FROM HUMILITY TO LORDSHIP

IN ISLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA*

Thomas Gibson, University of Rochester

In this paper, I compare the egalitarian religious images that exist in one of the most hierarchical societies in Island Southeast Asia, the Makassar of coastal South Sulawesi, with the hierarchical religious images that exist in one of the most egalitarian societies, the Buid of highland Mindoro. This comparison will allow me to cast new light on Woodburn's argument that the the origin of social inequality in immediate-return hunter-gatherer societies may lie in the appropriation of the religious domain by senior men.

In the first part of the paper, I argue that the Makassar and the Buid formed part of a single regional system in which coastal societies preyed on the members of autonomous tribal societies practicing shifting cultivation in the highlands. The depredations of the hierarchical coastal societies spawned an ethic in the highlands in which equality, autonomy and communal solidarity were valued above all else. But even within the coastal societies, the lower orders often developed a set of religious values similar to those of the highlanders, values that rejected the hierarchy, dependency and factionalism of the elite. This rejection was expressed through popular interpretations of world religions like Islam and Christianity. Historically, religions promising spiritual salvation

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from social bondage often arose in the most hierarchical social orders. I argue that hierarchy and equality, dependency and autonomy, solidarity and factionalism should all be viewed as conceptual oppositions that develop in tandem with one another, much like the concepts of "free gift" and "commodity" (Parry, 1986).

In the second part of the paper, I approach popular ideas of salvation among the Makassar through an analysis of the epic of Datu Museng. In reciting this epic, Makassar bards simultaneously recall their experience of Dutch colonialism, express a mystical vision of life as a quest to transcend the social order and reunite with God, and rework a pervasive precoccupation of Austronesian mythology, the fate of opposite-sex twins. They also reveal a profound ambivalence toward the values of equality and hierarchy, autonomy and dependency, solidarity and factionalism. It is only because Makassar society was based on hereditary ranks, slavery and warfare that Makassar religion could develop such a clear ideal of the wandering saint who transcends all worldly spatial, temporal and categorical boundaries.

In the third part of the paper, I compare the salvation Islamic saints promise the Makassar with the salvation Jesus Christ promises lowland Filipinos. In both cases, the lower orders in a hierarchical society can appeal to the transcendental values of a global religion to circumscribe the power of the local spirits and political elites. I contrast this situation with that of the Buid and the immediate-return hunter-gatherers discussed by Woodburn. In these egalitarian societies, the major threat to society comes not from elites who abuse their power but from individuals who place their own autonomy above the needs of the group. Religious rituals are used to assert the primacy of communal solidarity over individual autonomy. The seeds of inequality lie in a widespread

tendency to map the opposition between communal and individual interest onto the opposition between male and female, allowing senior men to assert a monopoly of control over collective ritual.

Equality as a symbolic value

The values of social equality, individual autonomy and moral solidarity coexist in most societies with their opposites: hierarchy, dependency and factional loyalty. This claim derives from the simple point that at the level of symbols and meanings every element gains its meaning from its place in a structure of significant differences. For egalitarianism to be a value, people must have some concept of its opposite. The same is true of hierarchy. This means that people who value equality in some contexts must at least have a concept of hierarchy in others. In most societies, the two sets of values govern different spheres of social life. In extremely hierarchical societies, egalitarian and individualistic values may be confined to the realm of religious belief and practice. This is Dumont's argument with regard to religious renouncers who sought individual salvation in Hindu India without regard to hierarchical notions of the relative impurity of social groups like castes (Dumont, 1970). In extremely egalitarian societies, hierarchical values may be confined to the realm of religious belief and practice. I have argued that this is the case for the Buid of Mindoro, Philippines (Gibson, 1986). Woodburn has made a similar argument regarding the presence of an exclusive men's cult in otherwise perfectly egalitarian hunter-gatherer societies in Africa (Woodburn, 1998).

Six kinds of society in Island Southeast Asia

In a previous paper comparing attitudes toward violence, domination and aggression among shifting cultivators in Island Southeast Asia, I identified three types of

society that value equality in distinctive ways (Gibson, 1990a). In the first category of societies, typified by the Buid, equality is *ascribed* to every member of society at birth. At the social level, everyone enjoys equal access to productive resources, personal autonomy in the choice of spouse and place of residence, and the right to share the meat of domestic animals sacrificed by other members of the community. At the religious level, all men enjoy equal access to the spirit familiars that guard against disease, personal autonomy in relation to the spirits of dead ancestors and an obligation to participate in certain collective rituals to appease the spirits of the earth. Women play a less prominent role in interactions with the spirit world. They are not categorically excluded from it, however, and some women do acquire direct access to spirit familiars.

In Buid society, social relations based on long-term indebtedness, moral obligations to genealogical kin and factional conflict are viewed as morally wrong and mystically dangerous to the social whole. Boastful, domineering, possessive and aggressive actions by individuals are stigmatized by society. All these behaviors are vividly exemplified in the religious domain by a host of predatory spirit types. Among human spirit types, the ghosts of dead kin are always greedy for meat, the spirits of the mountain peaks are possessive lovers, the spirits of the forest are irrationally aggressive, and spirits who resemble lowland peasants are cannibalistic. The cosmos as a whole is represented as a food chain in which moral vice is represented by the predatory spirits at the top of the chain who attack humans for their food. Moral virtue attaches to the spirits of the earth and the plants at the bottom of the chain that feed all the rest.

A second category of society views equality as an *achievement*. Access to the status of equal adult tends to be more open for men than for women, and the achievement

of such status often links a man's achievement of such status to feats of bravery which are precursors to the acquisition of a wife. Marital and parental claims are correspondingly greater than in the first category. But the ideal continues to be a community of equal adults. The clearest example of this type is the Ilongot of northern Luzon (R. Rosaldo,1980; M. Rosaldo,1980). A third category departs from valuing equality of outcomes, but continues to value equality of opportunity in the *competition* for high rank that is not necessarily passed on to the next generation. A famous example of this type is the Iban of Borneo described by Freeman and others (Freeman, 1970; Rousseau, 1980). Again, men have an advantage over women in this competition because it is linked to success in headhunting and warfare.

