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In: Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 155 (1999), no: 4, Leiden, 617-643

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Introduction

Power exists, independent of its possible users. It is not a theoretical postulate but an existential reality. Power is that intangible, mysterious, and divine energy which animates the universe [...]. In Javanese traditional thinking there is no sharp division between organic and inorganic matter, for everything is sustained by the same invisible power. (Anderson 1972:7.)

Likewise for the Sa'dan Toraja of South Sulawesi, as an early commentator put it, 'there is something, they believe, that is neither matter nor force. Let us call it soul. It is this soul that makes all living things tick – men and women, birds, beasts and fishes, flowers and trees. It exists in differing quantities or concentrations in different living things' (Wilcox 1949:117). Ebbing and flowing, however, this 'soul' remains elusive and invisible. Although lodged at the very centre of existence, it seems to be lacking an easily discernible presence. It is about 'fortune' (*kinande*) and 'health' (*kamasakkeran*), but it is not fortune or health. It is about 'life' (*katuoan*) and 'death' (*kamatean*), but it is not life or death – indeed, hidden in the enigma of its unfolding ('path'), it traverses both life and death. Beyond what it is or is not, I would like to suggest, it is only in the pattern of its unfolding that it gains a mode of being and expresses its immanence. In making 'living things tick', it both manifests and embodies its flow. Thus, rather than the living things in themselves, what is important is the way they are joined together in an almost infinite series of related embodiments and manifestations. Depicting its config-

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uration in the ethnographic context of Buntao'¹, I shall try to describe the tenor of this series and to indicate the arrangement of its course. Hence, rather than the 'soul' itself, it is the articulation of its unfolding that is the focus of the present article.

As most of the information I sought during my fieldwork concerned the traditional sacrificial practices of the Buntao' Toraja (*aluk to misa' ba'bana*, 'the ways of those who share one door'), nearly everything I have to say reflects a particular indigenous exegesis, an exegesis which was always framed as a commentary on 'the way things ought to be'. In fact, most of my friends and informants saw themselves as 'guardians of the ancestral ways'. Although 'it's too meagre to say that I report of them' and 'naive to say that I can reveal their point of view' (Campbell 1995:234), it is my understanding of their understanding that lies at the heart of this article.² Of course, this is not to say that things have not changed. For one thing, over the last twenty-five years, the majority of the population have converted to Christianity. In the same way, the details embedded in their discourse (what they always described as 'true words') may or may not be authentic. After all, in a region which, quite apart from lacking an indigenous script and a literary tradition, has undergone an extraordinary amount of change during this century (see Bigalke 1981), it is not clear according to whose criteria the question of authenticity may be answered or judged. In any case, rather than on what is authentic or inauthentic, it may be more interesting to concentrate on the ways in which 'authenticity' is produced and reproduced in contemporary Buntao'. As this is something I will not be doing here, I am simply offering these remarks as an acknowledgement of the limitations inherent in the timeless 'truth-perspective' I have adopted – that is to say, not only was I told the truth, but this truth was the only one. At all events, as Foucault put it, 'it is obvious that the archive of a society, a culture, or a civilisation cannot be described exhaustively' (Foucault 1974:130). As there is no reason to suppose that a truth, how-

¹ The traditional community of Buntao' is situated in the eastern part of Tana Toraja (Sulawesi, Indonesia). In terms of present-day administrative patterns, it is divided into two 'villages' (*desa*): Buntao' (with a population of about 3,500) and Buntu Dengen (with about 4,000 people). The fieldwork on which this article is based was conducted between July 1988 and March 1990. I am grateful to the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) and the Universitas Hasanuddin (UNHAS) for sponsoring my research. I am also indebted to M.J. Lloyd for her comments and suggestions.

² For sharing the 'truth' with me, quite apart from their friendship and generosity, myriad thanks are due to several people in Buntao', in particular Ne' Bua', Pong Babak, Ne' Kuli', Ne' Sulle, Ne' Baru, Ne' Nangko, and Sapan Pong Masak. In addition, for their ceaseless warmth and care, I am especially grateful to the members of the Danduru family and Ne' Bimbang, who made my stay in Buntao' a memorable experience. Lastly, without the help of Ne' Dena' (Makale) and the hospitality of Yus Paulus Senga (Rantepao) my work could not have begun, much less been completed.

ever partial, is not a part of such an archive, it is the archive of Buntao' society I am concerned with, and to this extent the following discussion is meant both as a contribution to the ethnographic record of the Sa'dan Toraja and an interpretation of some of its aspects. Furthermore, although the concept of *sumanga'* has lost some of its traditional salience (see Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994:100-1), it remains an important part of this record. During my fieldwork, it was used to explain a variety of seemingly unrelated events – from death and confusion to sacrificial imperatives and the efficacy of Christian prayer. This is not to say that the people of Buntao' preoccupy themselves with *sumanga'* any more (or less) than do their neighbours. In fact, most of the time it was used in an explicit way only in order to distinguish between illness ('hotness') and health ('coolness'). Nevertheless, although some people were far more knowledgeable than others, nearly everyone had something to contribute to the ensuing discussions.

Sumanga' and semangat

Associated mostly with indigenous notions about potency and vitality, the idea that a kind of constantly creative energy permeates and animates the universe is extremely common in Southeast Asia (see Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995:255 n. 22). In South Sulawesi, the terms given to this energy are close cognates of the Malay *semangat* which, having found its way onto the ethnographic record through observations made early this century (for example, Skeat 1900; Annandale 1903; Wilkinson 1906; Winstedt 1924), became almost synonymous with such terms as 'soul substance', 'life force', and 'potency'. More recently, apart from two suggestive reinterpretations of this early material (Cuisinier 1951; Endicott 1970), *semangat* and a host of similar ethnographic concepts have been discussed in a variety of contexts, from politics (Anderson 1972) and head-hunting (Needham 1976) to house building (Waterson 1990).

Although the question of whether there is a South Sulawesi civilization (as some have implied, see Andaya 1981) and whether the Sa'dan Toraja ought to be seen as an integral part of it remains problematic, it seems clear that three out of the four major 'ethnic' groups within it (the Bugis, Makassarese and Toraja peoples) recognize a concept analogous to the Malay *semangat*. While the Buginese and Makassarese call it *sumange'* (Errington 1983a:545), the Sa'dan and Mamasa Toraja call it *sumanga'* (Van der Veen 1966:9; Koubi 1982:27), by which name it is also known to more marginal mountain settlers like the Pitu Ulunna Salu (George 1996:63). Unfortunately there is little relevant information for the fourth major group, the Mandar people. Given their proximity to the Bugis and the Pitu Ulunna Salu, how-

ever, we can assume the existence of a similar concept here. Furthermore, the notion of a creative energy is just as common in Central Sulawesi. Early this century, A.C. Kruyt (1906) paid considerable attention to it, discussing it first in terms of 'soul substance' (*zielestof*) and later as a 'magically working force' (*magische Kraft*) (see also Downs 1956; Koentjaraningrat 1975).

Whilst undeniably widespread, the concept of *sumanga* has not, however, received the attention it deserves in the ethnographic context of South Sulawesi. To the best of my knowledge, only Errington's work (1983a, 1983b, 1989) has explicitly tried to account for practices that involve a belief in an 'impersonal and creative energy' which 'supports and animates the universe' (Errington 1983a:546). Her ethnographic work concerns the people of Luwu, 'the first major historical kingdom known in South Sulawesi and regarded by most as the cradle of Bugis civilisation' (Andaya 1981:17). Despite the regional importance of Luwu and the possibility of a comparative analysis at a more generic level, my purpose here, as I have already indicated, is to delimit the flow of *sumanga* within a single Toraja community and explore its significance through its more particular (that is, local) manifestations. It is only through an appreciation of these manifestations that *sumanga* may be depicted, articulated and eventually contrasted with the better-known *semangat* of the Malays. Nevertheless, although such a comparison is beyond the purview of this article, it may be useful to briefly situate my own discussion in relation to the way in which *semangat* has mostly been described and analysed elsewhere.

