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BELIEF IN REINCARNATION ON BUTON, S.E. SULAWESI, INDONESIA

I. Introduction

My research into the culture of Buton has revealed, to my surprise, that one of the aspects of its culture is a strong belief in reincarnation.¹

The island of Buton (or Butung; S.E. Sulawesi) was until 1960 the nucleus of the sultanate of Buton. According to the sultanate's own documents, largely written in the Wolio language in a modified Arabic script, the sixth raja (monarch) of the monarchy of Wolio or Buton became the first sultan (Murhum). Zahari (1980:40) has calculated that the transition took place around 1542.² If the traditions concerning historical developments are reasonably accurate, the beginnings of the monarchy may therefore be situated in the first half of the 15th century. In the earliest period of the monarchy there were, according to the tradition, relations with the Javanese kingdom of Mojopahit. The first monarch, Queen Wakaakaa, married a prince from Mojopahit, Sibatara. The son of the second monarch, Queen Bulawambona, was called Bata-raguru. When he became the third monarch of Wolio, he visited the court of Mojopahit. His son Tuarade, the fourth monarch of Buton, also visited Mojopahit, and brought back four regalia, later known by the name *syara Jawa* (Javanese institutions; cf. Zahari 1977, I:38-42).

Although little is known about this period, it may be presumed, on the basis of these relations, that the Buton monarchy was under Hindu-Javanese influence. This is also indicated by the oral traditions. On the island of Wangi-Wangi – the northernmost island of the Tukang-besi group, situated to the south-east of Buton – tradition has it that the first monarch of Wanci, a village on the island, was converted to Islam. On his death his body was therefore buried, which gave rise to conflict with his subjects, the majority of whom were still Hindu and would have wanted the body cremated. In any case they did not want the earth polluted by the body.

When the sixth raja, Sultan Murhum, embraced Islam, the inhabitants of the kingdom were obliged to become Muslims. Working outwards

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from the centre of the kingdom, the *kraton* of Wolio, a systematic attempt was made to disseminate Islam. According to oral tradition, there was a group of Javanese on Buton at that time, who had left Mojopahit after its Islamization, wishing to remain Hindu. For them, Buton was friendly territory. Under Murhum, however, they were also forced to become converted to Islam. They are said to have refused, preferring voluntary death, and to have descended into a mass grave they had dug themselves in order to die. The Butonese living in that area were told that the group had departed after the silencing of the gong. The (Mojopahit) grave is supposed to be situated on the south coast of Buton, near Betauga.

When the sultanate was dissolved by the Republic of Indonesia in 1960 – the last sultan, La Ode Falihi, had died shortly before – it had existed for over 400 years. This fact does not immediately suggest the presence of the notion of reincarnation. Of course one may suppose that, in less intensively administered parts of the sultanate, the presence of Islam may have been less pronounced than in the centre. The former sultanate comprised the two present-day regencies or districts (*kabupaten*) of Buton and Muna. Apart from the islands of the same names, the areas of Poleang and Rumbia on the south-eastern leg of Sulawesi also belonged to the sultanate, as did the island of Kabaena, to the west of Muna, and the above-mentioned archipelago of Tukang-besi. My research has revealed, however, that the belief in reincarnation is particularly strong in the centre. It is there that a special form of Islam has developed in which there is room for the idea of reincarnation.

Such an unexpected discovery immediately raises a number of questions. What form is taken by reincarnation in this belief? Are there any clear parallels with Hindu ideas? To what extent and in what way have these ideas been reconciled with Muslim thinking? The same question arises with respect to ancestor worship. Are there possible links with pre-Hindu, ancient Indonesian notions? Is this thinking encountered elsewhere? What is the distribution of this belief in the Buton area? What kind of future developments can one expect?

Although these questions are too numerous to be answered exhaustively within the scope of this paper, a number of them will receive a provisional answer. I hope that this article will anyway inspire greater interest in the presence of the belief in reincarnation in Indonesia.

II. Various examples

One of my informants told me of the following personal experience. In 1948, when he had to go to Makassar (now Ujung Pandang) on business, his father-in-law was already ailing. He had to promise not to stay away too long. After his departure, his father-in-law became seriously ill and sensed that his end was near. On several occasions he asked whether his son-in-law had returned. When he was dying he called his daughter and

said: "Look me straight in the eye. When I die, I shall come back to you. You must see to it that your husband returns quickly before your womb dries up. And you must keep a piece of cotton-wool with moisture from my navel as medicine for the child that will be born to you."

He then said to his other children, "You must not be jealous that I will be returning through her". During this conversation five prominent people from Wolio, the centre of the sultanate, were also present.

My informant did not return until 1951, and not long thereafter his wife became pregnant. When the first labour pains announced the birth, he took his wife to the hospital, but on their arrival the pains ceased. They returned home to await a renewal of the labour pains. On their way back he had a vision and heard a voice saying, "Pay your debt". He thought of the fact that he still had not paid half the wedding-gift (*popolo*). He then uttered the *zikir*³ 500 times and, on returning home, said the following prayer: "O Lord, permit him to come back to the right place".

Three days later his son was born. Shortly after the birth, when he took his child in his arms and whispered the *azan* (the call to prayer) into both his right and his left ear, the child murmured "Yes, yes" in agreement, and immediately urinated over him. This made it clear that the father-in-law had returned in the child. His wife also said, "That is my father". In later years she often wept, since she felt cheated by her father: "He promised me a good child, but my son is often disobedient".

One informant knew, for three of her four children, precisely which relative's spirit had returned in each of them. She could only not tell about the youngest child.

When she was pregnant with her eldest son, she had suddenly seen a light in the bathroom. It was as though a great eye was looking at her from the edge of the *mandi* basin. Later it appeared that a male member of the family had died at that very moment as a result of a fall in his bathroom striking his head against the *mandi* basin. She is convinced that this meant that the dead man would return in the unborn baby. And indeed, her son looks like him.

In her second child an aunt of her husband's had returned. This woman had had no children. Before she died she had whispered that she wanted to return to her nephew's family because he was a good person. When my informant was pregnant and the aunt died, she saw an apparition of her. She had also felt the aunt returning in her baby daughter, who moreover looks like her.

She likewise knows for certain that a great-aunt of her husband's has returned in her third child. She was again pregnant when she had visited this great-aunt. The old lady had held her hand for a good hour and said, "I am leaving now, but I'll be back soon". Her little daughter looks like this great-aunt and, like the old woman, is very fond of animals.

Both the spirit of the last sultan, Falihi (1938-1960), and that of his wife have returned in a grandchild. The spirit of the sultana has come back in a grandson. Before dying, she had already indicated that she wanted to be a man in her next life. As sultana, she had always had a major influence on her husband's policies. The grandson in whom she has returned showed this in his behaviour. At a very tender age he pointed to the jewelry of the late sultana and said that it belonged to him. His mother could use these jewels, he said, but had to look after them.

The spirit of the wife of the last sultan but one, Hamidi (1927-1938), has returned in the family of her nephew. He had been residing at the court of the sultan of Bone for some time. When she became sick and felt she was about to die, she asked whether he would return. Many people in Wolio also dreamt that she would come back as her nephew's daughter.

Conflicts from the past may be continued in the present if the spirits of the adversaries return. In 1906 there was a conflict between La Ode Muhammed Asyikin (also known as Oputa i Antara Maedani; Zahari 1977, III:82) and La Ode Akhmad Maktubu Aruna (also called Aruna Bola, son of Sultan Muhammed Salihi (1871-1885; cf. Zahari 1977, III:78)) about the succession of the late Sultan Muhammed Umar (1885-1904). In 1906 the Dutch East Indies government imposed a new contract on Buton. Aruna Bola was the first candidate for the throne, but he was not prepared to sign the new contract with its far-reaching demands, including the placement of government administrative officials and the obligation of obedience to government instructions. But Asyikin was prepared to sign, and thereupon became sultan. Aruna had to be content with the position of ruler of Muna, part of the sultanate of Buton. The rivalry between the two candidates went back to an older conflict between two parts of Wolio, the districts of Melai and Kabumbu. This conflict had, in the first years of the 20th century, almost culminated in a civil war. The spirits of Asyikin and Aruna Bola were reincarnated in two aristocrats, both of whom were administrative officials in south-east Sulawesi in the fifties. Conflicts arose repeatedly in their official relations with each other. The older people of Wolio ascribed this to the old rivalry between Asyikin and Aruna. The two officials themselves felt that a baneful destiny was controlling their mutual relations. One of them told me that they used to be friends, and they have now agreed with each other that fate has determined how things are to be between them.

In the early days of Islam on Buton reincarnations of Muslim scholars also occurred.

In the reign of Raja Mulae (late 15th century) a conversation took place between Abdul Wahid, the Muslim who brought the Islamic faith to Buton, and his teacher, Ahmed bin Chaïs. The latter told Abdul Wahid⁴ to go from Pasai (Aceh, Sumatra) to Buton. "Later, in the time

of your grandchildren, I shall come to Buton to perfect your institutions (*adat istiadat*).” In the lifetime of Abdul Wahid’s grandchild, *imam* Malanga, Firus Muhammed came to Buton. On his arrival, Mardana Ali was born, who was to be sultan from 1647 to 1654 (cf. Zahari 1977, II:18). It was Mardana Ali who was sought by Firus Muhammed as the reincarnation of Ahmed bin Chais.

It is also said that Firus Muhammed promised that he would return after his death to perfect the constitution and the culture of the country. When Syarif Muhammed came to Buton, he looked for the person in whom Firus Muhammed had been reincarnated. (Syarif Muhammed was a man of Arab descent⁵ who advised Sultan La Elangi (1578-1615) on the drafting of the constitution of the sultanate of Buton, the *Murtabat Tujuh*.) He went to the sultan and asked if a child had just been born. When he was told this was so, he went to visit the child. On taking the child in his arms, it wet his *juba* (cloak) with urine. Syarif Muhammed then said, “Truly this is the one I was looking for”.

Sultan Muhammed Idrus (1824-1851; cf. Zahari 1977, III:28) is well known for his attempts to persuade his subjects to give up all manner of superstitious practices, including certain forms of ancestor worship. In his tract *Tazikiri Momampo Dona* he urges young women to reflect on death. In so doing, he was following the “official” teaching of Islam. His high official, Haji Abdul Ganiyu, or *kenepulu* Bulu Sabandara, one of the few Butonese to have made the pilgrimage, was of great assistance to him in the fight against all kinds of “superstition”. Nevertheless, his tract *Ajonga Inda Malusa* develops a philosophy of life and death in which belief in reincarnation does have a place – a philosophy to which Muhammed Idrus was not opposed. That the idea of reincarnation was a matter of course in his time may be apparent from the following tale.

