby the division of property is carried out in proportion to the amount of each heir's funeral sacrifices
<i>Pa'buaran</i>	The sacred ground used as the setting for celebration of the greatest Rite of the East, the <i>ma'bua' pare</i>
<i>Pa'kandean nene'</i>	'Feeding the ancestors'; a colloquial term for the Aluk To Dolo

<i>Pangan</i>	ingredients for betel chewing
<i>Parandangan Ada'</i>	A council of representatives of Aluk To Dolo
<i>Pa'tondokan:</i>	Association of adult members of a village ( <i>tondok</i> ), who work cooperatively on festive occasions or to help with tasks such as house building. The term is also sometimes used to refer to the council of village elders who can be called to settle disputes, otherwise known as the <i>kombongan ada'</i>
<i>Pemali</i>	Prohibition, taboo
<i>Pemulu</i>	Prohibitions having to do with rice
<i>Puang</i>	Lord, title of aristocracy in the three southern domains of the Tallu Lembangna and the north-easterly Sa'dan and Balusu districts of Tana Toraja
<i>Puang Matua</i>	The 'Old Lord' of the heavens; an important deity of the Aluk to Dolo, chosen by Dutch missionaries as the translation of 'God', and correspondingly more prominent today
<i>Puya</i>	The afterlife in the indigenous Toraja cosmology
<i>Rambu Solo'</i>	'Smoke of the Setting [Sun]', term for mortuary rites, associated with the West, with death or with ancestors
<i>Rambu Tuka'</i>	'Smoke of the Rising [Sun]', term for all those rites associated with the East and with life and fertility
<i>Rampanan kapa'</i>	ritual term for marriage; the marriage rite
<i>Rampean</i>	Affines
<i>Rante</i>	A plain or flat place; the sacred ground where high ranking funerals are celebrated, and standing stones ( <i>simbuang batu</i> ) erected as memorials
<i>Rapu, pa'rapuan</i>	Literally, 'bamboo-culm'; a bilaterally related group of kin who trace their descent from a particular origin house or <i>tongkonan</i> , or from a particular couple within that <i>tongkonan's</i> genealogy (contextually defined, especially when planning the rebuilding of a house)
<i>Rara buku</i>	'Blood and bone', inherited kinship substance shared by relatives
<i>Reformasi (I)</i>	The period of democratization and 'Reform' initiated after the fall of Suharto from power in 1998
<i>Sangpala'</i>	A standard measure for the size of buffaloes, denoting a beast with horns as long as the distance from the tip of the fingers to one palm's width above the wrist
<i>Sukaran Aluk</i>	Another name for the Aluk to Dolo; <i>sukaran</i> = 'measurements'
<i>Tabang</i>	<i>Cordyline terminalis</i> , a plant whose red leaves are often used as ritual decorations and which are believed to have healing properties. The leaves are said to prevent bleeding of those who cut themselves while in trance during the <i>ma'bugi'</i> or <i>maro</i> rites
<i>Tallu Lembangna</i>	The 'Three Domains' of southern Tana Toraja – Ma'kale,

	Sangalla', and Mengkendek – which in the past formed a federation and where social hierarchy is most pronounced
<i>Tana'</i>	Literally, 'stake'; term designating social ranks of the highest nobility ( <i>tana' bulaan</i> or 'golden stake'), lesser nobility ( <i>tana' bassi</i> or 'iron stake'), commoners ( <i>tana karurung</i> or 'stake of sugar-palm wood'), and formerly, slaves ( <i>tana' kua-kua</i> or 'reed stake')
<i>Tau-tau</i>	Effigies of the deceased, placed in balconies beside their tombs in the rock
<i>Tedong</i>	Buffalo
<i>Tedong bonga</i>	Piebald buffalo, much prized for funeral sacrifice, and worth ten or twelve times as much as the black variety
<i>Tekken</i>	Literally, 'walking stick'; a piece of land inherited <i>inter vivos</i> , and requiring the recipient to sacrifice a buffalo at the giver's funeral in order to maintain their claim on the land
<i>To dolo</i>	The ancestors
<i>To manurun</i>	The 'Descended Ones', supernatural founding ancestors of noble houses who are said to have descended from the sky, marrying women who rose up out of river pools
<i>To minaa</i>	Literally, 'knowledgeable person', a priest of the Aluk To Dolo
<i>To minaa sando</i>	A special priest of the Aluk To Dolo, a hereditary position particularly associated with Rites of the East, whose distinctive feature is that they are required to set an example in keeping the peace
<i>To Nene' Pada Tindo</i>	The 'Ancestors of the Shared Dream', village chiefs who united to drive out an incursion by the Bugis, possibly under Arung Palakka, the ruler of Bone, in 1683
<i>To Parengnge'</i>	Title of ruling nobles in precolonial times, the resident head of a <i>tongkonan layuk</i> or 'great house'; sometimes also used to refer to the heads of other aristocratic <i>tongkonan</i> to which ritual offices are attached
<i>Tondok</i>	Village
<i>Tongkonan</i>	Origin house
<i>Tongkonan bua'</i>	The leading noble house of a <i>bua'</i> or group of villages forming a ritual unit
<i>Tongkonan layuk</i>	'Great origin house'; formerly the house of a ruling aristocratic family, whose resident was the political and ritual leader of a <i>lembang</i> (district, equivalent to today's <i>desa</i> )



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