In dealing with *semangat*, most ethnographic commentators place the emphasis on indigenous 'notions' or 'beliefs' and the way they should be interpreted or explained. In this context, it makes no difference whether one juxtaposes 'magic' and 'religion' (like, for example, Annandale, Winstedt and Skeat), 'primitive' and 'modern' (Cuisinier), or 'traditional order' and 'structural model' (Endicott). In all cases, the reality ascribed to *semangat* is primarily that of a mental construct – be it an idea, a representation, or a percept, in other words, some kind of 'meaning'. Furthermore, as Endicott (1970:8) puts it, this meaning 'is in the mind, and is manifested through its effect on a person's attitudes and actions'. Thus, although 'meanings are frequently cultural', in the sense of depending on 'the classifications that cultures impose on the world' (Endicott 1970:8), they are nothing more than 'conceptual blueprints: they direct, inspire, or promote activity, but they themselves are not activities' (Bell 1992:19).

In this fundamental respect, rather than emphasizing ratiocination and apperception, I shall try to explore the importance of Toraja *sumanga* as a practical activity. An activity which, by being embedded in the empirical configuration of its 'flow / path' (*lalan*), attempts to exploit the resemblances and affinities between some of the sources of this energy. Such sources, often

described as 'navels', are considered 'extremely potent' and are thought to have attained a degree of visible permanency. Permanent navels can be contrasted with more temporary sources of potency and taken as places within a sacred geography of 'doing' rather than 'thinking'. A geography that manifests the continuity of the creative energy over and above the particularity and apparent discontinuity of its various manifestations.

Thus *sumanga'* may be seen as determining the actual patterns rather than the meaning of life. Instead of being a mental representation or a belief, it is first and foremost an organizational process whose characteristic dimension is space and basic principle that of inscription. The inscription principle operates by assigning existence to a series of places, but it is these places which bestow the possibility of existence itself: unless it is 'planted' and 'centred' (that is, positioned), life seeps away. This is not a matter of turning human experience or thought into a kind of geography. It is a matter of human existence itself being an attribute of geography, in the strong sense of *geo-graphy*. Within such a landscape, everything becomes a question of landmarks ('roots', 'trenches', 'paths', and so on), which function both as bearers of life and as its ciphers. Dealing with *sumanga'* is coming to terms with this geography.

Of course, this is not to say that its explication cannot be framed in more traditional terms: like *mana*, for instance, '[it] is not simply a force, a being, it is also an action, a quality, a state, [...] a noun, an adjective and verb' (Mauss 1972:108) – without having to assume a direct parallel between *sumanga'* and *mana*, nearly all my information could be organized along these lines. However, as Mauss's definition demonstrates, the major problem in dealing with notions like *mana* and *sumanga'* is their polythetic (or multivocal) nature – something that has given rise to a number of attempts at a 'relational definition' which, by turning the necessity of an empirical problem into a theoretical virtue, seem to conflate the possible formulation of an explanation with what ought to be explained.

In Endicott's work, for instance, the polythetic nature of *semangat* manages to attain both an empirical and a theoretical status: for the Malays, 'essences are partially defined by the categories of matter that they inhabit and [...] they, in turn, help define these categories' (Endicott 1970:177); for himself, 'successive inclusion and triadic division seem, then, to be the basic ordering principles in Malay magical ideas' (Endicott 1970:178). Definition by relations is used to illustrate *and* explain. By reproducing the empirical manifestation of 'essences' at the more abstract level of 'ordering principles', Endicott's analysis merges ethnography and theory, offering a rather tautological explanation of the Malay world. Furthermore, the constitution of such relations as well as the elucidation of their meaning is possible only insofar as they are seen as products (or sources) of mental processes dealing with

notions, ideas and representations, as forming integral parts of a specific mentality or manifesting intrinsic patterns of a cognitive mechanism.

My own emphasis on geography is not meant to imply that inclusion and division do not constitute ordering principles, but that they may be seen as an integral part of a spatial matrix which gives rise to life in terms of, first and foremost, territory. In other words, the importance of *sumanga'* should be construed as reflecting an order of spatial *positions* rather than a classificatory scheme of propositions. Thus, rather than ideation and mental structuration (cognitive or otherwise), I shall try to depict its flow as manifesting a process of spatial inscription and territorialization upon which life depends. That is, as a 'way of being' rather than a 'way of seeing'.

The flow of life

The people of Buntao' describe the sources of life in two distinct, although intimately related, ways: firstly, in the more restricted sense of *deata* ('life-spirit'), they account for the vitality of those manifestations of life which are bound by particular and distinct bodies or, at least, can be said to enjoy a minimum degree of structuration – a structuration mostly depicted in terms of 'joints' and 'navels'; secondly, in the more general sense of *sumanga'* ('life-force'), they account for the foundation of all forms of life – a foundation upon which particular embodiments ultimately depend.

In most respects, the overall contrast may be seen as quite similar to Johansen's distinction between the Maori concepts of *tupu* and *mana*: they both 'denote unfolding, activity and life; but whereas *tupu* is an expression of the nature of things and human beings as enfolded from within, *mana* expresses something participated, an active fellowship which according to its nature is never inextricably bound up with any single thing or any single human being' (Johansen 1954:85). There is, however, an important difference. In the case of the Toraja, all activity and life is part of a single continuum, a single unfolding. To phrase it somewhat differently, *deata* is nothing more than embodied (that is, structured through joints and navels) *sumanga'*. In the case of humans, for instance, death is co-extensive with the transformation of one's *deata* ('life-spirit') into a *bombo* ('black shadow'), and the most important purpose of the traditional rites of death is to initiate a process of transition through which one's *bombo* is eventually 'converted' back into *sumanga'*, or, as the Toraja put it, 'returns to its original form' (see Tsintjilonis 1993:125-207). Furthermore, once it is purified and converted into its original form, it is 'called' (*ma'kurre*) back through another series of rites which attempt to transform (that is, restructure through new joints and navels) it into further vitality, prosperity and life (Tsintjilonis 1993:208-36).

Thus, in the sense of *sumanga'*, life can be construed as an immortal and continuous lineage that does not depend upon particular manifestations; on the contrary, particular manifestations depend upon it. Hence the distinction between two separate – though converging during birth and death – lines: one continuous and germinal, the other discontinuous and somatic. Within this continuity and discontinuity, it is important to emphasize the difficulty in actually defining *sumanga'*. Although always depicted as the 'essence' (*bombong*) of life and growth, it is discussed in terms of *dalle'* ('fate', 'luck'), *kinande* ('material and/or mystical fortune'), *parayaan* ('riches', 'blessings'), and *kabudanan* ('abundance'), but also of *kamarendengan* ('long life'), *kamasakkeran* ('health'), and 'potency' (*ma'karra'*). Throughout all these associations, however, it is closely linked with the need to be 'forged in determinate ways' (*tampa rapa'*) and to appear 'complete' (*ganna'*); it is only through this determinateness and completeness that life (in terms of luck, abundance, health, and so on) can be enhanced and prosper (see Tsintjilonis 1995:278-80; 1997:253-4).