His wife’s uncle, La Ode Jurutulisi, or La Ode Balabowa, one day came to Muhammed Idrus to announce that he would die at 2 o’clock that afternoon. He asked the sultan permission, saying, “I want to go on ahead”. The sultan merely laughed. The others didn’t believe him, either. But at exactly 2 o’clock he did die, uttering as his last words, “Go to the sultan and tell him I have already gone ahead”. Sultan Muhammed Idrus was sorry that he had not taken La Ode Balabowa seriously. Balabowa also said before he died, “I shall come back through Watia”. Watia was his niece, the wife of Muhammed Idrus. Not long afterwards La Ode Abdul Hadi was born, as the reincarnation of Balabowa. Abdul Hadi later went on the pilgrimage.

According to the traditions, the above-named dignitary, *kenepulu* Bulu Sabandara, or Haji Abdul Ganiyu, was the reincarnation of former Governor-General Cornelis Speelman. During the United East India Company’s conflict with the state of Goa, Admiral Speelman had relieved Buton in 1667 of a siege imposed by some 10,000 troops from

Makassar who had sailed to Buton in 450 proas (cf. Stapel 1922:93-134). He concluded a new contract with the sultan of Buton. Speelman consequently occupies a special place in the history of Buton. During his residence on Buton and in Makassar he maintained good relations with the highest official, the *sapati* Baluwu⁶. Baluwu had initiated him into the secret knowledge of how to make one's spirit return after death. They had agreed together to return to Buton. Baluwu had predicted to Speelman that there would come an end to all the fighting in which they were now involved. Baluwu returned in the person of Yaro Batauga Mogotambaruna. They both took part in the war with Diponegoro from 1828-1829 in the Butonese detachment brought into action in that war.

III. Several ideas connected with reincarnation

Influences on the time and place of reincarnation

Influence can be exercised on the return of the spirit in various ways.

It is believed that some people have the power to determine, when the dead are being buried, where and when their spirits will come back. In Wolio such a person is called *motaurakea*, and in Lia and Rongi *pasucu*. In Wolio the belief in this is still strong, in Lia and Rongi less so. The family of the deceased will choose someone who has this gift, and he will place the deceased in the grave in the correct way and utter the appropriate prayers.

One of the informants recalled that his uncle had functioned as *motaurakea* at a burial. The family of the deceased had asked him, "Where are you taking the spirit?" He had answered spontaneously, "I'm bringing him here", pointing to a family that was present. Not long thereafter, the spirit of the deceased had been born again in that very family.

The people of Lia apparently assume that the Wolio people have more knowledge and more power to bring this about. An informant from Lia could remember how his father-in-law had come across from Wolio for a ceremony in Lia. He was immediately asked to be a *pasucu* at the burial of La Ode Mbangu. The deceased's brother-in-law asked him to exert himself to the fullest to bring the spirit back quickly. The man in question did not consider himself to be a *pasucu* and answered, "I cannot add to or change what I know; whatever you say, I cannot do more than that". Incidentally, this is the same person as the one in the first example of reincarnation, the man who determined before his death where he was to return.

The *pasucu* and the next of kin remain by the grave after the mosque officials have left. They pray for the salvation of the spirit of the deceased. According to one of the informants, the prayer of the *pasucu* to the Lord runs as follows: "O Lord, lend forgiveness to us and to him. Exalt his position among those who have received the right guidance and replace him among his relatives. And give him light in there (his

grave). O Lord of creation.” (He also gave the following Arabic text: *Allāhumma 'ghfir lanā wa-lahu, wa'rfa^c darajatahu fī 'l-mahdiyyīn, wa ukhluḡhu bi 'l-agraḡin wa-nawwir lahu fīhi, yā Rabba 'l-ālamīn.*)⁷

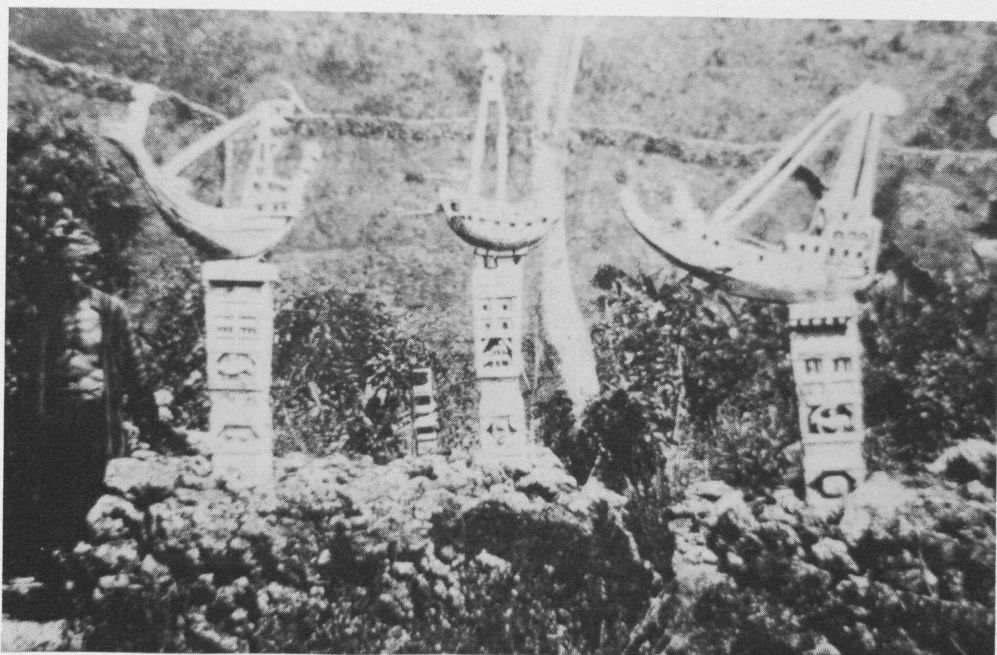
The *pasucu* is also expected to see to it that the spirits do not come and annoy the living. This is particularly important in the case of spirits of those who have died too young.

In Rongi the idea used to be current that people could function as *pasucu*, but now the dominant view is that the speed of the return is dependent on the amount of merit achieved by good works (*amal*; Ar.: *‘amal*) and the degree of sinfulness. My informant rejected the idea that the *pasucu* could determine where the spirit would return. He was convinced that the spirit (*sumanga*) which is already clean or pure will itself look for a good place. If there is no good husband-wife relationship among the next of kin, the spirit will not want to return there. It is, however, assumed that the spirit usually returns in the body of a grandchild. This is called the “replacement of the dead” (*kabolosina mia mate*). The possibility of a return outside the deceased’s own family or even outside Rongi is not excluded.

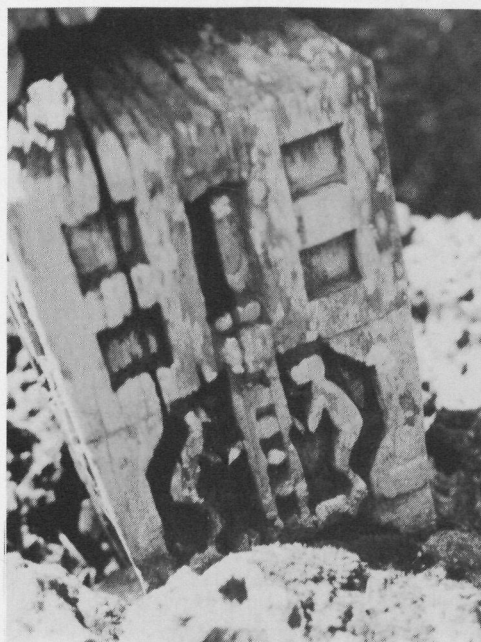
The return cannot take place until after a period of 120 days, at which time the last commemoration of the spirit of the deceased is held in the form of a ceremonial meal. Formerly the tombstones (*mayasa*) used also to be placed on the grave on the 120th day, one at the head and one at the foot of the grave. At the same time a white cloth (*bida*), some 7 feet long, was placed on a set of 8 stakes above the grave, called the *paturu*. This is now done on the Muslim holiday of the sacrificial feast (Arabic *‘id al-qurbān* or *‘id al-adḡā*, called *raraya haji* in Wolio and Rongi). The grave (*langka*) represents a proa in which the spirit sets out, as of that moment, in quest of a place to return.

According to tradition the spirits first go to a kind of heaven (*kacingkia* is where the *cingkaha*, spirits, also called the *sumanga*, dwell). Heaven is similar to the dwelling-place of the living, and it is there that decisions about the return of the spirits are taken by the Lord (*Kawasana ompu*).

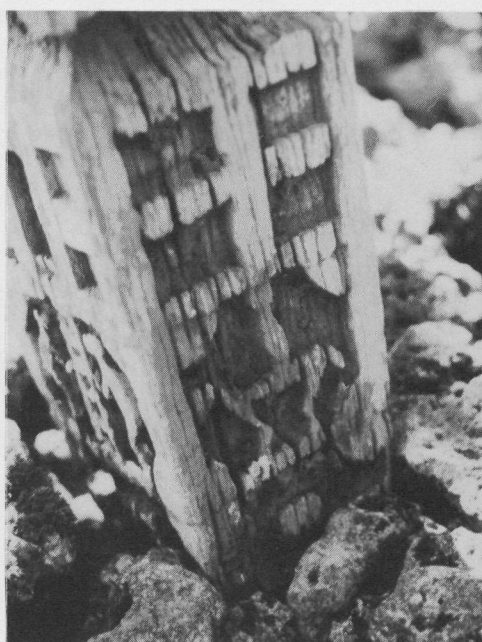
This belief is said to be no longer very strong in Rongi. In Hendeya, the village which, like Rongi, belongs to the *desa* Sandang Pangan, the belief in heaven as the temporary abode of the spirits as they await their return is still very much alive. In this village two wooden graveside poles (*mayasa*) are placed on the grave one hundred days after death. These poles are decorated with wood-carvings. One of the poles depicts two spirits trying to climb up the ladder to a pile-dwelling. In this way they wish to enter heaven (*batula*). Under the house hangs a gong (*mbololo*) which is struck when the spirits enter heaven. On the *mayasa* may also be represented animals which serve as mounts for the spirits. The spirits have to be dressed in white – the clothing of the dead – if they are to approach *Kawasana ompu*, the Lord.