In addition to the predominantly egalitarian societies discussed so far, it is also possible to identify the presence of egalitarian values in predominantly hierarchical societies. Many tribal societies in Island Southeast Asia have a system of hereditary ascribed ranks, often glossed as "noble", "commoner" and "slave", which are reproduced through a hierarchical marriage system involving large marriage payments. But significantly, societies in this category retained a large place for *competition between factional leaders* who occupied relatively equal positions in the ranking system and who sought to convert their economic, military or religious achievements into higher social rank. This would appear to be the most typical form of society in the Southeast Asian highlands, where a complex of headhunting and competitive feasting helps to reproduce a stratified social order. Societies of this sort continued to exist into the twentieth century among the Ngaju, Kayan and Kenyah of central Borneo (Scharer, 1963; Rousseau, 1990).

A fifth category includes those internally ranked tribal societies that developed into even more hierarchical chiefdoms and kingdoms between the fourth and fourteenth centuries CE, often adopting Indic notions of divine kingship. Many of these kingdoms later converted to Theravada Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. These religions brought with them both hierarchical versions centered on the royal court and egalitarian versions centered on popular ritual and *mysticism* (Reid, 1993: 132-202). Talented boys could escape their humble origins to pursue careers either within the religious hierarchy or in opposition to it. As Cannell has argued for the Christian Philippines and as I argue for Islamic Indonesia, these global religions made new idioms of equality and solidarity available to increasingly oppressed peasants at the same time that they provided new forms of legitimacy for their masters.

A sixth category includes the societies that fell under the control of Europeans after the Portuguese conquest of Melaka in 1511. The history of the Philippines and Makassar after the imposition of European rule is one of continual anti-colonial uprisings, often framed in terms of *millenarian* ideas derived from Christianity or Islam. Colonial rule led to a cleavage between the social, political and religious hierarchies at a very early date. In the Philippines, the pagan tribesmen of the mountains were the only peoples to resist both Christianity and Spanish rule. Their territories often provided a refuge for lowland peasants seeking to evade colonial rule. In South Sulawesi, the Makassar kings of Goa and Tallo' became the heads of a peninsula-wide social hierarchy during the sixteenth century. They converted to Islam in 1605, making the scholars and saints of Mecca and Medina the heads of the religious hierarchy in the seventeenth

century. They were defeated by the Dutch in 1667, making the Governors of the United East India Company (VOC) the heads of the political hierarchy in the eighteenth century.

Southeast Asia as a regional system

For many centuries, societies falling into all six of these categories constituted a single, a loosely-integrated system in Island Southeast Asia (Gibson, 1990b). This system was composed of units that were both politically autonomous and socially porous. The autonomy and fluidity which characterized societies in the region from pre-historic times until the rise of modern states was facilitated by certain features of the physical and social landscape: the proximity of most land areas to navigable trade routes, low population densities, and an interstitial position between the great civilizations of East, South and West Asia. Local ethnic groups could form, grow into great powers, collapse and be absorbed into their neighbors (see e.g. Warren, 1981).

Social fluidity was also facilitated by the fact that societies falling into all six of these categories employed variants of a single underlying cultural model inherited from their common Austronesian ancestors. Elsewhere I have argued that kinship, understood as relations of filiation and descent, and marriage, understood as alliances between distinct kinship groups, are not central to social life in most Austronesian societies (Gibson, 1985, 1995). Rather, the social order is based instead on idioms of shared space and activity that allow Austronesian societies to transform strangers into kin over time.

Houses serve as the primary symbol of shared space. Houses provide the basic framework for the most fundamental shared social activities: cooking, eating and sexual intercourse. In addition to structuring people's everyday social and economic experiences and activities, the house draws together many of the models of gender, space

and time encountered in myth and ritual. It is androgynous, divided into three levels and oriented according to the movements of the celestial bodies. It integrates celestial, biological and historical time. Finally, houses are a microcosm of the local community, the kingdom, and the world. Social groups of widely different sizes can be symbolized by structures that range from humble huts containing a family of slaves to royal palaces that represent entire kingdoms (Headley, 1987).

The relationship between co-resident siblings and spouses serve as the primary symbols of shared activity. Sibling sets are internally differentiated by relative age but not by gender. The relation between elder and junior sibling is less hierarchical than that between parent and child and more elastic (cf. McKinley, 1981). In the "bilateral" societies of central Indonesia and the Philippines, one normally marries a cousin, a kinsman of the same generation who is comparable to a sibling. Some marriage rituals are designed to open up a symbolic difference between potential spouses sufficient to avoid the feeling of incest at the time of marriage (cf. Conklin, 1964; Bloch, 1971). Other rituals are designed to transform those related only by marriage into kinsmen. This transformation can be effected through a "downward focus" on the common offspring of a marriage through devices such as teknonymy (Geertz and Geertz, 1975) or by stressing the relation between co-parents-in-law as stabilized through shared grandchildren (Carsten, 1997). The fluidity between the categories of sibling and spouse receives its purest expression at the level of myth, in the story of opposite sex twins who are separated at birth but ultimately reunite. This is a theme that runs through the Panji tales of Java and Bali and the I La Galigo tales of the Bugis (Rassers, 1922; Ras, 1973; Pelras, 1996: 88-89). It is also one of the themes that underlies the Epic of Datu Museng.

In summary, transitions from one category of society to another could take place in either direction, both in the lives of individuals and in the histories of whole societies. Thus, social inequality in Island Southeast Asia was not the result of a unilinear and irreversible evolution, but of the changing concrete political and economic situations a group confronted in its history. Individuals were able to cross from "societies" dominated by one set of values to another, either through choice, as when slaves escaped to the highlands, or through coercion, as when highlanders were captured to serve as slaves.

History, mysticism and myth in the Epic of Datu Museng

I will now turn to the images of equality and personal autonomy that lie at the heart of religious practice in one of the most hierarchical and predatory societies of Island Southeast Asia, the Makassar of South Sulawesi. These images are contained in written and oral literature inspired by Sufi mysticism and in associated ritual practices. They enabled even the most humble slave to imagine a world in which individual moral virtue outweighed all forms of inherited power, rank and wealth. This form of Islam stood in opposition not only to the hierarchy of the social world, but also in opposition to the official Islam of the royal court.