The parameters of this forging and the completeness associated with it are well explained in the ancestral narratives (*ossoran*) of the Toraja. According to the most important of these narratives, known as 'the path of the ritual measurements' and recited in the context of a series of sacrifices which concentrate on increasing the fertility of the earth, the creator-god (Puang Matua, 'Old Lord') forged the original ancestor of humanity with four different substances: earth, stone, water, and fire; the fire was 'placed' (*dipatorro*) as the 'source of the navel', the earth as the 'source of the flesh', the stone as the 'source of the bone', and the water as the 'source of the tongue'.³ Beyond having to use these particular substances because they are described as 'matching each other', Puang Matua endeavoured to position them in a particular order. Having started with the heat of the fire and moving from 'right to left' (*liling kanan*), he placed the remaining substances in a circle around the navel. Thus, while the source of the navel is thought to be at the 'centre of the body', the source of the flesh is on the left side and the source of the bone on the right. As soon as the mixture of the four elements was prepared, the creator-god added a fifth ingredient. This particular ingredient, 'pure gold' (*bulaan tasak*), was fixed as the 'source of potency' (*to' makarra'*) and became the 'essence' (*bombong*) or the 'inner kernel' (*batu ba'tang*) of the body. Pure gold is said to have originated in 'the centre of the [primordial] sea' or 'in the source of the foam'. Thus, although it is hard and impenetrable, it is also cool and moist. In most of its qualities, it is identical to the life force (*sumanga'*) which, according to the Toraja, animates and lends vigour to all forms of life.

³ As I have discussed this in much more detail elsewhere (Tsintjilonis 1997), I shall highlight only those points which seem especially relevant here.

Indeed, gold may be seen as a particularly pure concentration (or source) of *sumanga*'.

With all the ingredients properly mixed and positioned, the mixture was melted ('put to sleep') in the divine smithy, retaining the essence of each ingredient and giving rise to the very first human being (Datu Laukku'). Thus the body of Datu Laukku', having been created from a specific number and kind of substances, is described as 'having been forged in determinate ways'. In addition, the sum total of these substances is said to be 'complete' and their actual bodily alignment is depicted in terms of a circle. Hence the order of their original arrangement is retained in the form of the human body. Furthermore, the crystallization of this disposition becomes the channel for the continuous flow of embodied *sumanga*'. The pattern of this flow is described as being similar to the shape of an 'inwardly moving spiral' (*ma'-suale lu tama*), the centre of which is formed by the piece of pure gold. This piece of gold is actually depicted as a tiny stone which revolves, from right to left, upon its own axis. This is the source of individual potency and vigour, which remains hidden in the innermost recesses of the body and is described as hardness. In the form of the revolving stone, it imparts movement to the embodied life force and concentrates the overall currents of the living body in the shape of a centripetal spiral. In this form, *sumanga*' is nothing more than one's *deatanna* ('his/her life spirit').

This dis-positional concentration of substance and movement is thought to characterize all forms of life. For instance, although the ingredients were different, animals and plants were created in the same way. Indeed, in the most general sense, everything that is considered alive is thought to consist of at least three parts arranged in a triangular fashion from right to left ('planted as a set of triplets'). The cosmos itself was violently shaken into life through the imposition of the movement from right to left and the arrangement of its sources so as to match each other (see Tsintjilonis 1993:52-64). Furthermore, the gods themselves arose from within this violent shaking. For example, the emergence of the two original Buntao' deities (the parents of Puang Matua) is traced back to the very beginning of the universe, a time of 'darkness' and 'lack of everything'. Rather than nothingness, however, this lack implies the absence of growth and focus, a kind of primordial sterility. According to the legends, in the midst of this sterile darkness there existed a primeval hermaphroditic being known as *datu* ('sovereign'). Although it lived in solitude and complete immobility, its condition (often depicted as a dreamless sleep) was eventually transformed through its power of speech. Because it could speak, it is also known as *datunna kada* ('the sovereign of the word'). It was its first words (that is, 'let us separate our bodies') which created the initial rotation from right to left, dissolving the hermaphroditic body, giving rise to the initial deities ('prince' and 'princess'), and initiating

the process of cosmic creation and growth.

Thus if *sumanga'* is to be successfully embodied, it must be contained and the components of its container must be arranged in a specific fashion: from right to left, around a source of power ('navel', 'inner kernel'). While the establishment and successful propagation of particular forms of life is co-extensive with this arrangement (*lalan kanan*, 'the path [from the] right'), death is perceived as movement from the left (*lalan kairi*, 'the path [from the] left') and is seen as resulting in the dissolution of the body and the dispersion of its components. Nevertheless, as life involves 'ascent' (to live is to follow 'the path of the rising sun') and death 'descent' (to die is to follow 'the path of the setting sun'), both types of movement are incorporated in a single anti-clockwise motion which manifests the overall flow of the creative energy and is known as *lalan sumanga'* ('the path/flow of vitality'). The traditional ritual sequences of the Buntao' Toraja replicate this flow in order to effect the continuity of embodiment and disembodiment or, in other words, the reproduction and regeneration of the cosmos (see Tsintjilonis in press). In replicating the path from the left, the rites of death disperse the body and displace embodied *sumanga'*. In replicating the path from the right, the rites of life transform *sumanga'* into its original disembodied state, replace it within the germinal flow and, eventually, 'call' it back.

Consequently, what must be emphasized is that *sumanga'* cannot be destroyed, but it can be lost, it can escape, or even 'wander with no purpose'. The aim of Toraja ritual, in the overall continuity and integrity of its various sacrificial practices, is not indiscriminate agglomeration but determinate articulation: unless it is relatively framed and centred, somatic life will ebb away; and, once it starts to ebb (upon death), its essence (that is, embodied *sumanga'*) must be guided back to the germinal level of incorporeal life and disembodied vitality. In this sense, the ritual project can be seen as replenishing and revitalizing the cosmos.

Within the process of this replenishment and revitalization, what can hardly be over-emphasized is the importance of determinate and complete forms of embodiment. Bodies do not simply manifest particular instances of existence but, through the way in which they are structured, effect its very possibility. Indeed, in this sense, Toraja ritual may be seen as a quest for bodies. It is this embodiment that functions as a process of territorial inscription and assimilates human existence with greater sources of potency and ancestral centres of power – that is, more encompassing manifestations and embodiments of *sumanga'*. Within this encompassment, however, all life (human, ancestral, or otherwise) must be structured in the same way: namely, as a *geo-graphism*, or, to put it another way, as something which is, first and foremost, a 'place' (*inan*). Thus, to echo Errington's work in the neighbouring territory of Luwu',

The body [...] is constituted in the same way as other sorts of places, places to which we give names like 'house', 'kinship grouping', and 'kingdom'. These different sizes of places share a common organization: each has a 'navel', a source of power or point of origin, around which peripheral matter are [sic] oriented. (Errington 1983a:547.)

In the following sections, documenting the flow of *sumanga'* through its geography, I shall describe a few such places: kinship grouping, marriage, polity, and ritual feast. I shall try to indicate in what sense they can be described as places and why their centres can be said to constitute both sources of power and points of origin.⁴ Furthermore, as these points are successively ordered, it is important to show the way in which they are constructed, inter-related and oriented. Hence the continuation of the cosmos and the successful propagation of human life do not depend simply upon successive embodiments, but also upon the way such embodiments are inscribed in the overall flow of *sumanga'*. The patterns of this life-flow are co-extensive with the configuration of its visible sources ('founts', 'roots', 'navels', and so on), and it is the dispositional order of these sources that can be described as a geography – a series of places that contain, embody, and regulate the flow of life.