Wooden graveside poles (*mayasa*) in Kombèri, East Buton. Photograph taken from J. Elbert, *Die Sunda-Expedition*, Frankfurt: Minjon.



Wooden graveside pole near the village of Hendeya with a representation of spirits of the deceased about to ascend the ladder to heaven (*batula*) (see p. 109). Photograph Schoorl 1981.



The same graveside pole depicting a mound of the spirits of the deceased (see p. 109). Photograph Schoorl 1981.

The two graveside poles are also said to serve as sticks used by the spirit to support itself on its way to the gathering in heaven. At this gathering one has to give an account of oneself in the presence of *Kawasana ompu*. If one has behaved well on earth, one's spirit may return immediately. However, if the spirit must expiate sins that have been committed, the sojourn in *batula* (heaven) may last longer, up to 7 years. Every year, on the first day of the month of fasting, *Ramadhan*, a gathering takes place in *batula*, at which the spirit may ask *Kawasana ompu* for a new decision. The surviving relatives can alleviate the fate of the spirit by saying prayers for the spirits, by uttering the *zikir* on the grave and by pouring water on the grave (*kababusi*). In this way the deceased person's guilt is also reduced.

Where one's sins have been very great, it is possible for the spirit not to have atoned sufficiently even after 7 years. Then the spirit is reborn, but the person in whom the spirit has returned will be handicapped.

In Hendeaya the view is held that the *pasucu* can ensure that the spirit does not take his sins with him. In this case the spirit will return quickly. For this purpose old prayers, *batata* (from a pre-Islamic period), are used.

No comparably elaborate "theology" concerning the temporary abode of the spirits is found in Baadia, Lia or Rongi. Nevertheless an informant from Baadia recounted that even in the centre, Wolio, it was believed that the spirits of the deceased temporarily went to heaven (*sarogaa*)⁸. If the spirit comes with many merits, achieved through good works (*amal*), it may rise to the seventh heaven and, after the allotted time, return from there. If the merits are less great, it does not proceed beyond a lower heaven. If the spirit only has a bad life to look back upon and manages to return quickly even so, its next life will not be good and will also soon end in death.

In *Kawasana ompu*'s investigation in heaven into the life of the deceased, the various parts of the body – the arms, legs, eyes, etc. – will, according to the stories of the elders of Wolio, answer themselves, even if the whole person should want to deny everything.

Another informant from Baadia, who incidentally had been living elsewhere for some time, denied that there was any idea of heaven as a temporary abode of the spirits. In his opinion, the spirits do not reside in any one particular place in the intermediate period in which they must expiate their sins, but wander around in the world of the spirits, *alam arwah*.

In the religious thinking of Buton seven worlds (*alam*; Ar.: *ʿālam*) are distinguished. This distinction into seven worlds (*murtabat tujuh*) is also to be found in the constitution of the sultanate. According to Butonese history, the first version of the constitution was framed by the fourth sultan, La Elangi (1578-1615), with the help of the Arab divine Syarif Muhammed (cf. the examples of reincarnation above). The first three

worlds,⁹ *alam ahdāt* (Ar.: *aḥadiyya*), *alam wahadat* (Ar.: *waḥda*) and *alam waahidiyat* (Ar.: *wāḥdiyya*), belong in their entirety to the domain of the Lord. Man has absolutely no conception of the first world. In the second and third worlds there are analogies, points of comparison, with conditions on earth. Only in the fourth world, however, is there question of some sort of a becoming, of an order to become (*kun*).¹⁰ This is the world of the spirits, or *arwah*. The spirit moves to the thinking, the brain of the father, and is reincarnated in the thinking of the father. The married couple have to ask a spirit for their child, to be drawn from among the spirits of the deceased dwelling with the Prophet. They ask for a spirit that is accomplished and good, that will enjoy longevity and prosperity and the perfection of a strong faith. From there the spirit then moves to the fifth world, the *alam misal*, in which an image, a reflection, an idea is formed in the mother's womb. Before this transition to the *alam misal* the inner self of the parents must also be purified. Every time they pray to the Lord in order to purify themselves, they utter the *kalimat saḥada*¹¹ and ask the following: "Purify my heart, in accordance with the purity that was there when you put me in my mother's womb". In the mother's womb the transformation takes place of a little moisture (sperm), which changes into flesh and blood, into a body. That is the sixth world, the *alam ajisam*. Both the *alam misal* and the *alam ajisam* last 40 days. During the *alam ajisam* the parents must live very carefully so that the child will suffer no defects and have no problems in growing up. It is also in this period that the child's character is formed. The foetus develops into a being with all five senses (*panca indra*), a human being. Then the seventh world is reached, the *alam insan*, or world of the human being. Now the foetus is ready to be born. Even when the spirit is in the *alam insan* the parents must pray for purity. Every time water is used for purification before the ritual prayer they say: "Yes Lord, purify my heart, my life, as in the time when I was in the *alam insan*". This is the core of the prayer, which is uttered in the form of a special *batata*, or (pre-Islamic) saying.

A link is also established between this idea of reincarnation and the commemorative meals, or ceremonies for the deceased on the 3rd, 7th, 40th, 100th and 120th nights after his death. There is a kind of parallelism in development between the reincarnation of the spirit via a new birth and the decomposition of the corpse. After 3 days the corpse becomes bloated, but still does not burst. In this period the spirit is searching but cannot find a place to settle. After seven days the body becomes more bloated and begins to burst open, whereby fluid and blood are excreted. In this period the spirit, *roh* (Ar.: *ruh*, pl. *arwāḥ*) is blown into the soul, *nyawa*, encouraged by the continuous repetition of the *zikir* by those attending the commemorative meal. The spirit still does not enter the body. After 40 days the corpse has become largely decomposed, although the bones are still covered with flesh and blood.

The spirit and soul now take their first form in the father's head, but still have no corporeal shape. It is not until after 100 days have passed that the corpse has become entirely decomposed. Then the spirit, together with the soul, has entered the mother through the father's thoughts and then through sexual intercourse. The body begins to develop and everything is present in rudimentary form, but has not yet grown to maturity – *indapo aseka o kauna limana*, i.e. 'the fingers and toes have not yet opened'. After 120 days the body is wholly perfect and merely has to grow more.

Knowledge of the origin of man, of the various worlds in which the spirit dwells before birth, is necessary for both young and old if they are to be free from boastfulness and arrogance. The reference to the womb is an expression of humility: this way man will not forget that he has originated from an unclean situation. Even in times of joy one must be mindful of this. Such is true faith. Even those who do not often go to the mosque but who live with these thoughts are people with a good faith. The essence of evil lies in boastfulness, haughtiness, and forgetfulness of one's origins. The danger for a human being is that he will then make a god of himself. This can be avoided by a humble attitude.

This knowledge is often called *ilmu tauhid* (*ilmu kejadihan*), the knowledge of becoming, of coming into existence.¹² This knowledge is essential if one is to get to know oneself, to discover one's origins. Without it, one cannot be truly convinced that the Lord exists.

If one has achieved this knowledge (*ilmu*), one has already risen to the level of acquaintance with the essence of things (*hakekat*). At this level, one does not have to say prayers (the *salat*) regularly, for if one is near to God one does not need to pray any longer. One is then already walking with the Lord. Those who have achieved this, the mystics (*ahli tasawuf* or *ahli sufi*), are detached from all earthly matters.

Those who have achieved great knowledge (*ilmu*), who approach God closely (*opoopoti oputa*, lit. "the contemplation of God"),¹³ can also determine where their spirits will go, just as they can do other things that ordinary people cannot and may not do.

It is known that these people are able to determine themselves when they will die and where they will return. In a certain sense the speed and the place of return in their case is less a matter of merit than of skill or knowledge, as becomes apparent in the story of La Ode Jurutulisi, who lived during the reign of Sultan Mohammed Idrus. This belief is still present in Wolio, but not (any longer) in Rongi. In Lia this is still believed to be possible, but it is felt that only older people in Wolio possess the necessary knowledge. One example from Lia concerns La Ba'ani, who, when he was about fifty, said one morning to his relatives and acquaintances, "Soon after the Friday afternoon prayers, I shall leave you". At 9 o'clock he still went to fetch coconuts and at 12 o'clock performed the ritual ablution for prayers. He talked as usual. Many

people came to look and laughed at him. After the *salat* he lay down on a cushion and said the *zikir*. While saying his hundredth *zikir* he died. Before this, he had said to a family expecting a child, "You must look after that child well". When the child was born, people knew that it was La Ba'ani who had returned. The person in whom he was reincarnated is still alive.

Mystics who can determine when they will die and how they will return are sometimes called *wali ullah* (Ar.: *waliyyu 'llāh*), the *wali* of Allah, or saints. A number of cases are known of such *wali* disappearing entirely after their death. After being washed and wrapped in the *kafan*, or white shroud, the body turns out to be no longer inside the *kafan* on arrival at the grave. This story is also told about La Ode Mbarube, who was *lakina*¹⁴ Baadia, and was well known as a *wali*. When his time had come, he called the *menteri besar* (*bontoogena*, a high official) and told him that he was departing. Shortly thereafter he died. When his body was being washed, it seemed as though he was actually taking in and then spitting out water. Suddenly the body shook and he indicated that he had had enough — he was becoming too cold. After he had been wrapped in the white shroud and carried to the grave, he appeared to have vanished on arrival there. According to one of my informants, such persons were then already living in the world of the *arwah*, or spirits. The informant said that one may also enter the *alam arwah* through asceticism (*bertapa* or *beramal*), whereby one is able to see things that are invisible to others.

An informant from Lia spoke of them as *walikuburu*, or saints of the grave. These are allegedly reluctant to "eat" earth and therefore disappear before the body is placed in the grave.

In these ideas there is a certain ambivalence with respect to the merit one acquires and the consequences of this in the next life. According to some stories it is especially the knowledge one has gained that may be used to influence the time and place of return. The acquisition of knowledge is usually associated with a life close to the Lord. The people concerned, many of them mystics, are those who have achieved merit through good works (*amal*) by means of asceticism. Yet a close link between the acquisition of knowledge and a good life is not established in all of the stories. In some stories this is more a matter of skill than of merit.

