

REVIEW ARTICLE

**Changing Patterns of Architecture
and Symbolism among the Sa'dan
Toraja (Indonesia)**

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Some of the world's most interesting traditions of wooden architecture are found among the ethnic groups of Indonesia. Although most of these traditions are known to some degree from ethnographic literature, only few have as yet become the subject of comprehensive ethno-architectural studies by researchers specialized in the field. As a result, really adequate monographic treatments of such "building cultures" are still largely a desideratum. Even the work under review* cannot satisfy the requirements one would like to set up for ethno-architectural monographs. But given the general rarity of books about traditional Indonesian architecture, it deserves our attention as an attractive contribution that is likely to stimulate research in this neglected field.

The book is based on two months of fieldwork among the Sa'dan Toraja¹ of South Sulawesi, done in summer 1983 by a team consisting of two anthropologists (Hetty Nooy-Palm and Reimar Schefold), a photographer (Ursula Schulz-Dornburg), and an architect (Jowa Imre Kis-Jovak). As is stressed in the introductory chapter, multi-disciplinary collaboration was an essential feature of the project, particularly with regard to grasping the symbolic aspects of Sa'dan Toraja

* KIS-JOVAK, JOWA IMRE; HETTY NOOY-PALM, REIMAR SCHEFOLD, URSULA SCHULZ-DORNBURG. *Banua Toraja. Changing Patterns in Architecture and Symbolism among the Sa'dan Toraja, Sulawesi Indonesia*. Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1988. 135 pages. Maps, line drawings, 139 photographs, glossary, bibliography. Paper Dfl. 75.00; ISBN 90 6832 207 9.

architecture. In this respect, attention is called to the fruitful effects of a blending of expertise ("expertise in form and expertise in content" [8]), for it is, we read, often the seemingly unimportant details and the technically superfluous elements of a building that are rooted in symbolism.

Although one might perhaps expect to find the two kinds of "expertise" combined, in varying proportions, in each single member of the team, the presentation of the book under review suggests a somewhat different idea. While the illustrations are, with a few exceptions, contributed by the photographer and the architect, nearly all of the text is written by the two anthropologists. We do not learn what the photographer and the architect think about this spectacular kind of architecture, nor are we told what part the two anthropologists took in the measuring and examining of the buildings and in the selection of the subjects to be photographed. Although produced after joint fieldwork carried out in Tana Toraja (as the main dwelling area of the Sa'dan Toraja is called today), the book presents itself, not as a commonly authored monograph, but as a work made up of four rather different kinds of materials, two contributed by experts in visual documentation, two by anthropologists relying mainly on the written word.

In what follows, I shall try to give an idea of the book's contents and of some of its problematic features, restricting my critical remarks mainly to a few topics which have particularly occupied me in my own studies.

1

To begin with the photographic documentation, it may be said that a similarly rich and varied selection of informative photos of Sa'dan Toraja architecture and related matters is hardly found assembled in any previously published work. Nearly 100 of the 140 pictures (including the book cover) were shot by Schulz-Dornburg, the rest mostly by Kis-Jovak and by Schefold, with one by Nooy-Palm. Only one has been taken from an archive. About one-third are printed in big format (some are 20×30 cm, or even larger), the remaining are still big enough to permit making out of details. As far as quality is concerned, the pictures—all in black and white—leave nothing to be desired; many are masterpieces.

As for the selection of the subjects, this is another outstanding feature. Seen together, the photos do not produce a pictorial of the more common rather superficial kind, but an interesting documentation of the varied aspects of an architecture which is still highly conditioned by religion and old customs, in spite of all the changes that have

taken place in recent times. We do not see only houses and rice barns from "touristic" villages, such as are already well known even from the pamphlets of international tour organizers. There are also pictures from some more remote parts of Tana Toraja, where simpler and apparently older forms can be observed. Then there is also variety with regard to building types of different function. Besides houses and rice barns, which are the main subjects, funeral architecture is treated, too (112-115). Even the rice guardhouse in the field, the buffalo stall, the pigsty, and the chicken house are represented by one or two examples each (110-111), not to speak of the rather fanciful works that resulted from some recent attempts to combine modern concrete buildings with roofs or even entire house models in the traditional style (116-117). Of particular interest for researchers are photographs showing houses under construction, interiors, villages, landscapes, ritual scenes in front of houses, as well as temporary structures and decorations set up at the time of festivals.