Thus, to echo Bachelard (1969:8), what I am proposing is a brief 'topo-analysis' of some dimensions of Toraja life. However, at least in the case of Buntao', the basis of discourse is not *logos* (as Bachelard asserts, 1969:xix), but *topos* – beyond speech, thought or the power of the imagination; unless it is properly placed ('planted' and 'centred'), life itself will fail and dissolve. Nevertheless, we should be careful not to divorce the life-force from its conditions of existence. The spatial relations in which *sumanga'* is implicated cannot be broken down or reduced to their constituent elements. At this level, almost by definition, life implies affiliation and encompassment – that is, contiguity and intrinsic affinity rather than discontinuity and extrinsic connection.

⁴ Of course, one should be careful not to over-emphasize the similarities between Luwu' and Buntao'. For one thing, the Toraja were neither Indicized nor politically centralized. Furthermore, even in the ethnographic context of Luwu', Shelly Errington's work has been criticized for applying the 'Indic state' model to a realm outside Indian influence (see Caldwell 1991). In any case, whether or not Luwu' was influenced by Indian cosmology, the importance of the centres I am about to describe should not be seen as implying the existence of some kind of Toraja *negara* (see Geertz 1980).

Kinship grouping

Kin organization among the Sa'dan Toraja exemplifies the kind of cognatic patterns considered typical of the societies of middle Indonesia in general. Waterson summarizes its basic features as follows:

Terminology is basically generational, no distinction is made between cross and parallel cousins, and there is a tendency to extend immediate kin terms – father, mother, grandparent, sibling, child, grandchild – to all relatives as well as unrelated people in the appropriate generation merging everyone of the appropriate status into a single category, or at most two categories distinguished only by sex. Both men and women trace their descent through the houses where their parents, grandparents and more distant ancestors were born, maintaining links throughout their lives with a number of different houses. (Waterson 1986:89.)

Although, as Waterson recognizes, defining the boundaries of their membership is highly problematic, it is these houses that function as foci of kin organization. The indigenous term for these ancestral houses is *tongkonan* (from the verb *tongkon*, 'to sit [especially in ritual contexts]'). For descriptive purposes, Toraja kinship can be said to consist of contextually circumscribed units, the smallest of which can be described as a single family household (*banua*). Within a *banua*, descent is traced bilaterally through the male and female sides of the household back to the *tongkonan* constructed by the commonly acknowledged founder of the family branch (*rapu*) to which a particular *banua* belongs. In theory at least, each *rapu* can trace itself back three to five generations to the establishment of its own ancestral house. A *rapu* ('clump') may be best perceived as a dense cluster of coconut trees or a bamboo stand, 'growing together as if from a common root, but with each tree branching separately' (Volkman 1985:46). Thus, the family is often compared to a *rapu tallang*, 'a stool of bamboo'. However, members of new *tongkonan* continue to acknowledge their relationship to the original one, perceiving themselves as part of an inclusive, ancestor-oriented, ambilineal group (*pa'rapuan*).⁵

Although Nooy-Palm (1979:22-3), echoing the more comparative work of R. Fox (1967:146-7) and the Polynesian material of Firth (1957), has described

⁵ Echoing one of the central points of Waterson's analysis, however, it is important to emphasize that defining a *rapu* in terms of fixed composition is extremely problematic: 'Depending on which ancestors are chosen as its starting-point, a *rapu* may contain members of more than one house of origin, while a single origin-house may have more than one *rapu*' (Waterson 1986:102). Nevertheless, in Buntao this difficulty was usually avoided through an emphasis on the depth rather than the spread of one's 'family'. Depending on the circumstances, even when the actual links were not known or were anything but obvious, different *rapu* and/or *tongkonan*, by choosing the 'right' starting-point, could always be said to share a single source.

these ambilineal groups as 'ramages', the application of the latter term to the Toraja has been criticized. According to Waterson, for instance, while ramages imply some distinction between mother's and father's kin, Toraja kinship 'is profoundly bilateral' (Waterson 1986:98) – that is, there are no restricting criteria (such as residence), and all rights are equally inherited from both mother and father. In her own work, carried out in the western part of Tana Toraja, this equality is associated with the idea that both parents 'contribute equally and in undifferentiated manner to the creation of a child' (Waterson 1986:103). However, as 'bone' is thought to be inherited from the father and 'blood' from the mother, this does not apply to the situation I encountered in my own fieldwork. At least for ritual purposes, although they have neither patrilineal nor matrilineal kin groups, the people of Buntao make a clear distinction between relatives on 'the side of the mother' (*tanda indo*) and relatives on 'the side of the father' (*tanda ambe*). This distinction amounts to a differentiation between rites inherited from the mother (*umpolalan salurara*, 'following the blood-river') and rites inherited from the father (*umpolalan salubuku*, 'following the bone-river'). Funerary sacrifices, for instance, belong to the former category, and in death one is said 'to follow his or her mother' through the reproduction of the appropriate sacrificial patterns (*aluk susu*, 'ritual of the milk/breast').⁶ Furthermore, the amount of potency one is said to embody is also thought to be inherited from the mother – in other words, as in the ritual of the milk, one's essence is conveyed by the blood of the mother (see Tsintjilonis 1997:260-5). In these fundamental respects, then, the utility of the term 'ramage' may be greater than Waterson is prepared to acknowledge.

In any case, the substance of common ancestry is always described in terms of 'blood and bone'. The Indonesian word for family (*pamili*) is often translated as *rarabuku*, a shortened version of *sang rara / sang buku*, 'one blood / one bone'. Thus, the history of a *pa'rapuan*, its genealogical tree, is seen as being co-extensive with, and constituted by, the dispersion of its *rarabuku*. What I would like to emphasize is that this dispersion is turned into a physical landscape, a kind of living map, through the ordered succession of ancestral houses. The points at which *rapu* bifurcate (giving rise to new *rapu*) are the points at which particular ancestors founded new family groups. It is these points that have a concrete counterpart in the Toraja landscape in the form of a house.⁷ Such houses have their own names, are perpetuated

⁶ Properly speaking, however, there are no rituals which one inherits from his or her father. All important rituals are associated with one's mother. Indeed, in terms of indigenous exegesis, describing a ritual as following patterns inherited through the 'bone-river' is often equivalent to describing it as having been improperly executed.

⁷ Initially I thought these points could be drawn and labelled on a kinship diagram. Due to continual disagreement, however, no such diagram was possible.

through time, and constitute the centres of all ritual activity – indeed, as far as their importance is concerned, Toraja communities may be seen as examples of what Lévi-Strauss has named 'house societies' (1983; see also Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995).

A *tongkonan* is quite different from an ordinary house (*banua*⁸). The latter are much simpler constructions; they are smaller, closer to the ground, often built of woven bamboo and undecorated wood. In contrast, a *tongkonan* is the visible manifestation of the high status enjoyed by the *rapu* associated with it: its walls are decorated with carvings; it stands on a number of high posts, usually facing a set of large rice barns; the ridge of its roof turns upwards at both ends; and, quite often, it is surrounded by 'potent' trees which function as part of a protective fence. An ancestral house is built according to strict architectural norms, with each stage of its construction being marked by an appropriate sacrifice (see Nooy-Palm 1979:246-50; 1988:46-9). Furthermore, each of its parts is associated with specific human activities and their 'spirit guardians', as well as with the major deities and ancestors (see Tangdilintin 1975:83-93).