On the other hand it is also said that a good life may be rewarded with a better subsequent life. Someone from the third estate (*Papara*) may be reborn as a child of a *Walaka* (second estate) or of a *La Ode* (first estate), or, in earlier times, even of the sultan himself. One informant from Lia said that this occurred frequently and added that it seemed as if the *Papara* also understood the art of instructing the spirit where it must return. (This remark reveals the same ambivalence in the ideas about merit and skill.) Conversely, someone who has led a bad life may be reborn in a lower estate. Sometimes it is also regarded as a punishment if

a man is reborn as a woman. Women formerly used to bemoan the fact that they had been reborn (born) as women, since men were always regarded as being more important and boys were more spoilt than girls.

There are no stories in Wolio to the effect that a punishment might take the form of a soul returning in an animal. Stories about returning in an animal or changing into an animal are largely restricted to the island of Muna and are not so much part of the culture of the centre of Wolio.

In Lia there is no belief in reincarnation in animals. In Rongi, however, people are said to believe that a bad life, such as a life of lechery, may cause the spirit to return in an animal. This can be any kind of animal, even a pig.

Nevertheless I have the impression that the speed with which the spirit returns is crucial. A good life leads to a quick return of the spirit and a bad life to a slow return. In general, thoughts and deeds are directed to a speedy return of the deceased. This is probably connected with the idea that the spirits generally return to their own family. In Rongi, indeed, there is talk of replacement of the dead (*kabolosina mia mate*), whereby parents return as children or grandchildren.

Changing into animals

The passage of the spirit to the world of the animals is called *dauru* (Ar.: *dawr* = turn, change). In the stories about this from Wolio, which concern the island of Muna, this passage has nothing to do with punishment for a bad life. On the contrary, people who can undergo this change are very holy.

One well-known story is that of Sangia-i-rape, the son of Sultan Murhum (ca. 1491-1537; cf. Zahari 1977, I:46; the name *sangia* also indicates holiness); this story is set on Muna. Sangia-i-rape was well known as someone who acquired great mystical knowledge (*ilmu kebatinan*). One day he noticed that his skin was beginning to resemble that of a crocodile. His son, Sangia Wambulu, also noticed this and felt ashamed. He said to his father, "I had better take you to the sea to bathe". When they reached the sea, Sangia-i-rape laid his sarong on a stone and was washed by his son. In the process he changed completely into a crocodile. Because of the knowledge he had accumulated he could change into a crocodile without further ado. He wanted to experience what the world of the animals was like. My informant from Wolio added that he clearly had come near to God (*opoopotu oputa*), since he could become anything he wanted. If one has come so close to God and achieved such unity with God, one can do what one likes. This was also the explanation for the behaviour of La Ode Wuna, the brother of Sultan Murhum. This story is also set on Muna.

The top half of La Ode Wuna was a human being and the bottom half a snake. He had a magnificent voice and could sing beautifully. When he

had reached adulthood, he happened one day to be singing in the front room. His mother was sitting in the back room. He was singing very beautifully, and, without properly realizing it, she was so moved that she exclaimed, "I am already wet, my son" (*kumabahomo laoti*). La Ode Wuna moved his tail towards his mother and so had sexual intercourse with her. Wuna was to be put to death for this incestuous act. The execution was to take place a long way from where the raja – his father – lived. He was taken to a place between the villages of Wakarumba and Pola, in the present-day subdistrict (*kecamatan*) of Wakarumba, on Muna. When he was about to be executed, he suddenly changed into water, and that was the origin of the river Uwe igoraaka. There is also a flower, *topina laode wuna*, La Ode Wuna's cap, which gives off a strong scent in the rainy season. When there is no water in the dry season, the people call out loudly to La Ode Wuna and then the rain comes. The water for the consecration of a sultan is said formerly to have been taken from the Uwe igoraaka.

This latter story is an even less clear example of reincarnation, although it is mentioned as an example of *dauru*. Another example is provided by the story that was told in Tiworo (also on Muna) in the early twenties. In Tiworo there are crocodiles with a white patch at the back of their heads. These crocodiles are descended from a *haji*, or a pilgrim to Mecca, who was reincarnated as a crocodile. My informant from Wolio had heard this story from his father, who had been an administrative officer in Tiworo. Another informant fused this story with the one about Sangia-i-rape. In his view, the crocodiles with the white patch on the back of their heads are descended from Sangia-i-rape.

Recognizing the spirit of the deceased in children

The preceding examples of reincarnation show how, in particular cases, it may be established who has been reincarnated in a specific child. Sometimes the relative will have expressly stated, before dying, in whom he or she will be returning. In some children the reincarnation is apparent from their facial features and/or behaviour. The grandson of the last sultan, who is a reincarnation of the sultana, made this apparent by recognizing, as a small child, the sultana's jewelry and claiming it as his own. The son of one informant, in whom his father-in-law is reincarnated, gave evidence of this by deciphering Arabic writing without any difficulty.

Sultan Mohammed Idrus also knew who was reincarnated in him, while his son Mohammed Isa was able to speak immediately after his birth thanks to the spirit that was reincarnated in him.

A deceased person may also be identifiable by certain scars reappearing in the child in whom he is reincarnated. In Hendeya (the village which, together with Rongi, forms the *desa* of Sandang Pangan) particular marks are put on the deceased which will then be found again

on the children that are born later. In this way it can be established who has become reincarnated in which child.

Young children are not told who was returned in them for fear that if a child comes to know itself in this way, the spirit will be embarrassed. This is why the name of the deceased person is not given to the child, either. The family do speak about the child's origins among themselves and pay attention to what it says, as earlier experiences may be revealed in its words, but the child does not realize this.

IV. Belief in reincarnation and other religious ideas

Belief in reincarnation and Islam

One of my informants (from the centre), who himself had a strong belief in reincarnation, on the one hand presented the (more) orthodox Islamic view of life after death, while on the other hand he was convinced that belief in reincarnation was compatible with Islam.

According to the (more) orthodox view, all the spirits of the dead await the last day, *hari kiamat*. Then all the dead will be awakened and life will be infused into them by the Lord. They will be weighed on the plain of assembly, the so-called *Padang Mahsyar* (cf. Juynboll 1930: 112). The good will go to heaven and the bad to hell. He who is to go to heaven (*sorga*) will already feel *senang* in the grave in the interim period, as he will already sense heaven. The recitation of Muslim prayers and Koranic texts by the grave is designed to influence the fate of the dead positively. Thus the *ikhlas*, the *zikir* and the *tasbi* are recited by the grave to ensure the well-being of the deceased. The *istikwar* is used to ask for the remission of a person's sins and the *tobat* is designed to procure release from sins.¹⁵ However, the merits achieved by the deceased through good works (*amal*) are decisive.

Yet in addition there is the belief in the return of spirits, which is not considered as being in conflict with Islam. The people who truly believe in reincarnation usually lead a good life, fulfil their promises, refuse to live in luxury, repress all desire to excel others and refrain from boasting. They likewise condemn such behaviour in others.

They find confirmation of their belief in reincarnation in a Koranic text which is read as an expression of praise every day after the *salat* (ritual prayer). This passage states that night passes into day and day into night and that life comes from death for whoever is loved without reckoning. (*Perpindahan malam didalam siang dan perpindahan siang didalam malam; dan masuknya hidup daripada mati bagi siapa yang disukainya dengan tidak hitung* (Ind.). – *Tūliju al-layla fī al-nahāri, wa-tūliju al-nahāra fī al-layli, wa-tukhriju al-ḥayya min al-mayyiti, wa-tukhriju al-mayyita min al-ḥayyi, wa-turziq man tashā'u bi-ghayri ḥisābin* (Ar.))¹⁶

As was mentioned above, those who often practise asceticism (*beramal*) come near to God and thus may determine when they will die and

where and when they will return. Coming near to God in Wolio is called *opoopotu oputa*. According to one informant (not the one mentioned above), this is also in accordance with Muslim writings, such as those of Al Arabi and his pupil, Hamzah Fansuri. The latter is said to have written the work *Man ʿarafa nafsahu fa-qad ʿarafa rabbahu*¹⁷, in which the following words are to be found: “He who truly knows himself will certainly also know his Lord, the Eternal One” (“*Barang siapa yang mengenal keadaan dirinya yang sejati, nistiyaya ia mengenal keadaan Tuannya yang kekal*”). The mystics in this tradition can also see things that are hidden to others.

There is a connection between this mysticism and the legislation of the sultanate of Buton (see above). The *Murtabat Tujuh* also contains a statement that the spirits migrate, specifically in the following passage: *oro hi yitu akalipa-lipa, rohi yitu ooni arabu, maanana olipa* (Wolio), which was translated into Indonesian and explained as follows: *Dalam arti bahasa Arab nyawa itu disebut roh, karena selalu pergi; atau berpindah dan sebab itu arti roh dalam bahasa Wolio dikatakan lipa artinya pergi*. In English the Wolio text has the following literal meaning: The spirit is in (a process of continuous) going, *roh* is an Arabic word and its meaning is “going”.

In prayers to the Lord, prayers for the spirits of the dead are also included, such as: “Yes, Lord, forgive us and him/her. Let him/her have a better place, replace what is not good with what is better, and give him/her much light in the grave.” For the spirits of those who have been dead for a relatively long time, the following words may be addressed to the Lord: “Thou hast the power to arrange everything. We do not know if the spirit is still in the grave or has migrated to another body, but Thou hast the power to arrange everything.”

Moreover, there has by common report been little public discussion concerning the question of whether or not belief in reincarnation is compatible with Islam. In the mid-twenties there were certain followers of the Muhammadiyah who were opposed to the belief in reincarnation. These were largely non-Butonese, mainly people from Makassar. Those Butonese who were members of the Muhammadiyah usually retained a firm belief in reincarnation. One of the informants could still remember a discussion in 1939, when La Malangka, the village headman of Bau-Bau and a member of the Muhammadiyah, had asserted that death is death and there is no return. The village headman of Nganganamala had asked him where the text or verse which indicated that there was no reincarnation was to be found. And *haji* Abdulah had asked what the following text from the Koran meant: “*Perpindahan* etc.” (see above). This text states, after all, that death enters (*masuk*) life and not that death replaces (*ganti*) life. La Malangka was at a loss how to answer this question.

Official Islam does not make any clear attempt to oppose the belief in

reincarnation. On the other hand, the Butonese do not parade their belief in order to avoid clashes of opinion.