On the other hand, researchers will miss a convenient map that would indicate the approximate locations where the photographs were taken. Judging from the captions, which do not all identify the place, the team's fieldwork seems to have been limited to an area covering about one-third of Tana Toraja, namely the central and northern regions, but not the southwest or the southeast.

2

The value of this impressive and fascinating photographic documentation is increased through the architectural drawings by Kis-Jovak. A total of twenty-four drawings (plans, sections, and elevations) represent seven buildings: three different ancestral houses (*tongkonan*) built on posts, two dwelling houses displaying log-cabin features in the ground-floor section (*banua tamben*), and two rice barns (*alang*) of different roof construction. Many of these drawings, besides being found in the part titled "Survey of architectural forms" (chap. 7), are used repeatedly, and in varying scales, in other chapters of the book as well. This facilitates the reading of the texts, because one is not always forced to turn pages in order to find a drawing referred to. On the other hand, the repeated appearance of the same item is likely to create the illusion that the book contains nearly three times as many architectural drawings as it really does. Although it includes more scale-drawings of Sa'dan Toraja buildings than other Western-language publications known to me, it cannot compare in this respect with a noteworthy Japanese study authored by a group of architects from Tokyo Kōgyō University (CHATANI et al. 1981).²

Apart from the scale-drawings and some simplified versions derived from them, the book contains three maps, schematic layouts of three different types of settlements, one very rough plan of an identified settlement (Palawa), three sketches illustrating changes in construction details, one diagram ("historical shift in building proportion ratios"), and one schema that tries to visualize the mythical world view of the Sa'dan Toraja.

The authorship of some of these other drawings is not clear, so I do not know who is to be blamed for the poor layout of Palawa (24)³ and for the two geographic maps that indicate the location of Tana Toraja by a circle much too big (10-11).

3

As for the text sections of the work under review, about three-quarters of the contents were written by Nooy-Palm, most of the remaining parts by Schefold, a mere two pages by Kis-Jovak.

Nooy-Palm, the senior expert on Sa'dan Toraja culture, first introduces the reader in concise form into general matters, such as geography, subsistence, history, rank, religions, and recent changes in Sa'dan Toraja culture (chap. 2). Then she offers valuable information on the traditional districts, on the villages and their subdivisions, on the types of settlements, and on everyday life in and around the house (chap. 3). Next comes a discussion of "the house as a microcosm," touching on subjects such as the house in history and society, the mythical world view and its "microcosmic representation" in the structure of the house, the image of the house as a tree, and the tree as a cosmic symbol. The quasi-central post/pillar arrangement (*a'riri posi'* plus *petuo'*) is interpreted as a symbol of the world's axis, and the function of ornamentation in various parts of house and rice barn is explained (chap. 4). A final chapter by Nooy-Palm gives us descriptions of a number of rituals, including that for rebuilding a *tongkonan* (chap. 5).

Although most of this information and these interpretations may also be found in the author's two-volume monograph on the Sa'dan Toraja (NOOY-PALM 1979 and 1986), it is very convenient to have now some of the materials, particularly those that relate to the house, presented in a book that is also adequately illustrated. Moreover, the attractive appearance of this book is likely to appeal not only to the specialist; and for the *general* reader Nooy-Palm's four chapters offer a wealth of new and interesting information such as is usually lacking in books that allot considerably more space to pictures than to words. As for scholars, they will of course have to study Nooy-Palm's con-

tributions in combination with her more detailed earlier works.

A weak point this new presentation shares with the earlier works is the lack of an adequate *hydrographic* map of Tana Toraja and surroundings. Considering the great importance of orientation in Sa'dan Toraja architecture and ritual, it is difficult to understand why the only map of the kind that we find in this book (13) does not show the two rivers that leave Tana Toraja due east and due south of the central region around Makale. The first of these empties east into the Gulf of Bone, where formerly the important principedom of Luwu' was established; the other, the Mata Allo (one name), runs some 45 kilometers south to Enrekang, where it joins the Sa'dan before this turns west and empties into the Gulf of Mandar.⁴ The spatial relationship between the Sa'dan and the Mata Allo, both relative to the traditional settlement area of the Sa'dan Toraja, is of paramount importance for understanding why the houses in this area turn their back to the south, although the Sa'dan leaves the land in the southwest. The reason is that *the Mata Allo leaves in the south*, and this is significant because it is in the valley of the Mata Allo—not in that of the Sa'dan⁵—that, according to Toraja tradition, Puya, the Land of the Souls, is located (DOMENIG 1977).