However, the most important difference between a *tongkonan* and an ordinary house is the former's possession of a 'navel post' (*a'riri posi*). Its erection forms part of *ma'pabendan* ('the raising of the poles'), but rather than resting upon the earth (as do other poles), it is set into it ('planted').⁹ It is hewn from jackfruit wood and sometimes decorated with wood carvings. Before digging the hole in which the post is to be set, the carpenter asks the permission of the 'earth spirits' by sacrificing a pig. An iron hoe is used to make the hole. When it is deep enough, 'three kinds of money', a piece of iron, and a yellow bead are placed in it. Then the pillar is sprinkled with water from a gourd in which 'cooling' plants have been placed. A necklace of white, yellow, and red beads on a string is also tied around it from right to left. Finally, just before it is put into place, it is often dressed with a skirt of palm leaves and given 'eyes' (a set of two or four small stones, which are embedded in it) – indeed, in some respects, an *a'riri posi* may be seen both

⁸ The term *banua*, however, can also be used to describe a *tongkonan* of extremely high standing, as, for instance, Banua Sura' in the neighbouring territory of Kesu' (see Nooy-Palm 1979:74).

⁹ There are *tongkonan* which do not possess an *a'riri posi*. Only those ancestral houses which have been 'bloodied with three kinds of blood' (*di tallu rarai*, that is, have been 'blessed' through the combined sacrifice of one buffalo, one pig, and one cockerel) can have an *a'riri posi*. These are noble houses which usually have a role to play in the ritual organization of the community as a whole (see also Tangdilintin 1975:42-3, 50-2). Nevertheless, even when a *tongkonan* does not possess an *a'riri posi*, the idea of having a 'navel' retains its significance – its foundation is still described as 'the navel of the family'.

Although I never had the opportunity to witness the rite of *ma'pabendan* in Buntao', I was fortunate to be present at two house ceremonies elsewhere in Tana Toraja (Kesu' and Makale).

as alive and gendered. The way it is inserted must follow the direction the branch was growing in and give the impression that it is 'screwed in', 'rotated around its axis three times' (*tiguririk pentallun*). Such an action is always carried out from 'right to left' in order to reproduce the movement of life and to replicate the 'path of the life force' (*lalan sumanga'*). Furthermore, having been 'screwed in', it is always fixed with its 'face' to the north (or, according to some, the east).

In this context, however *sumanga'* may be defined, it is clearly associated with the substance of shared ancestry and its dispersion through the various houses. The people of Buntao' describe the mode of this dispersion in terms of a 'river', the 'head/source' of which coincides with the place where the original family ancestor 'sat' (that is, the first *tongkonan*). Each time a new *tongkonan* is established, it is as if a new 'fount/well' were built. The navel post will turn this well into another waterway. In other words, an *a'riri posi'* and the overall organization of the house may be seen as a new 'trench for the river of creation' (*kalo' kadangna salu kadadianna*). *Sumanga'* disperses by 'passing through this river' and by 'ascending into the house' via the navel post. Once inside the house ('in its stomach'), it is guided so as to 'wander from right to left' and it is embodied in a variety of ways, the most important of which is the house itself and the family living in it.

Thus, just as the house is the centre (and origin point) of a *rapu*, the navel post is the centre (and origin point) of the house. Although its place is marked at the very beginning, it is the last item to be installed and the point upon which the physical structure of the house is centred (for details see Nooy-Palm 1979:231-52). The possession of an *a'riri posi'* both manifests and allows the establishment of a new *rapu*. The expansion of the *rarabuku* through marriage would lead to the destruction of the *pa'rapuan* if it were not for the establishment of new points at which the life flow can be tapped and channelled into the realization and eventual strengthening of a new *rapu*, every three to five generations. However, such strengthening is relative, because the further away from the original source one gets, the weaker and more fragmented the *rarabuku* (and the potency it embodies) becomes. This is reflected in the lower status of the more recent *tongkonan* in relation to 'the ones of before', the latter being, by definition, nearer to the initial source of potency and life. Nevertheless, this process of ramification does not amount to a radical separation. The crucial feature of this hierarchy is the common source, or origin point, which the various groups recognize. The various ancestral houses that shape the sacred geography of the Buntao' landscape designate spatially dispersed points which are separate from one another not because they are bounded on the outside, but because they are focused on their own centre, like links in a chain. In this context, to speak of a kinship group is to speak of a house, and to speak of a house is to allude to a prim-

ordial, undifferentiated whole.

In the western districts of Tana Toraja, to give a few examples from elsewhere, the houses which evolve as branches of a major *tongkonan* are designated as *tongkonan batu a'riri*, the *batu a'riri* constituting the foundation stones which are placed underneath each house pillar; 'the idea is that the family, with its many children, is like the house with its many pillars, each of which although separate forms part of a whole' (Waterson 1981:42). In a similar way, all descending generations are seen as constituting fractions of an original whole. Children are called *sangtanga* ('a half'), grandchildren *sangtepo* ('a quarter'), and great-grandchildren *sangleso* or *sangdaluk* ('an eighth'). Thus, the expression *sangtepo sangdaluk* has become synonymous with *rarabuku* (Waterson 1986:103).

The unity and continuity of *sangtepo sangdaluk* is continually stressed in Tana Toraja. In the northern communities, the members of a *rarabuku* are said to 'share blood', in 'the sense of being so closely joined that there is no gap, like broken bones that grow together (*sikande*) as they heal' (Volkman 1985:46). They are 'one word, one breath'. To fight within the *rarabuku* is like 'separating the whites of the eyes from the black irises' (Volkman 1985:46). To the suggestion that a person's kin tie is more distant than it really is, he can reply: *muserekki raraku* ('you are tearing my blood'), 'a reproach which indicates that a split is being made in something which should be continuous' (Waterson 1986:104). What underlies all of these expressions is the belief that the *sangtepo sangdaluk* are *sang dadian*, of 'one birth'. It must be stressed, however, that the importance of the house as a symbol of unity and (relative) wholeness does not imply co-residence in everyday life. Co-residential unity is associated with the past and is actualized only in the context of ritual. From this point of view, the rituals of life utilize and reconstitute the *rapu*, while the rituals of death are based upon the co-operation of the *rarabuku* and its affines (see Tsintjilonis 1993).

Thus to speak of a kinship group is to speak of a house that has a definite existence. Furthermore, a house possesses a navel that should be seen both as the centre and origin point of the family group. In addition, although the succession of houses functions as a process of spatial inscription and differentiation, it does not amount to a permanent separation or irreversible fragmentation, but to a multiplication of points at which the creative energy associated with the cosmos can be tapped and utilized in a continuous process of expansion. Within this expansion a *tongkonan* is much more than a house. It is not a spatial sign of life, it is the very place where life is 'planted' and 'grown'. Beyond particular examples of growth (that is, specific *rapu*), an *a'riri posi* is the centre and origin point of growth itself. Much more than a cipher or a bearer of life, it is the process of life itself.

Marriage

A proper marriage involves *basse situka*, 'exchanging oaths', an expression that 'both implies the gaining of a set of parents, and signifies the adoption of ceremonial responsibilities towards one's affinal relations' (Waterson 1986:105). Indeed, it is in the ceremonial context (especially the rites of death) that affinal relations are actively utilized and demonstrated. Marriage initiates (or reconfirms) a series of exchanges that extends beyond the life-span of any particular set of partners. Rather than describing the patterns of this exchange, however, I would like to briefly concentrate on three related points: first, marriage is talked about as a 'place' that has to be reached in the right way; second, this place is focused upon a particular navel; and third, this navel is closely linked with *sumanga* and the navel of the house.

The term *tonang* ('fixed') is closely associated with being 'female' (*baine*). While a woman (that is, mother, daughter, wife) stays fixed in the house, a man (that is, father, son, husband) wanders: she is 'the one who receives the food', he is 'the one who searches for it'. Furthermore, she is 'the one who fixes the cooking pot onto the stones of the hearth', while it is said that a cooking pot and a woman should be 'fixed' in the same way – that is, 'placed like a princess' (*dipatorro datu*). As a pot is the source of cooked food (*kinande*), a woman is the source of 'mystical fortune' (also *kinande*) and the 'guardian of the prohibitions' that are meant to protect such a fortune. In fact, the appropriate death rites for a woman carry this fixity to its logical conclusion by 'placing her as if she were a cooking pot' (*to dipatonang*) (see Tsintjilonis 1993:254-5). Be that as it may, the place where the woman and the cooking pot are fixed is the place that a prospective husband must reach.