Belief in reincarnation and ancestor worship

In Butonese religion a well-defined place is set apart for the worship of the spirits of the ancestors. A further specification of the concept of "worship" is not appropriate in the context of this article, but the question may be asked how the relationship between the belief in reincarnation and ancestor worship should be viewed. It could be argued that there exists a contradiction between the two ideas.

One of my informants had once asked his father and father-in-law about this relationship. Both men, who have since died, were regarded as authorities on *adat*. He claimed not to have received a clear answer. His father-in-law had, however, said to him, pointing at the children partaking of a festive meal for the spirits (*horoana sumanga*): "Look, here are the spirits of the ancestors (*sumanga*). Give them something to eat first, they are the *sumanga* (the spirits) that have returned. They therefore do not have to wait for the guests to commemorate the deceased (*niati sumanga*)."

In various Muslim ceremonies, the graves of the ancestors are sprinkled with water. An older person possessing the necessary knowledge utters a prayer or a saying (*batata*) over the water. Flowers and scents are added to this water. When preparing for or returning from a long journey, one goes to the grave of an ancestor or parent to pray. For some people there is no logically argued relationship between – no "theology" about – ancestor worship and reincarnation (or (more) orthodox Islamic ideas). Thus people go to the graves of deceased who they are convinced have returned in this life through reincarnation, especially in their own children. For them, these are different complexes of ideas that co-exist and among which they do not attempt to establish any logical relations.

Two informants stated that the purpose of sprinkling water always is to reach the *zat*,¹⁸ the eternal essence in man. The *zat* blends with the earth of the grave. The *zat* is located in the coccyx, or *lohil machful*.¹⁹ It is here that the course of a man's life lies enlocked from birth. The *lipa*, or spirit (also called *arwah* or *sumanga*), is the moving, the migrating element. Through the world of the spirits, the *alam arwah*, the *lipa* seeks a new life. Through the "door of coming" (*pintu datang*), that is, through man and woman, the *lipa* returns to man, to the *lohil machful*.

A somewhat different explanation was given by the informant who said that it is not the entire *arwah* (spirit) that comes back. It is sometimes said that someone has more than one grave. This applies particularly to the *wali*, or saints, who sometimes manifest themselves again after their death and are then reburied.

In Hendeya it is believed that there are two kinds of spirits (*arwah*). The coarse spirits (*arwah kasar*) are attached to the corporeal part of

man (*badan kasar*) that is laid in the grave. These spirits remain connected with the grave. There are also a fine kind of spirits (*arwah halus*) which go to heaven and then return to earth in another body. The spirits that remain connected with the grave, *la ompu*, are always asked for help. They intercede with the Lord, *Kawasana ompu*, for such help. In this way one is able to ensure a sufficient livelihood, *rezeki*.

A "theological" problem

One problem raised by one of my informants with regard to the belief in reincarnation was the question of how it is possible for ever more human beings to be born if the number of souls, *arwah*, is constant. This would indeed be the case if the souls necessarily came from people who have died.

The informant's father, an authority on *adat*, had given him the reply that more than one reincarnation can result from one spirit. There were cases known of one deceased person returning in more than 10 grandchildren.

Another informant gave the following reply to the question when I put it to him in connection with the story related above. "The Lord has the power", he said, "to make something out of nothing. The Lord is all-powerful and can make a lot from anything. He gives anyone as much as He pleases, a lot or a little, without reckoning; for the Lord everything is possible. For it is written in the Koran that the question of the soul(s) (*roh/arwah*) is a secret of the Lord Himself. No one can tell why there are now many souls (spirits) whereas there used to be few, or the reverse. The world of the spirits (*arwah*) belongs to the knowledge, the knowing, of the Lord. Man has little or no knowledge of that."²⁰

V. The origins of the belief in reincarnation on Buton

When hearing or reading about the belief in reincarnation on Buton, one may ask what the origins of this belief are. There are a number of possibilities. One may conjecture that the belief was already present in the pre-Islamic (and possibly pre-Hindu) culture of Buton. A second possibility is that the belief came about under Hindu influence before Islamization, especially as a result of contacts with the Hindu-Javanese kingdom of Mojopahit. A third possibility worth mentioning is that the idea of reincarnation was present in the Sufism that was brought to Buton. These three possibilities will be briefly examined here. Of course, the further possibility must be borne in mind that both ancient Butonese (ancient Indonesian) and Hinduistic and/or Sufi ideas underlie the belief in reincarnation here.

When examining the possibility that an ancient Butonese, i.e. pre-Islamic and also pre-Hindu-Javanese, idea is continuing to exert its influence, we must first answer the question of whether a similar idea occurs in other cultures in the Indonesian region.

Wilken (1912:64-90), on the basis of the literature available in 1884, reaches the conclusion that the belief in the transmigration of souls is present among various Indonesian peoples. He regards the idea of reincarnation as a special form of this. He is of the opinion that "the doctrine of the transmigration of souls" is an originally "Polynesian" concept, by which he means an originally Indonesian idea (Wilken 1912:64). With regard to Javanese culture he does point to Hindu influence, but he gives the impression that here, too, he assumes originally Indonesian ideas to be fundamental (Wilken 1912:64 and 68). With respect to the relevant ideas on Bali, Wilken believes there to be nothing that is reminiscent of Hinduism, although it is precisely here one expects its influence (Wilken 1912:71). We would note in passing that the data concerning the belief in reincarnation on Bali appear to be surprisingly scant.

Wilken mentions as peoples known to possess the idea of reincarnation the Olo-Ngaju in south-east Kalimantan and the Batak of the eastern Batak area (Wilken 1912:75-77). More recent literature also cites examples of the occurrence of the belief in reincarnation among various Indonesian peoples. Firstly, there is confirmation of the presence of this belief among the Ngaju Dayak (Stöhr 1959:32), while there is also mention of its existence among the Lawangan and Maanjan Dayak in south and south-east Kalimantan (Mallinckrodt 1925:406-407). The belief also occurs among a number of peoples of southeast Indonesia. Forth (1981:145 and 205) describes a certain form of belief in reincarnation in the Rindi culture of East Sumba. Barnes (1974:129 and 203) ascribes to the Kédang on Lembata (or Lombleng, in the Solor group) an idea of reincarnation whereby the spirit of a dead person is believed to be caught up in a cyclical process of death and rebirth. It thus lives and dies in 5 worlds beneath the earth and in 7 heavens above the earth until it is reborn on earth. Arndt (1951:57 and 193) describes ideas about a similar cyclical process in religious beliefs in East Flores, Adonare and Solor. Pelras (1981:171) mentions the presence of the belief in reincarnation in the "archaic" Makassarese community of the Kayang in South Sulawesi. This may be a confirmation of reports from the 17th century that the Makassarese believed in reincarnation.

This testimony indicates that the idea of reincarnation may be part of the totality of ancient Indonesian thinking. Perhaps we should regard it, with Wilken, as a particular expression of the more general notion of the transmigration of souls as described in studies on Indonesia.

In this connection we must not omit to note that some writers explain this belief as being attributable to Hindu influence. Stöhr (1959:32) especially considers the presence of the belief in reincarnation among the Ngaju Dayak to be explainable by reference to Hindu influence, since the notion of reincarnation in his view is alien to and difficult to assimilate for the Ngaju religion. Mallinckrodt (1925:406 & 407), on the

other hand, is of the opinion, on the basis of the existence of substantive departures from the Hindu idea of reincarnation, that there is question of an originally Dayak idea here. Arndt (1951:246-248) believes, on linguistic grounds, that Hindu but not Hindu-Javanese influence is involved in the area described by him. He assumes that the ideas were carried here in earlier migrations, in which case we might speak of ancient Indonesian ideas. Considering the nature of these ideas and their distribution, I personally am inclined to believe that ancient Indonesian ideas are involved, whether or not they were later strengthened or modified under Hindu influence.

Proceeding from this assumption, we may now ask if there are particular reasons for conjecturing that ancient Indonesian, or ancient Butonese, ideas are involved rather than ideas which emerged under Hindu-Javanese influence. Both possibilities must be borne in mind.

If the notion of reincarnation was stronger in the peripheral area than in the centre, this would be one indication that the idea was ancient Butonese in character. This argument is, however, very difficult to apply to the Buton area, since the population stems from very heterogeneous ethnic groups. To the extent that the argument may be tenable, it turns out that the idea is no more prevalent in the villages of Rongi and Lia than in the centre, Wolio. In Rongi, indeed, the idea was assumed to be part of Islam and as such to have been disseminated from the centre.

One possible indication of Old Butonese origin is provided by the nature of the idea, which is certainly not "purely" Hinduistic, in view of the minor or relatively less important role played by the idea of *karma*, or the continuing influence of one's deeds on one's next life and the absence of the idea one may attain ultimate redemption and eternal peace. This line of reasoning does not, however, allow of any definite conclusions, since it is known from the literature on acculturation that there are various forms of acculturation, such that the process of assimilation and the process of incorporation may be seen as two opposite poles. In the former the point of departure is the people's own system of values, whereby new elements are adopted to the extent that they fit into the existing cultural system. In the latter case, the process of adoption is determined above all by the (perception of the) system of values of the alien culture.²¹ I have been unable to find unequivocal evidence of an ancient Butonese idea being (either partly or chiefly) involved. Yet this possibility cannot be precluded.

The assumption that there is question of Hindu influence on Buton leads us to ask whether there is any evidence for this influence. The following pieces of evidence may, in fact, be adduced. Firstly, the local tradition mentions contacts with Mojopahit. This claim is strengthened by the names of the Butonese monarchs from that period, which suggest possible Hindu-Javanese influence, namely Sibatara, Bataraguru, Tuarade and Rajamulae.²² According to tradition the sixth monarch was

converted to Islam and then bore the title of sultan; he was later referred to by the name Murhum, derived from the Arabic *marhum*.²³ A second piece of evidence is the story included in the tradition according to which the fourth monarch, Tuarade, brought back with him four Javanese regalia from his visit to Mojopahit. In the Javanese history of Mojopahit, the *Nagara-Kertagama*, too, Buton is mentioned as an area with which there was contact or in which there was influence.²⁴ A further piece of evidence may be provided by the earlier mentioned story about the Javanese refugees from Mojopahit who sought refuge on the friendly island of Buton in the reign of Rajamulae. Under his successor, Murhum, they were pressed to become converted to Islam. One may further point to the story, also mentioned above, about the conversion of the first *lakina* Wanci to Islam.