The much too vague image the reader gets of the physical geography of Tana Toraja and the adjoining regions is partly due also to the fact that Nooy-Palm neglects the horizontal view when she tries to visualize the structure of the Toraja "three-fold world" by a cosmological schema (36, Fig. 4). It is true, the coexistence of both a vertical and a horizontal view of the world is rightly stressed on page 37, where both the ground-plan and the cross-section of a house are used to illustrate the idea of "the Toraja house as a combination of the two- and three-fold world." However, of the *two* macrocosmic correspondences only one—the (vertical) "three-fold world"—is represented by a figure, too. In this, the horizontal structure is referred to in a rather confusing way by adding the words "north" and "south" in the regions of the zenith and nadir, respectively. This should express that the zenith is "associated" with north, the nadir with south, but since the reader finds no separate diagram for the horizontal view, she or he is likely to believe that the mythical and religious world image of the Sa'dan Toraja is mainly a matter of vertical structure. However, one might be able to argue that in the myths and rituals of this people the image of the horizontally structured world plays a far more dominant part than its vertical counterpart.

As for calling the Sa'dan Toraja world in its horizontal structure a "two-fold world" (37), I doubt that this is justified. In my inter-

pretation, both the rites and the ritual chants (VAN DER VEEN 1965) of this people indicate that north and south are conceived, not as two halves of the cosmic Land (the "Earth"), but as two cosmic regions lying beyond that Land, in such a way that together with this Land they, too, constitute a "three-fold" world. The same view might apply also to east and west, only that in this respect the image seems to be somewhat less distinct (DOMENIG 1977).

Regarding the vertical view of the world, Nooy-Palm informs us of the interesting fact that, in Sa'dan Toraja litanies, the sky is described by a metaphor based on the model of the house (38). She speaks in this context of the "somewhat hazy picture of the Upper World," which in ritual texts is compared to a roof or to a cone-shaped ornament—as if it were triangular in section (36–38; cf. NOOY-PALM 1979, 131). I wish she had also dared to express this uncommon idea in the above-mentioned schema of the "three-fold world." For had she tried to do so (instead of drawing once more the familiar clean circle), the result might have been a welcome challenge to the traditional, all too one-sided view of house-cosmos relationships. There are still too many scholars who, following an ideology such as advocated by Mircea Eliade, take pleasure in reading the spatial structure of the house as a reflection of the macrocosm, but refuse to focus equally well on those phenomena that suggest that the house often provided also a model for a people's mythic image of the World (DOMENIG 1985).

4

The last substantial text section of the book is contained in chapter 6. Like the introductory chapter 1, it is written by Schefold and presents what seems to be the book's main issue as far as theory is concerned. Apart from the formulation of a thesis and the attempt to support it by arguments, Schefold offers detailed descriptions of constructive features displayed by some of the houses documented by Kis-Jovak's drawings. He also discusses variations, such as those found in the relative size of the interior dwelling space, in the number of hanging spars, in the line of the roof-ridge, in the construction of the floor frame (corner solution), in ornamentation, and so forth.

Schefold's interest in such variations is motivated by his thesis that "the contemporary Toraja buildings are not as traditional as they might at first sight appear," that "they are the result of an architectonic development which in some respects has made the houses progressively less suitable as dwellings" (66). A more sophisticated formulation of this basic claim is given following the discussion of a number of typical features and their variations in a few selected houses of dif-

ferent age. Since the passage summarizes what seems to be the main conclusion with regard to the subject of the whole book according to its subtitle, it may be quoted here in full:

There are two parallel lines of development. First, there is a tendency towards increasing refinement both in the structure of the building and in specific details of construction technique and decoration. Second, this has also led to a spectacular enhancement of visual effect: the towering modern houses with their profuse decorations and dramatically curved roofs make them all too well fitted for the task ascribed to them by tourist brochures, as if they were primarily intended for "show." *Neither line of change, however, whether refinement or ostentatious display, implies any fundamental structural change, since both have been achieved through developing a model which continues to underlie all stages of evolution.* To use the famous concept introduced by Goldenweiser and elaborated by Geertz, this process could be labelled as an "*involution.*" (71; italics mine)