My first-hand knowledge of Makassar culture and society was acquired during field research in the villages of Ara and Bira, located at the southwestern tip of the peninsula of South Sulawesi. These two villages have enjoyed a regional reputation as boat builders and sailors since at least the sixteenth century and possibly even since the thirteenth century. They appear in the I La Galigo, ancient mythical cycle of the Bugis people, as the Waniaga, from the Sanskrit term for merchants (Pelras, 1996). For most of

their history, Ara and Bira have derived a remarkable degree of political, economic and cultural autonomy from their geographical position at the mouth of the Gulf of Bone. This location allowed them to serve both as middlemen on the trade routes between Java and the Spice Islands, and to play the Bugis powers to the north off against the Makassar and colonial powers based to the west.

Between 1530 and 1600, the twin Makassar kingdoms of Goa and Tallo' took advantage of their privileged access to Portuguese firearms to establish their hegemony over the whole of South Sulawesi. Armies made up of free Makassar from the core of Goa captured slaves from outlying kingdoms who were put to work building elaborate fortifications and growing rice. The rice was exported to the Moluccas in exchange for spices that were used to obtain yet more fire-arms in an ever growing spiral. Ara and Bira became vassals of the pagan Empire of Goa in the 1560s.

In 1605, the ruler of Tallo' looked across the seas for a more cosmopolitan model of royal absolutism than was provided by the local myth of royal descent from heavenly beings. He found it in the Islamic Sultanate of Aceh, ruled at the time by Iskandar Muda. The royal court of Aceh had in turn modeled itself on that of the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Tallo' converted to a version of Islam that placed the ruler at the center of both the secular state and the religious cosmos. The royal chronicle composed at the behest of Akbar, the *Akbar Nama* and the royal chronicle of Aceh, the *Hikayat Aceh* provided a new model for centralized imperial authority in the "Gunpowder Empires" of Asia (see Hodgson, 1974, Volume III Book 5). Between 1603 and 1611, all the kings of South Sulawesi converted to Islam, either voluntarily or after being defeated by Goa.

In 1667 the Kingdom of Goa was itself defeated by a coalition of the Dutch and Bugis from the Kingdom of Bone. According to the Treaty of Bungaya, Goa's outlying vassals were transferred to the VOC by right of conquest. These included the villages of Ara and Bira. The VOC established a permanent garrison in Ujung Pandang just north of Goa's palace at Somba Opu. The King of Bone also maintained a permanent presence in Ujung Pandang in a fort at Bontoala that had been captured from Goa. The three greatest powers of eastern Indonesia thus confronted one another in Ujung Pandang throughout the eighteenth century.

In 1727, the villages of Ara and Bira began paying annual tribute to the VOC. After 1737, they were nominally under the authority of a "Junior Merchant" stationed at Fort Carolina in Bulukumba. Throughout the eighteenth century, the VOC maintained garrisons in many other outlying territories, including Selayar and Bima. The Dutch officials in charge of these outposts assumed the power formerly enjoyed by local chiefs of enslaving people as a punishment for certain crimes or in cases where a miscreant was unable to pay a fine. These officials soon became the primary suppliers of the slaves exported from Makassar (Sutherland, 1983). They officials also frequently intervened in local succession disputes in exchange for bribes. The Governor in Ujung Pandang was often drawn into the matter and had to decide who was the legitimate ruler of a local kingdom. He thus undertook one of the roles formerly played by the Sultan of Goa, that of confirming local rulers in office, without being able to play his other central roles as the apex of the regional systems of marriage and religion.

The Dutch did not attempt to impose direct rule on villages like Ara and Bira until 1864 and did not do so effectively until the 1920s when native officials were paid a salary

for the first time. From 1942 until 1961 South Sulawesi suffered constant turmoil, first from the Japanese occupation, then from the war of independence, and finally from the Darul Islam insurrection which attempted to establish an Islamic state. The grip of the central government on the villages of Ara and Bira only really tightened between 1971 and 1998 under the New Order regime of President Suharto (Gibson, 2000). Thus despite having acknowledged a series of distant overlords over the past five hundred years, the villages of Ara and Bira have been able to maintain a remarkable degree of political and cultural autonomy.

The Sinrili' Datu Museng in 1852 as subaltern history

The Sinrili' Datu Museng seems to have first come to the attention of Europeans in 1852 when versions of it were recorded by two different Dutch missionaries. The first of them, Benjamin Frederick Matthes, arrived in South Sulawesi in 1848 (van den Brink, 1943). In his Makassarasche Chrestomathie he wrote that the Sinrili' Datu Museng was obtained "from the mouth of a renowned singer and transcribed by the hand of a very accomplished Native scribe"(Matthes 1860: 512). The full version contains about 1150 lines of thirteen or fourteen syllables each.

> Version 1 The Sinrili' Datu Museng (Matthes, Goa, recorded ca. 1852)
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> Datu Museng is a loyal servant of the Sultan of Sumbawa. The Sultan learns that the Datu of Jarewe is in Ujung Pandang and is on the verge of persuading the Governor to recognize him as the legitimate Sultan of Sumbawa. He sends Datu Museng to plead his case. Datu Museng brings his wife Maipa Deapati along. When the Governor learns of her beauty, he demands her as a concubine, offering to exchange forty slave women for her. Datu Museng refuses. Together, he and

> Maipa decide it would be better to die and reunite in heaven than to submit to an infidel. Maipa washes, prays and allows Datu Museng to cut her throat. Datu Museng discards his protective amulet and fights to the death. The Karaeng of Galesong kills him with a lance and brings his head back to the Governor. (Condensed from Matthes, 1860: 529-557)

Matthes linked this version of the Sinrili' Datu Museng to a real succession dispute that took place in Sumbawa in the 1760s. The historical background to this dispute is as follows.

The rivalry between the Kingdoms of Goa and Bone continued after Goa's defeat in 1667. Bone's attempt to establish its own hegemony over South Sulawesi was thwarted by the astute marriage politics of royal house of Tallo' with other royal houses in Borneo and Sumbawa. The continuing ability of the House of Tallo' to maintain its position at the top of the regional marriage system after the fall of Goa was a source of constant irritation to the VOC in the eighteenth century.