Evidence of a different kind may be drawn from the considerable degree of resemblance between the belief in reincarnation on Buton and the notion of reincarnation in (Central) Java as described by Geertz (1960:75 and 76), viz. "The third view, which is extremely widely held by all but *santris*,²⁵ who condemn it as heretical, is the notion of reincarnation – that when a person dies his soul enters shortly thereafter into an embryo on its way to being born. The usual way in which this occurs is that a pregnant woman feels a sudden intense craving for some special food – an orange out of season or a duck egg – and the soul is inside this food and so enters the woman's womb and is reborn as her child. Often but not always reincarnation occurs within the same family, although the relationship may be rather distant and the individual in whom the soul is reincarnated need not necessarily be of the same sex as the deceased. It may be heralded by a dream on the part of the mother or established by a similarity of features in the child and the recently deceased or by a similar birthmark. It is not wise to tell a child when it is still young of whom it is a reincarnation, for this might make the soul within the child ashamed, and he would fall sick. After he is over six or so, it does not matter any more." Wilken (1912:64-71) also describes the presence of the idea of reincarnation among the Javanese people. One feature of this belief that Geertz does not mention, but which likewise displays a resemblance with an element of Butonese thinking, is the skill, the secret knowledge – *ngelmu peling* – some people have for determining in which family they will return.²⁶

We may conclude from the preceding remarks that there is evidence for Hindu-Javanese influence on Buton and that it is not ruled out that this influence partially determined the nature of the notion of reincarnation here. Yet it must be pointed out at the same time that this does not preclude the possibility that an ancient Indonesian idea is still exerting its influence as well.

Finally, the question of the reincarnation idea being present in the Sufism which was diffused to Buton remains. In the pertinent literature

on Sufism in Indonesia, and especially in Aceh in the 16th and 17th centuries, the idea of reincarnation is not mentioned. Nor has Drewes²⁷ noted any examples thereof. At most one might suppose that Sufism was reasonably tolerant of divergent ideas and offered certain possibilities for the idea of reincarnation.²⁸

VI. Conclusions and final observations

1. Although the kingdom of Buton had been Islamized by the 16th century, the belief in reincarnation continued to play an important role in the religious thinking of the Butonese. In their religion several complexes of ideas may be distinguished which have continued to exist more or less independently alongside one another, including Islamic notions, the belief in reincarnation and ancestor worship. These complexes derive probably from different historical periods. It is better to talk of complexes of ideas existing side by side with one another than of layers of religion. Although there are in some cases "theological" explanations, there seems rather to be question of a certain degree of compartmentalization. The complexes of ideas co-exist without any logical relations being established among them. Each of these complexes is realized in particular circumstances.
2. It is likely that the belief in reincarnation as an integral part of Islamic belief was disseminated from the centre, Wolio, to the villages of the sultanate. The ruling élite saw their possession of religious knowledge as a powerful means whereby the centre could exert its influence on the villages. Knowledge of the religion was disseminated from the centre, but only to a limited extent, so that a situation of religious dependence was created. In the centre, people considered themselves independent of the world around them as far as religion was concerned.
3. I am inclined to assume that there was Hindu-Javanese influence on Buton in the light of the evidence thereof and of the diversity of that evidence. On the basis of this assumption we may conjecture that belief in reincarnation on Buton arose under Hindu-Javanese influence or that it assumed its present form partly under such influence. This conjecture would imply that the belief first took shape in the centre and was diffused into the villages from there. In that case, this diffusion would have taken place in the period after Islamization as a component of Islam as the latter was experienced in the centre, Wolio. This line of reasoning corresponds with the world view in the village of Rongi, where the belief in reincarnation was seen as a natural part of Islamic belief as it had been brought to Rongi from the centre.
4. The hypothesis of Hindu-Javanese influence, which is based on evidence of contacts with the monarchy of Mojopahit, is corroborated by the considerable degree of correspondence between the notions

concerning reincarnation in Java and on Buton. Points of correspondence with the belief as described by Geertz are: a. the return usually takes place within the family; b. in returning, one may change sex; c. recognition is achieved on the basis of similar facial features or special marks; d. its origins are not discussed with the child; e. improvement or deterioration of status in the next life is of little importance. To this can added the factor of the secret knowledge mentioned by Wilken as being necessary to determine in which family the spirit will return. Nonetheless, there are also differences that should be mentioned, namely as regards ideas concerning how the spirit returns. The presence of a correspondence in reincarnation beliefs therefore only offers a tentative indication of Hindu-Javanese influence.

5. The presence of the belief in reincarnation in the cultures of various Indonesian areas surrounding Buton (South and Southeast Kalimantan, South Sulawesi and East Flores, Adonara and Solor) as probably an ancient Indonesian cultural feature allows us to conjecture that ancient Butonese ideas are continuing to exercise an influence in the case of reincarnation. I have failed to find clear evidence for this, while moreover the above-mentioned views in the village of Rongi would lead one to suppose that this conjecture is not a valid one. In view of its ethnic diversity, any conclusion drawn from the Butonese data must remain tenuous. It remains a distinct possibility that ancient Butonese ideas still survive in current reincarnation beliefs, in a way analogous to Hindu-Javanese ideas as interpreted by Wilken. This could then partially explain why certain Hindu elements such as the idea of *karma* and the idea of ultimate redemption and eternal peace play no part, or no important part, in religion on Buton. It is further possible that this belief, in its obviously 'syncretistic' form, was taken over as a whole from Java.
6. In all likelihood the reincarnation belief on Buton is being increasingly pushed into the background by the way in which orthodox Islamic ideas are being disseminated by government agencies. The ministry of religious affairs is playing a major role in this process by providing literature for schools, training religious officials and distributing literature for the practice of religion. On the other hand, the possibility cannot be precluded that Sufism in Indonesia will be given new life as a reaction to and a strategy against militant orthodox practices, if these should occur, as is at present the case in Egypt²⁹. According to this scenario the idea of reincarnation would probably have a greater chance of survival.
7. It is desirable that further research be undertaken into the location and form of the belief in reincarnation in Indonesia. It is remarkable, for instance, how little is known of the nature of this belief on Bali.³⁰

NOTES

- 1 This article is based on data gathered during fieldwork carried out in the second half of 1981 on the island of Buton, in the old centre of Wolio, especially in the village of Baadia and the village of Rongi, some 18 miles east of the chief town BauBau, and on the island of WangiWangi, in the villages of Wanci and Lia. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Indonesian foundation LIPI for the permission and support given me. My thanks also go to the Hasanuddin University in Ujung Pandang, and especially to Prof. Hasan Walinono, for its sponsorship and the help given me. I would also extend my gratitude to my informants, especially La Ode Manarfa, A. Mulku Zahari, Wa Ode Harima and La Ode Bosa. I furthermore wish to thank wholeheartedly all those who were good enough to read critically the first version of this article, especially Profs. G. W. J. Drewes and R. Roolvink with reference particularly to Islam and Arabic words, Prof. J. C. Anceaux with particular reference to Wolio expressions, Dr. J. Noorduyn on aspects of the history, Dr. R. Schefold on aspects of the cultural anthropology characteristic of Indonesia, and Prof. M. Schoffeleers. They also made some good suggestions about relevant literature; in this connexion I wish to thank Dr. H. J. R. Hinzler for referring me to literature on Bali. I should finally like to extend my thanks to the Board of NIAS (Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences) for the opportunity given me to work at that institute during the year 1983-84. The quotations from Dutch literature have been translated into English.
- 2 It is difficult to verify this date on the basis of the available documents. This article is largely based on the ideas held by the Butonese concerning their community and its history. Where possibilities of verification are available, these will be mentioned.
- 3 *Zikir* (Ar. *zīkr* or *dhikr*) is described as follows in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² (1960-...): "Reminding oneself. 'Remind thyself of (*udhkur*) thy Lord when thou forgettest' (Kur'an, XVIII, 24). Thus: the act of reminding, then oral mention of the memory, especially the tireless repetition of an ejaculatory litany, finally the very technique of this mention. In *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism, JWS) the *dhikr* is possibly the most frequent form of prayer . . . For the Sufis the Kuranic basis of the *dhikr* is the above-quoted text . . . and XXXIII, 41: 'O ye who believe remember (*udhkurū*) Allah with much remembrance . . .'" Zoetmulder (1935:135) says the following about the *dhikr*: "The recitation of constantly repeated sacred sayings, especially of the *sahada* (the profession of faith, above all the first part, *lā ilāha illā 'llāh*, 'there is no god but Allah', JWS), is used for this purpose throughout the Islamic world, in such a way, even, that it has lost its original character of a pure mention of Allah's name and has become inextricably linked with ecstasy".
- 4 According to Butonese traditions, Abdul Wahid is the person who brought Islam to Buton. He was an Arab from Gujerat, who is said to have first come via Johor to Buton, specifically to Buragasi, on the south-eastern tip of the island, around 1527. On his second visit, Sultan Murhum became converted to Islam (ca. 1542; Zahari 1980:40). The name Murhum is derived from the Arabic *marhum*, which means 'the late . . . of blessed memory', and indeed, it is customary in Indonesia to refer to a deceased monarch as *marhum*. In the Butonese tradition, the name Murhum is still used with reference to this particular monarch, the first sultan. He is however also known by other names (Zahari 1977, I:46).
- 5 Prof. Drewes has drawn my attention to the fact that in many stories about the Islamization of particular areas in Indonesia, the names of those bringing the religion express the idea of authoritativeness. Thus the name Syarif indicates direct descent from the Prophet. The possibility that hereby legends are created cannot be precluded.
- 6 This name cannot be found in Ligtoet (1878), who mentions other names on p. 60. Zahari (1977, II:59) states that the leader of the 1,000-strong Butonese army that fought in the conflict with Goa was *kapitan laut* La Arafani (the *Jogugu* (= *sapati*) Baluwu). Zahari refers to Ligtoet (60) in this connection, but the latter names the

commander as La Djipalaoe, who is probably the same person. La Jipalau (or La Djipalau) was *kapitan laut*, i.e. commander of the army and the navy of Buton, in the war against Goa. He was later appointed *sapati*, which is translated in the documents of the United East India Company (VOC) as *rijksbestuurder*, that is, the highest official in the sultanate. According to Ligtoet (1878:69) *sapati* La-Djipalaoe died in 1691. Zahari (1977, II:74) tells us that *sapati* Baluwu (Minarfa) died in 1691 and gives a reference to the above-mentioned page in the article by Ligtoet (1878).