The continuation of his *rapu* will depend upon the strength of the connection (*kadenge*, 'tethering with a short string') which the ritual of marriage will effect between his 'bone' and the woman's 'blood'. As their life path is said 'to pass through the tip of her sarong' (*umpolalan pollo dodona*), the children he may father will inherit their ritual obligations and the overall patterns of appropriate behaviour (*siri*) from their mother and, if they are to enjoy a 'long life' as well as acquire 'fortune', they will have to follow the ritual patterns which are used at her ancestral house (*aluk susu*). In other words, a mother is not only 'the one who is fixed' (*to matonang*), 'she is the one who is fixed at/as the source of life' (*to ma'tonnana*, from the root *oto*, 'source', 'base', 'origin').

The initiation of a formal marriage proposal lies with the family of the prospective groom (see Nooy-Palm 1986:115). If their initial present (betel and areca nuts) is accepted, a series of visits by the groom to the house of the bride begins, culminating in the formal ceremony of marriage. The time of the visits, the people who will take the groom to the bride's house, the path

they will follow, the order they will walk in, and what they will carry are all very carefully prescribed. All their actions, as well as what they might encounter on the way, may well influence the future of the marriage – any occurrence, from the cry of a bird to whether they might have to cross a river, functions as a 'sign' (*tanda*) of the appropriateness of the match. In a similar fashion, the way they will be received, where they will be seated, and how they will move in the courtyard and inside the house, as well as what they will be offered to eat and drink, are part of a deliberate attempt on the part of the bride's family to ensure that the signs will be good and the eventual marriage successful.¹⁰

Another way of discussing marriage is through *kapa'* ('cotton'). *Rampanan kapa'* ('the laying down of the cotton') is one of the terms for marriage. Although the exact connotation of 'cotton' is not very clear (but see Nooy-Palm 1979:34-5), *rampanan kapa'* refers to the penalty the guilty party will have to pay for dissolving the marriage bond. The amount of *kapa'* always reflects the 'status' (*tana'*¹¹) of the person involved. With the exception of some of the most westerly districts, this is practised everywhere in Tana Toraja. *Rampanan* refers to 'a thin beam on the side of the house which supports the lower extremities of the roof'. In this sense, it can be seen as a marker, a sort of boundary pole that both expresses and supports the appropriateness of a marriage in terms of territory. In fact, the people of Buntao' describe *rampanan kapa'* as a 'fence' (*paga'*, *bala*) marking out the agreement between the two partners and their families and protecting the territory of the new marriage. Such an agreement itself is described as movement in 'mutually agreed directions' (*sipanga*).

If everything goes as planned, the meal which concludes a marriage ceremony will establish a connection ('strong string') between 'those who arrived' (*to parampean*) and 'those who received them' (*to dirampean*). Their relationship will have been turned into a 'closed basket' (*parando ditutu'*), in which fortune (an abundance of children, buffaloes, and rice) will be amassed. This enclosure itself has a centre, the appropriation and care of which is co-extensive with the notion of marriage – namely the 'hearth' (*dapo'*). To marry is 'to

¹⁰ Much of this information stems from discussions which took place during preparations for the wedding of the daughter of one of the leading families in Buntao'. Although the wedding was predominantly a Christian affair, attempts were made to follow a number of more traditional rules (two traditional priests were present). These attempts caused some consternation among followers of the traditional religion, resulting in several heated debates.

¹¹ Three kinds of 'stake' (*tana'*) are used to equate the value of different people with material substances: *tana' bulaan* ('golden stakes'), *tana' bassi* ('iron stakes'), and *tana' karurung* ('stakes from the hard core of the sugar palm'). These stakes correspond to a three-tiered status system: *to makaka matasak* ('ripe elder sibling' – noble), *to makaka* ('elder sibling' – commoner), and *kaunan* (slave) respectively (see Tsintjionis 1997).

become a hearth' or 'to plant a hearth'; in contrast, adultery is 'the destruction of the hearth'; divorcing is 'dividing the hearth'; remarrying a divorced spouse is 'returning to the hearth'; and 'half a hearth' is the situation in which one spouse has died.

A hearth consists of a wooden tray filled with earth which frames a set of three stones that support the cooking pot and are always arranged ('planted') in a triangular fashion ('like a set of triplets') pointing east. The stones must always number three, because everything in the cosmos stems from three sets of 'life spirits' ('sky spirits', 'earth spirits' and 'spirits from the earth-liver'), which are themselves 'planted as triplets' (*deata titanan tallu*). When a new hearth is built, a man (married and of slave descent) must search for these stones very early in the morning. He must look for them at the confluence of two streams and, as soon as he picks them up, should drop a yellow bead into the water – the 'veins' of such stones must 'meet' (*sitammu*). They are carried back to the house in the way in which women carry heavy loads. Once there, they are placed from right to left so as to replicate the 'path of life' and facilitate its proper movement inside the house. A large number of prohibitions are associated with hearths in general and a new *dapo*' in particular. For instance, when the fire is lit for the first time, a specific kind of wood (*buang-in*, a species of casuarina) must be burned and the fire should be kept going for three nights, during which time it cannot be used to light torches that are to be taken out of the house. The actual stones cannot be removed from the hearth or used in any other way and, although no special powers are ascribed to them outside the context of the hearth, if the house is destroyed for some reason (for example, if it burns down), they should be removed and used again.

The importance ascribed to the construction of the hearth is usually explained in terms of its ability 'to evoke the full wealth' (*ullambe' sanda eanan*), and in this context the three stones are often referred to as 'the edge of the family well' (*tondon turunanna to ma'rapu*). The hearth is associated both with the *sumanga*' which enters the house through the 'navel post' and with the spirit of fertility which is known as the 'mother of increase' (*indo' parangnganan*): in the former context, it is said that the arrangement of the three stones orients the creative energy by imparting the appropriate movement to it – *sumanga*', which 'passes through' the post, first enters the three stones from right to left and follows the same direction as it unfolds around the rest of the house; in the latter context, food (especially rice), grown and cooked under the protection of the 'mother of increase', is seen as the foundation of human growth. Furthermore, without any particular sacrificial offerings, ash and earth can be taken from the *dapo*' and used as the basic ingredients of particular medicines. They are usually mixed with water and rubbed into the navel of a sick person – usually pregnant women who have

fallen ill or are having difficulties giving birth. Hens of a specific colour are also sacrificed at the hearth and their blood (mixed with ash and earth) is used as medicine in a variety of illnesses which are thought to weaken the body. In fact, the stones themselves are ritually fed from time to time.

Thus, like kinship grouping, marriage is a *placé*. It is the place where the bride is fixed and which the groom must reach. It is only through its navel that the eventual union of husband and wife can be positioned and oriented in relation to the movement of the life force. Indeed, as the very expressions indicate, the 'one who arrives' and the 'one who receives him' are but attributes of this space itself – a space which is focused on the hearth, just as the hearth is focused on the *a'riri posi'*.