> Sumbawa belonged to the realms where the Makassarese rulers (that is the Gowanese and Telloese rulers) who were no longer in a position to expand by means of conquest sought to do so by means of marriage alliance; although diminished in power, the Gowanese and Telloese rulers knew how to preserve their prestige so well among the rulers of Celebes, as well as among those of the island of Sumbawa and the east coast of Borneo, that it was repeatedly the case that upon the death of a ruler in one of the realms situated there he was succeeded by the son or daughter of the Gowanese princess he had married, whether or not he had also fathered children in a previous marriage to a woman who, while not

> Gowanese, was sprung from no less pure noble blood, and whose claim to the throne was thus of no lower standing than of their Gowanese brother or sister. (Ligtvoet [1875] in Noorduyn, 1987: 10)

In 1756 Sultan Shafi al-Din of Tallo' died, the last strong ruler the polity of Goa-Tallo' was to have. In 1763 a struggle for the throne of Sumbawa boke out between the reigning Sultan, Datu Jarewe, and his traditional rival, Datu Taliwang. Datu Taliwang recruited Bugis fugitives from Wajo' to fight on his behalf, while Datu Jarewe turned to Balinese from the neighboring island of Lombok. Datu Taliwang then enlisted the support of the VOC Resident in Bima, Johann Tinne (1758-1764), by promising him 100 slaves. Tinne persuaded the VOC Governor in Ujung Pandang, Cornelis Sinkelaar, to send troops to help Datu Taliwang. In November, 1763, three sloops with 21 European soldiers arrived under the command of the Resident of Selayar, Jakob Bikkes Bakker (1758-1764). The Dutch succeeded in driving out the Balinese, capturing Datu Jarewe, and installing Datu Taliwang as Sultan of Sumbawa. Datu Jarewe was brought back to Ujung Pandang in February, 1764 (Noorduyn, 1987).

Datu Taliwang's ally Tinne died on June 25, 1764 and the commander of the Dutch expedition, Bakker, took his place as Resident in Bima (1764-1768). Fearing that the death of Tinne would undermine his influence with Governor Sinkelaar, Datu Taliwang sent a mission to Ujung Pandang at the end of 1764. It included the current Nene Rangan, another of the five Electors, and the Datu of Busing. The Datu of Busing was the Chief of Re, one of ten districts in Sumbawa proper, and also governor of one of the four districts into which the capital was divided. They arrived too late: Sinkelaar had indeed decided that he had been misled by Tinne about Datu Jarewe's right to the throne

of Sumbawa. On February 9, 1765, Sinkelaar signed a treaty recognizing him as the true Sultan of Sumbawa. Sinkelaar then ordered the arrest of the three emissaries of Datu Taliwang to prevent them from returning to Sumbawa with the news. Two of the emissaries surrendered, but Datu Busing resisted. On March 4, 1765, Datu Busing "ran amok" in Ujung Pandang and was killed by Dutch troops (Noorduyn, 1987: 34-35). This was, of course, none other than the Datu Museng celebrated by the Sinrili'.

The second Dutch missionary to record the Sinrili' Datu Museng was William Donselaar. Matthes had visited the former VOC outpost at Bantaeng in 1849 where he found a large Indo-European community, a product of liaisons between the garrison of Dutch soldiers that had been established in 1737 and local women. Neither Muslim nor Christian, they were deeply immersed in a Shaivite cult of Karaeng Loe that probably dated back to the fourteenth century (Goudswaard, 1865). Matthes recommended the dispatch of two missionaries who could both minister to the spiritual needs of the nominal Christians on the south coast and study the local languages with a view to carrying on missionary work among the surrounding Muslim population. The Netherlands Missionary Society at Rotterdam reassigned Donselaar from Kupang in Timor to Bantaeng in 1852. In 1853, he published a summary of the Sinrili' as it was then recited in Bantaeng.

> Version 2 The Sinrili' Datu Museng (Donselaar, Bantaeng, 1852)
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> Datu Museng elopes with Maipa Deapati, the daughter of the Datu of Jarewe, a vassal of the Sultan of Sumbawa who is himself a vassal of the Dutch Governor of Ujung Pandang. When Datu Jarewe goes to complain about Datu Museng to the Governor, the latter follows to defend himself. But when he arrives with his

> wife, Governor falls in love with Maipa and tries to seize her by force. Maipa tells Datu Museng she would rather die than submit to an infidel. She bathes in consecrated water and offers her throat to his knife. He kills her, wraps her in a shroud and recites the appropriate prayers from the Koran. Then he goes out and fights until he is exhausted. He cannot be shot or stabbed because he is invulnerable. The Karaeng of Galesong finally kills him by striking him in the head with the butt of a rifle. (Condensed from Donselaar, 1855)

As we will see, the detail about the elopement of Datu Museng with the daughter of a noble man is central to the version I recorded in Ara in 1988. Already the story is motivated as much by contradictions internal to Makassar society as it is by the uncontrolled power and appetites of the Dutch overlords.

Sufism in South Sulawesi

Although the Sinrili' Datu Museng concerns the fate of a minor noble from Sumbawa who died at the hands of the Dutch in Ujung Pandang, it resonates among all the Makassar whose ancestors suffered under the oppressive rule of the VOC. The versions recorded in 1852 came from the Dutch possessions of Bantaeng and Ujung Pandang. The versions of the Sinrili' Datu Museng I recorded 136 years later in Ara derived from the island of Selayar. Like Bantaeng and Sumbawa, Ara, Bira and Selayar was all intermittently under Dutch indirect rule from 1667 and 1949.

All these areas were also deeply engaged in long-distance networks of Islamic learning from the seventeenth century on. Soon after the conversion of South Sulawesi to Islam between 1603 and 1611, students from all over the peninsula began to embark on the pilgrimage to Mecca, stopping at ports all around the Indian Ocean to study under

Islamic teachers. The most important port along the way was Aceh in north Sumatra. The Shaik al-Islam in Aceh from 1637 to 1643 was a man of mixed Hadrami and Gujarati descent known as Nur al-Din al-Raniri. al-Raniri was a key figure in Southeast Asian Islam. He was the descendent of a long line of Shaikhs from the Hadramawt who taught both Islamic law and mysticism all around the Indian Ocean.

Nur al-Din al-Raniri may have been raised specifically to teach a version of Sufism to Malays that Fazlur Rahman labelled "neo-Sufism" (Rahman, 1979: 195). This version rejected the antinomianism and pantheism that had grown up around it in certain circles, but it was still based on Ibn al-Arabi's Neo-Platonic doctrine of the Unity of Being. According to this doctrine, the universe is composed of a series of Grades of Being that descend from the perfect unity of God to a phenomenal world made up of a multiplicity of corruptible entities. It is the task of the Perfect Man to ascend these Grades of Being through mystical exercises and reunite with his Creator. This doctrine made its way into popular Islam in Southeast Asia during the sixteenth century and remains embedded in many popular rituals to this day (cf. Bowen on its presence among the Gayo of northern Sumatra, 19xx).