- 7 The Arabic text as written down by my informant was complete but the spelling was not entirely correct. It has been put right by Prof. Roolvink and Prof. Drewes. The translation of the text into Indonesian was not complete, taking the following form: "O Lord, forgive us and him. Elevate his place. Replace him in this circle (family). And give light in there (in his grave)". This is taken from a prayer at Muslim burials.
- 8 The term *sarogaa* is specifically used to refer to the dwelling-place of the spirits of the dead. The term *kayangan* (Ind.), which is also sometimes used, has a broader meaning. The original meaning of this term was 'dwelling-place of the gods'. *Sarogaa* is probably derived from the Sanskrit word *swarga*, meaning heaven.
- 9 The presentation of the seven worlds as given here was offered by one of my informants. There is a clear link with the idea of reincarnation. In the constitution, also called *Murtabat Tujuh*, the representation of the seven worlds or degrees of being is more in agreement with the description to be found in 17th-century Acehese writings and, to this day, in Javanese *primbons* (vademecums containing precepts in connection with higher, mystical wisdom). The Butonese traditions also recognize the influence of Aceh and of Sufism.

In the hey-day of Sufism in Aceh (around 1600) there were two very famous mystics, Hamzah of Fansur (i.e. Barus in Tapanuli, once well known for its camphor export) and Shamsu'l-Din (died 1630). Their writings show that Sufism was influenced above all by the writings of Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240), the Spanish Muslim mystic who, after wandering about for many years, finally settled in Damascus (cf. Johns 1957:13 and 14; Zoetmulder 1935:40; and Kraemer 1921:21-25). Ibn al-Arabi built on the ideas developed by Mansur Al-Hallaj (put to death in 922), who tried to incorporate into Islam the Christian idea of the combination of the divine and the human aspect in one person (cf. Johns 1957:13). He assumed the absolute unity of God before creation, through contemplation of which emerges the manifestation of Himself, His attributes and His names. In Johns' view, there is still a dualism involved here. In Ibn al-Arabi, who builds on this line of thought, the system becomes entirely monistic. God is the cause of all BEING. However manifold the manifestations may be, they are all one in the one substance. There are degrees of emanation, radiation, and self-realization from the divine source of light. In his system of emanation, man, and the world of man, occupy the last position. The mystic is not content with this and distinguishes special men, perfect men – al-Insan al-Kamil, i.e. the prophets and the consummate mystics (cf. Zoetmulder 1935:39-48).

Building on this teaching and elaborating this last-mentioned line of thought, 'Abdu 'l-Karim ibn Ibrahim al-Jili (1365/6-ca. 1410) wrote the (book) *Kitab Al-Insan al-Kamil fi ma'rifati 'l-awakhir wa 'l-awa'il* (The Perfect Man, dealing with knowledge of the last things – things created – and the first things – preceding developments from the (divine) Being). This book exercised a strong influence on Indonesian Sufism (cf. Johns 1957:77-81; and Kraemer 1921:34).

Moreover, the work of the Indian mystic Muh. b. Faḍlullah, *Al-Tuhfa al Mursala ila 'l-Nabi*, has been of great importance, especially through the work of Shamsu 'l-Din (cf. Johns 1957:33). It is from this work that the system of the seven degrees of BEING, the seven emanations of God, is derived. A commentary on the *Al-Tuhfa* was allegedly written for Indonesia by Ibrahim al-Kurani (died 1689) at the behest of his master, Ahmad al-Qushashi of Medina (cf. Johns 1957:33; Drewes 1959:283). Shamsu 'l-Din is regarded above all as a follower of Hamzah Fansuri (cf. Nieuwenhuyze 1945:14-27; and Doorenbos 1933:1). The elaboration of the seven degrees of

being, the *martabat tujuh*, and especially of the terminology used for it that is also to be found in Sufism on Buton, but above all in Java, is borrowed from Shamsu 'l-Din and his followers (cf. Johns 1957:33; Nieuwenhuyze 1945:99-134; and Kraemer 1921:38, 39 and 47). Whatever differences there may have been between them, it is certain that there was a large degree of correspondence between the thinking of these two mystics and that they exerted a strong influence on the development of Islam in Indonesia. According to Butonese tradition, the first constitution was committed to writing under Sultan La Elangi (1578-1615), and was definitively drawn up and given the name *Murtabat Tujuh* around 1610. In the *sarana Wolio*, the constitution that was drawn up by Sultan Muhammed Idrus (1824-1851), the explicit point of departure is La Elangi's *Murtabat Tujuh*. An exposition is given of the seven degrees of being which corresponds with the elaboration thereof in Shamsu 'l-Din and his followers. In the constitution the seven degrees of being are then used to define a number of positions in the monarchy; positions which reflect the various degrees of being. The first three degrees of being are reflected in the position of the three branches of the aristocracy: Tanai-landu, Tapi-Tapi and Kumbewaha. Then follow the positions of the sultan, the *sapati*, the highest official, the *kenepulu*, high official, and the two *kapita lau*, or commanders of the army and navy. In the reign of Sultan Mopogaana Pauna Saparagau (1645-1646; cf. Zahari 1977, II:13) this sultan instituted the function of *lakina* Sorawolio, which was assigned the position originally allocated to the sultan in the constitution, i.e. that reflecting the fourth degree of being. The sultan then came to occupy a higher position, the reflection of the *alam barzakh*, the world between the first three degrees of being, which relate to the divine, and the four remaining degrees of being, which relate to the created. The term *martabat* may also be translated as "rank, high office, post, or dignity".

- 10 *Kun* (Ar.) occurs in the Koran (36:82 and 16:40) as the word of creation: "His command, when He desires a thing, is to say to it 'Be', and it is" and "The only words We say to a thing, when We desire it, is that We say to it 'Be', and it is" (Arberry 1955). In the writings of Hamzah Fansuri we find the incorporation of this creative word into his mystical system (cf. Al-Attas 1970:247, 248, 250, 275, 317 and 318). The concept of *kun* marks the boundary between the first three degrees of being and the last four, the worlds that fall under the creative word (*kun*) (cf. Rinkes 1909:103-104, and Zoetmulder 1935:123); see also notes 9 above and 28 below.
- 11 *Kalimat saḥada* = *kalimatu 'sh-shahada* (Ar.), the formula of the profession of faith, or rather of the witness, to the following effect: 'I bear witness that there is no deity but God, and that Muhammad is His Prophet' (*lā ilāhā illā 'llāh wa Muhammad rasulu 'llāh*).
- 12 *Ilmu tauhid* = *'ilm al-tawhid* (Ar.), the doctrine of divine oneness and uniqueness, arises from the knowledge of the genesis of man, as expressed in the pronouncement (attributed to the Prophet) that is much used in this mystic tradition: "He who knows himself knows his Lord". The equation of *ilmu keḥadian* with *ilmu tauhid* is not strictly correct, as Prof. Drewes pointed out to me.
- 13 According to Prof. Anceaux, this might also be translated as "catching a glimpse of God through a chink".
- 14 *Lakina* is the title of the lord or monarch of a particular area. The ending *na* means "of". *Lakina* can therefore not be used unless it is followed by the name of the area concerned.
- 15 *Ikhlas* (Ar.) means 'sincerity'. As a theological term it implies that a Muslim performs his religious acts with thoughts focused on nothing in the universe but God, shutting everything else out of his mind. Al-Ikhlās is the title of the 112th *surah* of the Koran, which recurs in the daily prayer and reads thus: "Say: 'He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one.'" (Arberry 1955, I:361). In the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² the following explanation, among others, is given: "Ikhlās is pre-eminently an interior virtue of the faithful Muslim, which implies both the unadulterated purity (and thus

sincerity) of religious actions, pure (exclusive) worship given to God and the Community of Believers . . . Analyses of *ikhlas* belong, above all, to Sufi meditations and investigations. *Ikhlas* is the secret of hearts that have drawn near to God by means of supererogatory works (*al-takarrub bi-'l-nawafil*), especially retreats and forty-day fasts . . . The text . . . that had the most profound influence was undoubtedly al-Ghazali's development in his *Ihya* (Cairo ed., 1352/1933, IV:321-8): four chapters devoted to the virtue and merit of *ikhlas* . . ."

Zikir – see note 3.

Tasbi = *tasbiḥ* (Ar.) is the ejaculation "*Subḥāna 'llāh*", "Praise be unto God!" "A most meritorious ejaculation, which, if recited one hundred times, night and morning, is said by the Prophet to atone for man's sins, however many or great" (Hughes 1885).

Istikwar = *istighfar* (Ar.), meaning "seeking forgiveness of God". It is related of Muhammad that he said: "I swear by God that I ask pardon of God, and repent before Him more than seventy times daily. O, men, repent and turn to God, for verily I repent for Him one hundred times a day" (Hughes 1885). Klinkert (1930) spells this term as *istigfarar*, glossing it as "to ask forgiveness; *astagrafir ullah*, I ask God forgiveness, may God forgive me!, as an exclamation of terror or amazement. In Malay, this has been corrupted as *astāgapirulah*, or simply *astaga*."

Tobat = *tauba* (Ar.), meaning 'repentance'. *Al-Tauba* is the title of the 9th *surah* of the Koran. *Saratī toba*, 'asking forgiveness', occurs in cases of serious illness or before death.