Polity

Information on traditional types of social organization higher than the *tongkonan* is very unclear and contradictory. Pre-colonially, Tana Toraja was subdivided into a large number of discrete organizational entities which led a relatively independent existence. Despite the presence of such entities, however, there is no indigenous word for polity. In this context, most of the ethnographic commentators use the term '*adat* community'. 'An *adat*-community denotes an autonomous political unit which inhabits a territory of its own and has its own *adat*, or system of customs' (Nooy-Palm 1979:59). Such communities were differentiated, according to size, into four categories: *penanian* (or *bua'*), *patang penanian*, *lembang*, and *tallulembang*. *Penanian* was the simplest one, referring to a certain territory the inhabitants of which celebrated a particular ritual together (*menani pare*, 'to sing the rice'). Thus, *patang* ('four') *penanian* denoted a federation of *penanian* which kept to a single arrangement in celebrating *menani pare*. *Lembang* ('ship') was an even larger combination of such territories. The *tallulembang* (*tallu*, 'three'), lastly, was a federation of such 'ships'. *Lembang* was the most common arrangement and the one the Dutch colonial authorities attempted to officially reproduce in their administrative organization of the Toraja highlands. There are important differences between these organizational entities, but the consequences of these, as well as their exact origin and significance, are not very clear (but see Bigalke 1981:23-8; Nooy-Palm 1979:60-92). However, they all seem to involve a similar notion of affiliation or encompassment, the most important dimension of which I shall briefly describe by concentrating on the traditional organization of Buntao'.

Buntao' was and, in *adat* terms, remains a federation of four *penanian*: Issong Kalua' ('Great Rice Mortar'), Tongkonan Basse ('House of Oaths'), Rinding Kila' ('Wall of Thunder'), and Rinding Daun Induk ('Wall of Palm

Leaves') (see Nooy-Palm 1979:69-72). Although a number of *rapu* reside in the same *penanian*, there is always a leading one, the history of which is intimately linked to the history of the specific *penanian* as a whole. In each case, the *tongkonan* of the leading *rapu* is considered to be the navel of the *penanian*, and its leader the head of the community. The indigenous term for such a house is *tongkonan layuk* ('high house') and, at least in Buntao', it is always depicted as the 'mother' of the other ancestral houses and the 'origin of their path' (*garonto' lalanna*).

Each of the four high houses traces its beginning to a specific ancestor who is acknowledged as both its founder and the creator of the ritual order in that particular territory: Kattu' in Issong Kalua', Tang diTonda in Tongkonan Basse, Passui Lalong in Rinding Kila', and Salle Karurung in Rinding Daun Induk. Kattu' and Tang diTonda were brothers, and their genealogy extends back to Parange', who is the original ancestral deity ('the one who came from above') and is credited with bringing the sacrificial ritual (*aluk*) to the area of Buntao' as a whole. He is thought to have built the very first house, on top of a mountain, in the territory of Issong Kalua'. This house was 'planted' at the very point at which he first stepped onto the earth. In a similar way, the genealogy of Passui Lalong and Salle Karurung, who were also brothers, extends back to an ancestor called Lanna'. Lanna' and Parange' were brothers and, although the former did not settle in the area of Buntao', some of his early descendants were incorporated in the local genealogies through a variety of ancestral houses. In this way, the various houses are seen throughout the four *penanian* as parts of a single whole.

Due to its direct association with Parange' (the 'original ancestor'), however, the *tongkonan layuk* of Issong Kalua' is considered to be the oldest and highest of all ancestral houses and the centre of the territory of Buntao'. In fact, it is described as *posi'na tondok*, the 'navel of the village'. Every other house traces its history back to Kattu' and, through him, to Parange'.¹² Its head is the leader (*to parengnge*) of the community as a whole and 'the guardian of its prohibitions'. Its sacrificial ritual is regarded as 'the origin and source of all sacrifices' (*garonto'na tangkean suru*) and its leader as 'the mother of [all] ritual' (*indo'na aluk*). This house is depicted as 'the head of the river' (*pangulu salu*) which flows out of the 'fortune earth' (*padang rongko*), that is, that part of the cosmos that is full of 'fatness' and 'foam' (riches and fertility). Seen from the top, ranking in the community can be described as a gradual dispersion and relative embodiment of this fortune. This hierarchy finds its most concrete and elaborate expression in the context of ritual feast-

¹² Despite their emphasis on the interconnectedness of the various houses, the lack of consensus on the exact links made it impossible to accurately depict these relationships. Indeed, in many ways 'reality' seemed to contradict the emphasis on unity in rather obvious ways.

ing. The fortune that should flow out of the community's navel (the leading *tongkonan* and its *a'riri posi'*) is made manifest in the leading family's ability to sacrifice and, in olden days, to win wars and take enemy heads.

What needs to be emphasized is that the relationship between the various ancestral houses and the leading one can be seen as the embodiment of a single family. More often than not, their members perceive themselves as relatives. This implies that the leading *tongkonan* is the elder in a social hierarchy that reflects and portrays the ramification of a single family tree. Thus, the people of Buntao' describe their community as 'one door' (*misa' ba'bana*): they inhabit a single house and they share a single door.¹³ In other words, 'they emerge from a common source' (*to misa' ulunna*). In this way, the territory of the whole community coincides with the ramification of a single *rarabuku*. The pre-eminence of the Issong Kalua' *tongkonan layuk* and the prosperity of the community as a whole manifest and embody the potency of a single source of power and a shared point of origin.

Thus, like kinship grouping and marriage, polity is a place. It is a place the organization of which depends on a single centre. Seen as the navel of the community as a whole, this centre both focuses and orients the creative energy upon which all life depends. Like a woman in the context of marriage, its guardian ('the mother of all ritual') is fixed at this centre, guarding the plenitude which stems from the 'fortune earth' and manifests itself in the prosperity and enhancement of the whole community. Herein allegiance to the priest-leader is allegiance to life itself – a life the organization of which encompasses the navels of the other ancestral houses and their hearths.

Ritual feast

In Buntao, attending a ritual celebration is often designated as *ma'pasa'*, 'going to the market'. Preparing the actual site and determining its territorial limits is *untanan pasa'*, 'to plant a market'. In accordance with the direction of the sacrificial smoke (*rambu*) there are three kinds of market: *pasa' rambu tuka'* ('the market of the ascending smoke'), always located on 'the side of the rising sun', is where the gods are propitiated; *pasa' rambu solo'* ('the market of the descending smoke'), always located on 'the side of the setting sun', is where the recently dead are prepared for their journey to the other world

¹³ Within this house, status distinctions and the logic of *tana'* are cast in a genealogical idiom which differentiates and unifies – while the nobles, being 'ripe elder siblings', are described as older ('ripe') than the rest of their brothers and sisters (the commoners), the slaves are depicted as 'children'. In this way, disparity is both retained and transcended. The various *tana'* can be parts of the same because they are different.

(Puya); and, last but not least, *pasa' rambu tangnga* ('the market of the middle smoke') is where the 'ancestors of the west' are invited to eat and drink. Thus, a ritual feast is the place where one goes 'to buy' (*mangalli*) from the gods and the ancestors. Surprisingly, although its importance was noted by Kruyt (in the more general context of Central Sulawesi) and incorporated into more theoretical statements about exchange (see Mauss 1990:16), this practice of buying has not received much attention from recent fieldworkers (for an interesting example see Waterson 1981:278-80). In any case, as I do not intend to discuss it in detail, a few brief remarks may be justified.