When Sultan Iskandar Thani II came to throne of Aceh in 1637, he made al-Raniri his Shaikh al-Islam, the highest religious office in the realm. He commissioned him to write an encyclopedic work in Malay on universal history, the *Bustan al-Salatin*. al-Attas lists fifteen other works al-Raniri wrote during his seven year stay in Aceh. They included basic texts on the rules and regulations applying to worship, and laws on marriage and divorce which were sent to Kedah in 1640 for the correction of the people who had "lapsed into infidelity and paganism" (al-Attas, 1986: 11). He also trained a

wide range of students from throughout the archipelago in Sufism and the shariah law, including a number of Bugis and Makassar from South Sulawesi. Many returned to serve as religious advisers to local rulers and to set up their own schools. Although he fell from favor at the royal court of Aceh in 1643 and returned to western India, he continued to teach Indonesian students until his death in 1658.

Around 1650, a Bugis student of al-Raniri settled in Bira. He is known in local genealogies as Haji Al-Shaikh al-Julaij Ahmad bin Abdullah al-Bugisiya, or Haji Ahmad the Bugis. His descendants provided most of the Kalis, or chief Islamic officials, in both Bira and Ara until the twentieth century. These Kalis were trained to recite sacred texts written in both Arabic and Makassar, many of which were written by al-Raniri himself (Gibson, forthcoming). The version of the Sinrili' I will discuss in this paper was recited by a descendent of Haji Ahmad, Dessibaji.

Dessibaji learned the Sinrili' from his uncle Daeng Pagala, who served as the last hereditary ruler of Ara from 1913 to 1915. Daeng Pagala learned it in Bira from a man from Haji Hae', a man who was originally from Selayar. The mystical dimensions of the epic can be attributed both to this local tradition of Islamic learning and to the fact that in his youth Dessibaji also studied Islamic mysticism in the village of Cikoang in Jeneponto. One can gain some sense of what was taught from the field research conducted there by Hamonic in the early 1980s.

> Traditionally, we are told, religious education here comprised four degrees: *Angngaji*, apprenticeship in reading and writing the Qur'an; *Assarapa'*, apprenticeship and knowledge of Arabic grammar; *Assarea'*, apprenticeship in Islamic law (*shari'at*) in Arabic and in the Makssar language written in Arabic

> characters; and finally *Attareka'*, apprenticeship in gnosis (*ma'rifat*) and in spiritual truth (*hakikat*). This last degree, which develops the discussion of religious problems relating to the creation of the world and to the figure of the Prophet, presupposes of course the perfect mastery of the degrees which precede it. It thus requires a secret initiation which takes place by word of mouth from master to disciple. . . Finally, the teaching of the principal articles of the faith (*usul al-din*) relies on three works, *Sharab ul-anam*, *Achbar ul-achirah* and *Aqidat ul-'awam*, in the Makssar language transcribed in Arabic characters, and which, like the Ashshirat al-mustaqim, are attributed to a great Muslim mystic who stayed in Aceh in the first half of the seventeenth century, Nur ul-Din al-Raniri. (Hamonic, 1985: 179-180)

It is thus clear that mainstream Islamic mysticism has been present all along the Makassar coast for almost four hundred years and has entered deeply into local understandings of the person and the cosmos. In Ara today, all Muslims agreed that there are at least two aspects to Islam: the outer form contained in the *syariat* law, and the inner meaning acquired by pursuing the mystical path, the *tarekat*. Many informants added two further stages after the *Tarekat*: *Hakekat*, Truth and *Ma'rifat*, Gnosis. The head of the Department of Education in Tanaberu, Muhammad Idris Maming, explained the relation between these four stages with a parable about fishing. Knowing the *syariat* is like knowing that there are fish in the sea. Practicing *tarekat* is like going off in a boat to catch them. Achieving *hakekat* is like actually catching a net full of fish and being able to examine them closely and sort them into kinds. Reaching *ma'rifat* is like eating the fish and making them part of your own body.

Version 3 The Sinrili' Datu Museng (Dessibaji, Ara, 1988)

The version of the Sinrili' Datu Museng recorded by Dessibaji in Ara in 1988 is almost twice as long as the one recorded by Matthes in the early 1850s. The narrative clearly grew in length and complexity between 1850 and 1988. All three versions link Datu Museng to Taliwang and cast the Datu of Jarewe as his enemy. Only Matthes' version retains a reference to the original dispute between Datu Taliwang and Datu Jarewe over succession to the office of Sultan. The other two attribute Datu Museng's presence in Ujung Pandang to the anger of Datu Jarewe over the abduction of his daughter. In all three versions, Datu Museng kills Maipa and allows himself to be slain by the ruler of Galesong to avoid dishonor at the hands of the Christian ruler. The greatest development has occurred in the the first half of the Sinrili', when Datu Museng learns the Koran, is rejected by Maipa's father, acquires esoteric knowledge in Mecca, and returns to abduct her. These episodes acquire a status equal to the later episodes set on the boat and in Ujung Pandang.

In the following summary of Dessibaji's version of the Sinrili', I have divided the story into four parts based on Datu Museng's journeys to and from four places: his home in Taliwang, the royal palace in Sumbawa Lompo, the center of Islam in Mecca and the center of power in Ujung Pandang. I will argue that Datu Museng's four journeys may be seen as allegories for the four stages of the mystical path and of the human life cycle as understood in Sufi theosophy. At this allegorical level, Datu Museng's Beloved, Maipa Deapati, represents the divine Beloved, from whom we are all separated at birth. His life is a long struggle to know and to reunite with the One Being who underlies all created beings. To provide the reader with a sense of the relative weight attached to each

part of the story, I have indicated in brackets the approximate number of lines devoted to each incident.

1. Syariat: Union before birth, separation and reunion while studying the Quran. [Lines 1-250] Baso Mallarangang [The Forbidden One] is deeply bound to Maipa Deapati even before he is born, indicating that they are twins who were separated at birth. Maipa grows up in the royal palace in Sumbawa Lompo, while Baso is raised in the remote village of Taliwang by Nene' Rangan, a mysterious being who was delivered in a cave by a tiger shaman and brought up by a snake. [This cave is still well known as a place of mystical power, *karama'*.] When Baso Mallarangang grows up, Nene' Rangan allows him to study the Koran with the Imam of Sumbawa Lompo. In just three days he memorizes and understands not only the Qur'an, but also the poetical Life of the Prophet written by Jaffar al-Barzanji (d. 1766).