- 16 The Arabic text was not quite correct and was emended by Prof. Roolvink and Prof. Drewes. They pointed out that the text occurs in the Koran (3, 27) and is translated as follows: "Thou makest the night to enter into the day and Thou makest the day to enter into the night, Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living, and Thou providest whomsoever Thou wilt without reckoning" (Arberry 1955, 1:76).
- 17 The expression *man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu* occurs regularly in Sufi writings of the 16th and 17th centuries. Man is the perfect mirror-image of God. He is "the turning-point in the cycle of Being. In him is effected the return, or *tarakki*. He is the compendium, the copy (*nuskha*), as the author of the *Insan kamil* puts it, of all Being. The Perfect Man is the microcosm, which contains the macrocosm within itself; it is he in whom the one Being returns, thinking, to itself. That is the meaning of the admonition 'to know oneself'" (Kraemer 1921:40-41). Hamzah Fansuri wrote the work *Muntahi pada merencanakan sabda nabi Allah : man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu* (cf. Kraemer 1921:23; also Al-Attas 1970:329-354). The informant was probably referring to this work. The available Malay text is not complete, but a full Javanese translation is available (cf. Al-Attas 1970:221; and Drewes 1984). In Al-Attas (1970:329-353) we find the incomplete Malay text. Prof. Drewes is working on an edition of the Javanese text.
- 18 *Zat* (Ar.), the essence of a thing or the ultimate and radical constituent of a thing. It is used with reference to the nature or essence of God (*dhātu 'llāh*), which is unknowable, while Allāh is the *ismu 'l-dhāt*, the "name of the Essence", in which all the other names (viz. the 99 "beautiful names") are recapitulated.
- 19 *Lohil machful* = *al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz* (Ar.), the Preserved Tablet. Muslims "believe that everything that shall happen till the last Day is inscribed on a Tablet under the Throne of God" (Nicholson 1921:59). "In Ghazzali's cosmology the *lawh mahfuz* is the centre of the eternally active ideas" (Gibb and Kramers 1953). In Sufi ideas of the Perfect Man we find the following: "The Perfect Man in himself stands over against all the individualisations of existence. With his spirituality he stands over against the higher individualisations, with his corporality over against the lower. His heart stands over against the Throne of God (*al-Arsh*), his mind over against the Pen (*al-Qalam*), his soul over against the Guarded Tablet (*al-Lawhu 'l-mahfuz*), his nature over against the elements, his capability (of receiving forms) over against matters (*hayula*) . . ." (Nicholson 1921:106). In the *sarana Wolio* – the "constitution" of Wolio, laid down by

Sultan Muhammed Idrus (1824-1851), and going back to the *Murtabat Tujuh*, the constitution of Sultan La Elangi (1578-1615; cf. also note 9) – the concept of *lohil machful* is also used in combination with the concepts of *aras* (al-Arsh), the throne of God, and *kursi*, the footstool of God. It is not quite clear how there came to be an association between *lohil machful* and the coccyx. The word for ischium or coccyx in Wolio is *baana dadi*, which, according to Prof. Anceaux, can be literally translated as “head of life”. This conception is akin to the notion found in the sacred Hadith (tradition) that the coccyx (*ʿajbu ʿldzanabi*, Ar.) is the starting-point of growth in man (Rinkes 1909:76). In this connection it is interesting to note that in the *primbons* studied by Rinkes the coccyx is mentioned in the same context as, *inter alia*, the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*). In one type of *zikir* (the *zikir nafī-iṣbat*), the believer is supposed while reciting (a part of) the profession of faith (*lā ilāha illā ʾllāh*; see note 3) to be mindful, with respect to the negation *lā ilāha* (there is no God), that the sevenfold Earth and all that is in it, the sevenfold Heaven and all that is in it, the Throne, the Seat, Paradise, Hell, the Preserved Tablet, the Pen, the Spirit, the Coccyx, and the four elements are none of them a godhead.

It is possible that this has given rise to the (not altogether correct) association between *lohil machful* and the coccyx, as well as the association between the coccyx and the *zat* of man.

- 20 The reference to the Koran may be to *surah* 17:85, which reads: “They will question thee concerning the Spirit. Say: ‘The Spirit is of the bidding of my Lord. You have been given of knowledge nothing except a little’.” (Arberry 1955, I:311-2.)

In Sufism one encounters the idea that the spirits of men originate in God and return to Him. Macdonald (1903:262), for example, writes with reference to Ibn al-Arabi, who exerted a great influence on the mystics of Aceh in the 16th and 17th centuries, “The being of all things is God: there is nothing except Him. All things are an essential unity; every part of the world is the whole world. So man is a unity in essence but a multiplicity in individuals. His anthropology was an advance upon that of al-Ghazzali toward a more unflinching pantheism. He has the same view that the soul of man is a spiritual substance different from everything else and proceeding from God. But he obliterates the difference of God and makes souls practically emanations. At death these return into God who sent them forth.”

- 21 Spicer, in an important study on acculturation processes among the North-American Indians, distinguishes between various types of acculturation, the two diametrically opposed types being assimilative cultural integration and incorporative cultural integration. In the former, the acceptors take the system of values of the giving culture (society) as their point of departure while in the latter their own system of values is the point of departure. Spicer also distinguishes between *fusional integration* and *isolative integration*. In *fusional integration* an entirely new culture results from the fusion of two cultures. In *isolative cultural integration*, new elements are accepted, but remain alien elements that have little connection with the other aspects of the culture. One example of the latter type is afforded by the Catholic ceremonies of the Pueblo Indians, which served as a kind of façade for the continuation of traditional religious ideas (Spicer 1961).
- 22 *Batara* (from *bhaṭṭara*, Sanskrit) is the name of a deity but was also used as the title of a monarch; *Batara Guru* is the name of the Supreme Deity. The name *Tuarade* is probably composed of the words *tuān* and *raden*, *tuān* meaning “lord” in Indonesian and *raden* being a title on Java for a man of noble birth – it used to designate high nobility, but later came to designate intermediate nobility.

The name *Rajamulae* is probably composed of the words *raja* (monarch) and *mulia* (Ind.) or *mulya* (Javanese), which means ‘noble, sublime, lofty’. The word *mulya* is derived from Sanskrit.

- 23 See note 4.

- 24 In Javanese historiography from the period of the kingdom of Mojopahit, Buton is mentioned as an area with which contacts were maintained or upon which an influence

was exercised. In the Nagara-Kertagama of Rakawi Prapanca of Majapahit (1365 A.D.), we read in canto 14, stanza 5: "Those that are (enumerated) island by island (are) Makassar, Buton, Banggawi" (Pigeaud 1960:17).

- 25 Geertz (1960:6) describes (not quite correctly) the three main religious impulses in the Javanese world-view as follows: "*Abangan*, representing a stress on the animistic aspects of the over-all *Javanese* syncretism and broadly related to the peasant element in the population; *santri*, representing a stress on the Islamic aspects of the syncretism and generally related to the trading element (and to certain elements in the peasantry as well); and *prijaji*, stressing the Hinduist aspects and related to the bureaucratic element – these, then, are the three main subtraditions . . .".
- 26 Wilken (1912:68-69) additionally mentions a particular form of *ngelmu-peling*, the *ngelmu-peling djaminé*, which is the power to recall one's preceding life; I received no information on this on Buton.
- 27 According to a personal communication.
- 28 In connection with the possibly greater tolerance of Sufism it may be noted that Macdonald (1903:262-263) ascribes great tolerance to Ibn Arabi: "All religions to Ibn Arabi were practically indifferent; in them all the divine was working and was worshipped. Yet Islam is the more advantageous and Sufism is its true philosophy. Further, man has no freewill; he is constrained by the will of God, which is really all that exists. Nor is there any real difference between good and evil; the essential unity of all things makes such a division impossible." We can assume the same kind of tolerance to have been characteristic of Hamzah Fansuri when we read what Kraemer (1921:36) writes about him and his teachings, viz. "Allah is the only Being. All being is *wujud* Allah. He embraces all being and all the world . . . Subject and object . . . etc. coincide in him. The being of the world is merely appearance, just like the image in a mirror, because there is only one Being . . . Hamzah does not hesitate to invalidate the strong Muslim consciousness of the opposition between pure and impure. Since the divine Being embraces everything, it also embraces that which is impure (*najis*). Just as heat (*panas*) fills all worlds, and thus also fills the impure, the spoilt (*busuk*), the good, the evil, the Ka'ba and the temples to idols (*rumah berhala*), so does the sacrosanct Being, too, without being perturbed by any of it. He embraces it, but is not tainted by it." The Butonese may have found a point of contact for their idea of reincarnation in Arabi's train of thought as reported in Macdonald's pronouncement about Ibn al-Arabi cited in note 20.

Kraemer (1921:39) points out that Hamzah Fansuri regards the process of self-determination on the part of Allah as described in the various degrees of the Being (*martabat*) as a cycle. He describes it by means of the metaphor "of the sea and its transformations. The motionless sea (*laut tetap*) is the Being in the pure state of self-orientation. However, if it begins to move (*bergerak, timbul*), then it is referred to as a wave (*ombak*), that is, the knowing one contemplates himself (*"alim memandang dirinya*) . . .".

Vaporization, the formation of clouds and rain represent various stages in the determination and differentiation of the Being. "The cloud turns into rain (*hujan*), that is to say, through the creative word (*kun, JWS*), which is on the dividing-line between the world of ideas and the material world, the *a'jān thābita* (things as eternal ideas, JWS) come forth. From the realm of the Being they descend into the realm of what has become. The rain appears on earth as a river (*sungai*). We are now in the concrete world. Just as the river returns to the sea and then is called sea again, so it is with all Being with respect to its origins. The absolute Being is the sea, which loses nothing from the outflow and gains nothing from the inflow. This is how Hamzah portrays the eternal cycle of the Being, which is at once an eternally moving process and an eternal stationary state, for it is perfect in itself, or, as he expresses it, all-holy (*mahasuci, suci daripada segala suci*). Here the well-known Plotinian scheme of the emanation process of the Being salutes us in Malaysian attire."

- 29 See the article on Sufism in Egypt by Harm Botje in the Dutch newspaper *NRC/*

Handelsblad of 10th September 1983.

- 30 Wilken (1912:71-72) mentions some views on reincarnation on Bali with special reference to the institution of cremation. Dr. Hinzler has drawn my attention to various publications testifying that mentions of the idea of reincarnation or references to it are to be found in a number of Balinese writings (cf. Goris 1926:116, 122; Hooykaas and Ida Surya Agung Hadrya 1949:386; Hooykaas and Ida Ketoet Djilantik 1950:447, 454, 466-467; and Putra c. 1974:66). I gained some idea of the current Balinese views from a conversation with a Balinese teacher about the belief in reincarnation. She gave me the following information. The spirits of the dead usually return within the family. The spirit of the deceased may be reincarnated in various people, and may even be spread across different generations. The spirit is, as it were, split up. When a baby is born, the elders of the community work out who has come back. It is possible for a royal personage to be reincarnated in the child of an "ordinary" family.

A sinful life, moreover, continues to have an influence in the next life: you have to pay for it. The problems that this teacher had experienced in her life – her husband had been a political prisoner on Buru for many years – were, in her view, a consequence of her sins in an earlier life. If one lives an exceptionally good life, one may escape from the cycle of continual returns.

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