The emphasis on this kind of buying extends to all cosmic domains and its importance is not restricted to sacrifices which concentrate on 'feeding' eponymous gods and human ancestors. It is associated with the idea that every domain (that is, rivers, forests, rice fields, gardens, and so on) has a particular 'sovereign' (*datu*) who, to all intents and purposes, is the 'owner' (*puang*) of that domain and everything in it (see also Mauss 1990:16). Thus, for instance, if house-building material is needed, before a tree can be felled, the permission of its 'spirit-owner' must be sought and some payment proffered, usually involving the sacrifice of a red hen. In the same way, even something as simple as cutting a leaf off a banana plant should be undertaken in conjunction with the making of a small offering (mostly betel nut). In most contexts, however, such a transaction does not really affect the ownership of what is exchanged. In other words, the sacrificer does not become the undisputed owner but simply the 'guardian' (*to mantaranak*) of what has been acquired. This guardianship is especially prevalent where animals and material associated with cooking and eating are concerned. For example, one cannot simply ask someone for a puppy or a kitten; on the contrary, some kind of symbolic payment must be offered in exchange. The need for this payment does not derive from the imperative to acknowledge the immediate owner's guardianship of a particular animal, but the animal's 'true' connection with its spirit-owner. Thus, it could be said, while gods and spirits can own, people may simply borrow or, perhaps, hire.

Beyond the specificity of particular everyday examples, this practice of buying can be related to the connectedness between life and death. Indeed, the transformation of a 'black shadow' into *sumanga'* may be seen as embodying an overall practice of exchange in relation to which the rites of the 'descending smoke' are both opposed and completed by the rites of the 'ascending smoke'. If, as Mauss put it, sacrifice 'is an act of giving that is necessarily reciprocated' (Mauss 1990:16), life and death may be seen as integral parts of this reciprocity – that is, the overall exchange between gods, ancestors and humans, on which the cosmos depends. If the conversion of a shadow can be said to replenish the cosmos, the patterns of this reciprocity can be construed as a process of 'reproduction' and 'regeneration' (see Weiner

1980:71) – that is, as the creation of new forms of life and the re-creation of already existing ones (see Tsintjilonis 1993:100-3).

If attending a ritual celebration is 'going to the market', this process of reproduction and regeneration is a place. Furthermore, it is a place which, like kinship grouping or marriage or polity, has a navel around which the ritual obligations are arranged, first and foremost, in terms of movement.

A *pasa* has always got a navel. This navel is part of the temporary ritual architecture which, 'like the branches of the extended families which assemble during ceremonies, [...] establishes a symbolic web of communication. At ritual performances these connections are activated, linking mankind with the spirits by sacred ties' (Zerner 1983:96). The market of the ascending smoke is usually focused upon a long bamboo pole or an extraordinary flag-like construction also made of bamboo. In the market of the descending smoke, it is the platform (*gorang bulaan*, 'golden platform') on which the sacrificial meat is divided that 'centres' the ritual proceedings. In a parallel fashion, the market of the middle smoke is centred on a wooden table-like construction on which appropriate offerings are placed.

Beyond the existence of navels, the ritual proceedings as such are construed in terms of movement. As I have already indicated, movement is not simply a figure of speech. In indigenous exegesis, both life and death are seen in terms of a single 'path' (*lalan*). While death is described as *lalan solo* ('descending path'), life is described as *lalan tuka* ('ascending path'); in the former case, one starts on or from the left and moves to the right (*lalan kairi*, 'path [from the] left'); in the latter case, one starts on or from the right and moves to the left (*lalan kanan*, 'path [from the] right'). As movement from the right involves ascent and movement from the left descent, however, both paths are viewed as parts of a single motion which takes the form of a continuous rotation (*liling*, 'to go around'). Within this rotation, death is depicted as *liling kairi* ('to go around from left to right') and life as *liling kanan* ('to go around from right to left').¹⁴ The overall motion is described as *lalan sumanga* ('the path of the *sumanga*') and is thought to embody the general flow of life over and above the particularities of specific lives and deaths.

Thus, apart from going to a market, what one does there is move from right to left or from left to right. Each and every sacrifice is nothing but a step in the right direction. The ancestral rites of the Toraja map out both the continuity and relative discontinuity of the universe. They channel and support the flow of life by amassing and distributing, as well as recreating and redistributing, the life force which constitutes the essence of its various forms. What is returned to the cosmos, on or from the left, is transformed into vital-

¹⁴ As the market of the middle smoke belongs to the realm of the setting sun, the sacrificial sequences which deal with the ancestors of the west are part of the 'path from the left'.

ity, prosperity and further life – *sumanga'*, which will be received and re-embodied on or from the right. In this context, a ritual feast is nothing more than a place and the sacrificial sequences nothing less than a set of 'measured' steps.

Conclusion

Polities, navel posts, hearths, houses, and 'golden platforms' constitute signs and marks of the energy that supports and animates the Toraja universe. They are all implicated, both as sources of power and points of origin, in the dispersion and concentration of *sumanga'*. However, as they do not introduce any absolute boundaries in the field of creative energy, they do not fragment the continuity of the cosmos. They are simply signs and traces of what J.J. Fox has called the 'immanence of life': 'creation did not occur *ex nihilo*: the cosmos was violently quickened into life and all that exists is thus part of a living cosmic whole. Life is evident everywhere in a multitude of forms whose manifestations can be complex, particularistic, but also transitory' (J.J. Fox 1987: 524).

Indeed, it may be argued, every form of life in the Toraja universe is at once a part of *sumanga'* and a container for it. This makes the cosmos continuous, reversible, and open. The spatially diffuse points (houses, ritual feasts, and so on), to echo Poulantzas in his work on the characteristics of space in ancient Greece, 'are separated from one another not because they are closed to the outside', being essentially different, 'but because they are turned in on their own centre' (Poulantzas 1980:101) – their own centre and, I must add, point of origin. They are nothing more than 'nodal points at which the energy collects, though in differing degrees of concentration' (Errington 1983a:564). Individual collections of this energy, although different in degrees of potency, belong to trajectories of the same kind – they all traverse a single space of which they are part and which they partially contain. In a continuous process of division, inclusion, and incorporation, they embody and manifest the progression of life and the multiplication of its sources.

Through a succession of related centres and navels, they transcend the relative boundaries of human bodies and fix human existence in a series of inter-related places. Through the organization and construction of such places, the necessary articulation of *somebody's* components is both extended and completed: if a body is to survive and grow in the proper way, its corporeality, beyond being centred and arranged from right to left, must also be 'planted'. The immanence of its intrinsic vitality must be fastened to extrinsic sources of life and potency which are also planted from right to left. In this context, beyond being organized like a place, a body may even be described as being a place (see Errington 1983b:234).

Be that as it may, the importance of places can hardly be exaggerated. The dispositional order of their arrangement is intimately linked with the manner in which the Toraja *effect* rather than represent life – that is, rather than revealing the schemata of its apprehension, their organizational matrices contain the patterns of its very appropriation. The Toraja world contains no secrets. Although *sumanga* is invisible, its trajectories can be mapped through a variety of visible signs on the surface of things (see Tsintjilonis 1995). The landscape manifests and embodies the paths as well as the concentrations of *sumanga*. A *rarabuku*, for example, is a feature of this landscape in the sense that its ramification (through the various houses) maps out the path of a particular stream of *sumanga* which originated at the point where the primeval ancestor first 'sat'.

This movement from unity to relative diversity is reversed by ritual. Ritual action is, to echo Traube's work on the Mambai, a 'mechanism of reconstitution': 'Scattered house members reconvene at their origin places for ritual purposes, and dramatically re-present their ideal unity and wholeness' (Traube 1986:66-7). This unity finds its most concrete expression in those rites which a community undertakes as a whole. From this point of view, the wider community can be seen as a manifestation and an embodiment of a single *rarabuku* and, as a *rarabuku* is circumscribed by its sacrificial obligations, 'one might say, the purpose of ritual is not society; rather, the purpose of society is ritual' (Traube 1986:16), but this is another story.

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