Also studying with the Imam is Maipa Deapati, the young daughter of the Karaeng and the most beautiful woman in the kingdom. She has learned nothing after three months, and the Imam tells Baso Mallarangang to tutor her. Impatient with her at pointing to the wrong letters while he is reciting, he slaps her hand, causing her heirloom ring to fall through the floor. Baso Mallarangang retrieves it, but vows to return it only after he has married her. Baso Mallarangang returns to Taliwang and sends a messenger to the King asking for Maipa's hand in marriage. The messenger is rudely rebuffed, since Gallarrang belong to the commoner class and women cannot marry beneath them.

Datu Museng experiences a state of bliss before birth by sharing his mother's womb with his twin sister. He is separated from her at birth, and exiled to Taliwang at the periphery of the kingdom. His task in this life is to reunite with her at the royal center. Datu Museng is raised by a wild hermit with supernatural powers whose midwife was a tiger. When he reaches maturity, Datu Museng returns to the central palace and pursues the first stage of the mystical path, the acquisition of exoteric knowledge of the Koran and other sacred texts (*syariat*). There he gets to know his twin sister on a superficial level and is irresistably drawn to her. He now knows that it is his destiny to reunite with her, whatever the obstacles. Datu Museng returns to Taliwang and sends an emissary to the king asking for his Beloved's hand in marriage.

2. Tarekat: Separation and reunion using esoteric knowledge learned in Mecca. [250-1400] Humiliated, Baso Mallarangang sells his buffalo and sails for the Hejaz. He studies the esoteric knowledge that grants one invulnerability in war for seven years in Mecca and seven years in Medina. At the end of his stay, he performs the hajj and takes a new, noble name, Datu Museng. He returns to Taliwang on the eve of Maipa Deapati's marriage to her first cousin, the Dammung of Alasa in Lombok. Datu Museng becomes so depressed he forgets to pray. Finally, he rouses himself just in time to go and disrupt the wedding. Datu Museng challenges the Sumbawans to a contest playing raga ball. In order to get Maipa Deapati to look out the window, he plays the fool until the entire crowd is laughing at him. Then he exercises his magical powers on the ball, making it stay up in the air as long as he wishes. Maipa finally bathes and dresses and sits against the central post of the house before going to the window. Datu Museng

catches Maipa looking out the window and casts a spell on her, causing her to faint. He continues outplaying his rival, Dammung Alasa, and mocks his manhood. The Dammung attacks him and soon Datu Museng and Nene' Rangan are fighting the entire army of Sumbawa. Due to their invulnerability magic, they soon put them all to flight.

Before leaving, Datu Museng makes the raga ball descend into Maipa's house, turn into a lizard and enter her belly. Maipa falls grievously ill and none of the healers can help her. Finally, the ruler of the Malays tells her father that only Datu Museng can cure her. He is summoned, enters her bedchamber, cures her with ordinary water, and shows her the lost ring, vowing to return it only after they are married. He goes away, but a week later at midnight casts a spell on her, causing her to awaken and to insist on going down to the well to fulfill a vow. Datu Museng causes her escort to flee by sending down a rain of ashes, and Maipa makes her way to his house. It is dark, but when she enters and sits against the central post it is filled with light. They are married by the Guru Keramat of Taliwang. Datu Museng returns her ring and they consummate their union.

Rejected, the hero goes into voluntary exile and pursues the next stage of the mystical path, the acquisition of esoteric knowledge (*tarekat*). He journeys to the center of the religious world in Mecca and Medina. The mystical knowledge he acquires there from the descendents of the Prophet and the Saints enables him to transcend his original social status as a commoner. He completes the hajj and takes a noble name. When he returns home to Taliwang, he uses his mystical knowledge to penetrate the palace in

Sumbawa Lompo, abduct the princess, bring her home to Taliwang and physically unite with her.

3. Hakekat: Victory in battle, crossing the sea and sacrifice at the hands of a Muslim.

[1400-1750] When her absence is discovered, the Karaeng Dea Rangan sends his army after them, but Datu Museng and Nene' Rangan easily defeat it. Knowing now that Datu Museng's magic is too strong for him, the Karaeng hatches a scheme. He forges a letter from the Dutch Governor of Makassar, known as Tuan Malompowa, The Great Lord, ordering Datu Museng to come to Ujung Pandang and promising to appoint him as his successor. Maipa is fearful it is a trap, but Datu Museng reassures her that his invulnerability magic is such that no blade or bullet can pierce his skin. Datu Museng and Maipa Deapati set out on his great black ship, the I Lolo Gading. During the long voyage, they pledge to remain together in eternity.

The abduction leads to a full scale military assault on the hero by the king. The hero's mystical knowledge makes him invulnerable to attack by ordinary mortals. The king is forced to recognize him as a social equal and to open negotiations to legitimate his marriage with his daughter. But the normal progression from a successful abduction to a formal marriage is interrupted when the king realizes that the hero's mystical power might yet be overcome by the corrupt power of the infidel ruler in Ujung Pandang. He forges a letter summoning Datu Museng to the center of political power. But the hero has now reached an even deeper level of spiritual understanding. Knowing that the ultimate outcome of his journey across the ocean in a magical boat will be death, he goes willingly

because he knows true happiness is impossible in a corrupt world. During the crossing of the ocean, a frequent image in Sufi poetry, he achieves a state spiritual unity with his Beloved, the state of *hakekat*, ultimate reality.

4. Marifat: Perfect union in the tomb

[1750-2025] They arrive in Galesong where the ruler is his kinsman and settle into a palace. When the Governor sees Maipa sitting in a window, he becomes infatuated with her and sends the Public Prosecuter to offer Datu Museng 40 concubines in exchange for her. Datu Museng indignantly refuses, and Maipa says she would rather die. The Governor sends his soldiers, but he and Nene' Rangan run amok and put them to flight. Realizing the next morning that she is the cause of scores of deaths, Maipa says she would rather die than cause any more deaths or become the wife of a Dutchman. Datu Museng cuts her throat and arranges her on a chair as if she were still alive. He goes down to the sea and throws his amulets and keris into the water, thereby making himself vulnerable to weapons. He asks his relative, the Karaeng of Galesong, to whip him to death, since his skin can still not be pierced by a blade. When the Governor hears he is dead, he goes to the house and embraces Maipa. When he realizes she is dead, he jumps back, hits his head on a post and dies.

The Captain of the Javanese in Ujung Pandang buries Datu Museng by the shore where he fell, but the grave begins to move. After seven nights it lies next to that of Maipa Deapati, so that just as their spirits are reunited in the afterlife, their bodies are reunited on earth. Due to all the knowledge Datu Museng

accumulated in Mecca and Medina, these twin graves become a sacred place where devotees implore his intercession with God.

The utter corruption of worldly existence is dramatized by the military power and uncontrolled lust of the Nazarene ruler of Ujung Pandang. The only true happiness lies beyond the grave in the purity of paradise. The hero and his Beloved purify their bodies for the grave before their physical death. They do not allow themselve to be killed by Christian infidels: Maipa is sacrificed by Datu Museng, and Datu Museng by the Karaeng of Galesong. The sister/wife is buried inland and the brother/husband is buried on the shore, but after seven days, their tombs miraculously merge. Lover and Beloved merge back into the primordial androgynous unity of *marifat*, gnosis.

The tombs of Datu Museng and his "sister"/wife are popular pilgrimage sites to this day for newly-weds. In a manner that recalls the Merina of Madagascar as analyzed by Bloch, the bisexual tomb of the ancestors replaces the house of the living as the source of blessing and fertility (Bloch, 1971, 1986). But the tombs of Datu Museng and Maipa Deapti are the objects of veneration not just for their own descendents, but for an entire ethnic group. The merging of Austronesian with Islamic symbols of the unity and equality of all humans in the afterlife has transformed the ancestors of the descent group into the Saints of the *ummah*. It is this aspect of the Sinrili' that derives most clearly from Austronesian mythology rather than from Sufi allegory: the primordial Unity of Being is represented in an androgynous form, as a relationship between opposite sex siblings who share a womb. This is radically different from the predominantly patriarchal symbolism of Middle Eastern monotheism, in which the symbolic focus is on relationship between Father and Son (Abraham/ Ibrahim/God and Isaac/Ismail/Jesus).

Conclusion

In the Sinrili' Datu Museng, a man of humble origin has a secret twinship with a royal princess. To marry his twin he must prove his high rank, and to prove his high rank, he must marry his twin. He obtains high rank by going outside the local social order altogether and acquiring universal knowledge in Mecca. This universal knowledge enables him to overcome even the incest taboo, although such unions are not meant for this world. The original unity and equality experienced by opposite-sex siblings in the womb is recoverable only after a radical separation in life, and is perfected only in the tomb.

The core metaphor for social solidarity and equality in these story is that of opposite-sex siblingship transformed into spouseship. While the unity, separation and reunification of twins received a Sufi gloss at the hands of the Makassarese, at bottom the metaphor retained the same egalitarian meaning that it had in non-Islamic societies in the area. Siblingship and marriage are the key kin relations in these societies. They point in a lateral, egalitarian direction as opposed to the vertical, hierarchical direction of unilineal descent. The difference between societies like the Buid and societies like the Makassar is that for the latter real unity and equality exists only in the other world, in the before- and afterlife. This world is marked by a constant struggle to overcome division and hierarchy.

In the Sinrili' Datu Museng, we can see that esoteric religious knowledge acquired by wandering around the perimeter of the Indian Ocean functioned as a sort of wild card in an increasingly hierarchical social order. Men of unknown origin could travel outside the bounds of familiar social space and return to claim a new place at the

top of society. The fluidity of their social identity could also allow them to serve as foci of resistance to European rule, as they brought to bear the global prestige of Islam against the global power of colonial armies.

Societies in which this sort of individual achievement was possible ultimately posed a much greater headache for colonial rulers than did societies like those of central and eastern Java whose social hierarchies became increasingly rigid from the seventeenth century on. The eruption of extra-social forces brings death and destruction on a terrifying scale. The entire social order is shaken as the Governor himself loses his life. But it is a social order that is corrupt from the top down, since it is headed by an impure infidel. The local social hierarchy has been decapitated by the Company, the unity of social, political and religious power which existed during the seventeenth century has been split in three. No longer can the supreme ruler in Ujung Pandang serve as the apex of the systems of hypergamy, vassalage and mystical purity in the manner of the first ruler to convert to Islam, Sultan Abdullah Awwal al-Islam, for infidels cannot even marry according to the Law, much less mediate between their subjects and Allah on a mystical plane. They can only exercise naked political power. By contrast, Nene' Rangang represents the forces of Nature, Datu Museng the quest for the Divine, Maipa Deapati the Divine itself.

Parallels to the Christian Philippines

The practice of visiting the tombs of Islamic saints, *ziarah*, is remarkably similar to the rituals performed around the dead Christ by peasants in the Christian Philippines during Holy Week. Cannell suggests that the image of Christ between his crucifixion on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter Sunday is the dominant

> symbol of Philippine Christianity because it constitutes a liminal period during which a channel is opened between the world of the living and the world of the dead. While blessings can flow unilaterally from dead ancestors to their descendents, interaction with the spirits of the dead always brings with it the danger that one will be pulled across the boundary. Only Christ can transcend the irreversible flow of life and move back and forth across the border. In this sense, the dead Christ is the ultimate shaman who has completely mastered the spirits of the other world. One can participate in his experience of death without fear of losing ones soul to the dead (Cannell, 1998).

In Cannell's view, Christianity was readily adopted by the great mass of Filipinos in the seventeenth century because of the way it avoided an oppressive feature of pre-Hispanic relations with the spirit world. In this system, the spirits were modeled on the patrons of the social world. Ordinary people had to enter into one-sided relations with their patrons and ancestor spirits in which one was likely to fall ever deeper into debt. Where Rafael argues that it was the image of Paradise as a realm of perfect mutuality and equality that attracted pagan Filipinos to the new faith, Cannell argues that there is little evidence of interest in the afterlife among them (Rafael, 1993). Instead, the Christian saints and above all Christ Crucified were introduced as figures of mystical power who transcended the local social structure and who would provide whatever worshippers needed to fulfil their side of a religious vow. Thus devotees need not fear death as a consequence of interacting with the spirit world if they did so through Christ, nor need they fear debt-bondage (Cannell, 1998: 183-199).

The ultimate saintly figure in Islam is Muhammad. In the Sufi tradition, he is regarded as being the most perfect of men, and his essence, the Light or Truth of Muhammad, is regarded as being coeval with God's creation. Subsequent Saints are regarded as being manifestations of the same divine principle.

> The Perfect Man is the *Qutb* (axis) on which the spheres of existence revolve from first to last. He hath various guises and appears in diverse bodily tabernacles . . . His own original name is Mohammed . . . In every age he bears a name suitable to that age. I once met him in the form of my Shaikh, Sharafu'ddin Ismail al-Jabarti. (al-Jili quoted in Nicholson, 1921: 105)

Following Cannell's lead, we might suggest that for the mass of villagers in seventeenth century Sulawesi, the main attraction of Islam was the avenue it opened up for a less threatening, more balanced relationship with the spirit world, one which provided an alternative to the oppressive debt relations villagers had to endure with their social superiors. In both the Philippines and Indonesia, the seventeenth century saw the gradual humbling of local aristocracies as Spanish and Dutch military power was brought to bear on them. The ruling elites also came to see an alliance with the Saints and their earthly representatives as necessary to their continued legitimacy. The seventeenth century ended with a very different model of mystical and political power than the one with which it had begun.

The symbolic origin of inequality

The basic point with which I started this paper is that societies like the Buid exist within a larger socio-cultural region in which they constitute an extreme example of social egalitarianism combined with religious imagery that represents hierarchy as a form

of anti-social predation. Societies in this category valorize egalitarian relations not just among men, but between men and women and even between adults and children. Such egalitarian "extremism" can only be understood as a cultural rejection of an opposite set of values: the debt-bondage and slave-raiding characteristic of coastal societies, especially in the early colonial period. The analysis of the Epic of Datu Museng showed that a similar rejection of these values can be found embedded in popular interpretations of religion in the lowlands as well.

Now, the extremely high value attached to egalitarian social relations among the Buid and many other small-scale shifting cultivators in Southeast Asia is also found in "immediate-return" hunting and gathering societies scattered throughout Asia and Africa. Woodburn has long argued against the idea that such societies must be viewed as part-societies whose values are molded primarily by their resistance to outside forces. Since immediate-return hunting and gathering is an internally coherent, environmentally adaptive and individually rewarding way of life, there is no need to appeal to influences like "encapsulation" and "oppression" to explain it.

> African hunter-gatherers . . . are, for the most part, descendents of groups that have a long history of hunting and gathering. . . the fact that so many of them are genetically or linguistically distinctive and different from their farmer neighbours certainly renders implausible the suggestion that in general they are impoverished drop-outs forced to hunt and gather. (Woodburn, 1988: 61-62)

Indeed, as Woodburn describes it, this way of life is so stable and rewarding that the main theoretical task is to explain why it was ever abandoned in the past and how

those who have been socialized into it can ever abandon it in the future (Woodburn, 1988: 63).

It is striking that virtually all of the peoples who lived exclusively by hunting and gathering in Island Southeast Asia during the twentieth century, such as the Batek of Malaysia and the Aeta of the Philippines were "Negritos", i.e. they appeared to be descendents of peoples who lived in the area before the arrival of Austronesian- or Austroasiatic-speaking agriculturalists. Thus the argument I have been advancing with regard to the co-evolution of egalitarian and hierarchical values among the Austronesian agriculturalists of Island Southeast Asia does not apply to these hunting and gathering societies. Their way of life generates a form radical egalitarianism that does not need to oppose itself to an external form of social hierarchy.

Woodburn does suggest, however, that even immediate-return hunting and gathering societies tend to generate an internal hierarchy in the religious domain. This may be the weak point in the system, one that allows delayed-return social relations to develop, and, ultimately, a delayed-return economy. Egalitarian societies stress not just equality and autonomy from specific others but also submission of the individual to the group. In hunting and gathering societies, this is universally expressed through the mandatory sharing of the meat of large game animals, but it is also often expressed through mandatory participation in certain collective rituals. They include the collective singing of the Batek, the *molimo* ritual of the Mbuti and above all the collective dancing of the !Kung. Woodburn's account of the latter could be applied word-for-word to Buid seances and sacrifices (Gibson, 1988):

> Sharing in this context is not merely analogous to the secular sharing of meat. It is consecrated sharing produced in the context of the joint participation of the entire community, a potent dramatisation of the production of the egalitarian community that has manifest appeal both to the reason and to the emotions of the participants. Its potency derives from its oppositional character: the shared unity of the participants in their joint opposition to the undifferentiated spirits of the dead, the bringers of illness and death. (Woodburn, this volume)

Ritualized sharing, primarily of meat but also of other valued goods and activities, subordinates the individual to the group in the name of the common good. It is directed against the possibility of one individual or faction asserting itself at the expense of the community. Egalitarianism in these societies is oppositional, even in the absence of a threatening outside power. It is society assrting itself against the internal possibility of hierarchy.

But ritualized sharing also has the potential to subordinate one social category to another social category. The hierarchical implications of the mandatory submission of the individual to the group arise when some part of society comes to stand for the whole. In many societies the collective interest of the group is represented by initiated men, defined in opposition to women and uninitiated men. This is true even among the Buid, where every adult man is a practicing spirit medium while only a few women acquire the ability to invoke a spirit familiar. It is also true among the Hadza, where senior men monopolize the cult of the sacred meat.

Why are Hadza men able to appropriate this role for themselves? I would argue that it is based on a division of labor between men and women in hunting and gathering

societies that is almost universal according to which only men hunt large game animals while women gather plants and small animals. The meat of large game animals is subject to the most elaborate rules of sharing and it comes to symbolize the submission of the individual to the group. By contrast, the plants and small animals gathered by women are only shared within the domestic group and come to symbolize factional loyalty. Even in the most egalitarian hunter-gatherer societies, the division of labor between male and female provides a basis for a symbolic association of men with communal solidarity and of women with factionalism.

The seeds of hierarchy thus lie in those aspects of social life in which the desires of the individual are subordinated to the needs of the group, combined with the ability of one part of the social whole to claim the right to interpret and represent those needs. This slippage is easiest to see where the role of representing the interests of the group is identified with a hereditary social estate with exclusive rights to political office, as it is among the Makassar. But the slippage exists even among the Hadza and the Buid, where senior men enjoy a privileged relationship to the rituals and sacred objects that symbolize the well-being of the group.

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