I certainly share Schefold's intuition with regard to the "involutionary" character of many changes that have occurred in Sa'dan Toraja architecture. However, in a book on the traditional Toraja house in general, the discussion of this particular aspect calls for a more comprehensive text that also deals adequately with other developments that cannot be labelled as "involutions." Apart from interesting changes in the constructive systems, such as seem to be reflected, for instance, in the presence or absence of different kinds of roof-supporting elements (poles and pillars) and in the varying carpentry details of rice barns (DOMENIG 1980, 170-181), there are also signs of a recent trend to change the spatial and functional structure of the traditional house by turning both the veranda and the formerly open ground-floor into interior dwelling spaces. This latter phenomenon is shown in the book by two large-scale photographs (67 and 103), the first of which has a caption calling the building "a majestic modern *tongkonan.*" Nevertheless, the text classifies the very same structure as a mere "makeshift solution" to the difficulties created by the involutionary changes (72).

Although houses of this rare type may look somewhat odd beside the many examples of the standard types that still dominate the scene, the careful design and workmanship of the added parts indicate that, far from being mere makeshift solutions, such examples signal the local establishment of a new type of *tongkonan*, a type which is developed from one of the traditional models so as better to answer the needs

of a dwelling house in the modern sense. If this still rare type should prove to be successful in overcoming the difficulties brought about by the changing times (not only by involutory processes), then it might well gradually gain in importance and eventually even emerge as the main type in some villages. In any case, the forms that exemplify the type already today bear witness to a noteworthy kind of *evolutionary* change—a kind that is of course not without precedents in other parts of the world.

A further point I would have liked to see brought out in a discussion of change, is the fact that the “fundamental model of a Toraja house,” relative to which involution is said to have occurred, is defined by a combination of features not all of which are always present in a traditional Toraja house. Schefold’s criteria for isolating the “fundamental model” are: (1) “vertical tri-partion,” (2) “a curved and jutting roof” (a roof with *longa*), (3) “projecting gables” (in this case referring to the slanting position of the triangular gable walls), (4) “different rooms lying one behind the other,” (5) “a regular base built of beams or posts” (either log- or post-construction supporting the raised floor), (6) construction of the jutting ends (*longa*) of the roof by means of at least one “hanging spar,” and (7) walls consisting of thin boards fitted into “a framework of flat, rectangular uprights passing through horizontal beams” (69–71).

That not all types of traditional Sa’dan Toraja houses reported in this century display all these features, is evident. Among the very first houses described in ethnographic literature is a house in the eastern mountains that GRUBAUER saw when approaching Kambutu on October 1, 1911. It was a *one-room* hut standing on short (hardly 50-cm-high) posts, was *built entirely of bamboo*, and had a “far projecting roof” which nearly touched the ground. The roof was thatched with *grass* and charged with rock-debris. The interior, so low that Grubauer could not stand upright, was filled with smoke from a central hearth (1913, 194–195).

Had Grubauer also visited the southeastern part of what today is called Tana Toraja, he might have seen another type of house that also does not conform to the “fundamental model” described by Schefold. As TANDILANGI (1975, 98) has pointed out, the *tongkonan* of Batualu, Simbuang, and Uluwai in the Sangalla’ district are subject to a traditional rule that strictly forbids modification of their form. Although they are considered to be built on the traditional model, their roofs, thatched with *alang-alang* grass, *do not display a curved ridge*. Since I visited the area in 1976, I can add to this that in some settlements (e.g. Burau) these old-looking dwelling houses also display neither

longa nor outward-slanting gable walls, although the latter are found with the rice barns (DOMENIG 1980, 169 and fig. 274). My guess is that we have here a case where already many years ago the Sa'dan Toraja dwelling house developed in some important respects away from the usual model, perhaps under Buginese influence.

Other types of houses that also might not conform to the now usual model might be found in the western and southwestern regions. The architecture there seems to be little studied, but we know that the customs partly resemble those of the Mamasa Toraja, the western neighbours of the Sa'dan Toraja (NOOY-PALM 1979, 7-8 and NOOY-PALM 1988).

To draw attention to such regional differences is necessary because Schefold deliberately neglects them, justifying this by the surprising claim that chronology could serve his purpose as well. To quote him once more (66):

There are clear differences in format and in construction detail between individual houses, and the Toraja attribute these partly to regional peculiarities and partly to the status of the inhabitants' descent group. These differences will not be further examined here. Independently of this category of variation, chronological order of construction allows us to recognize the common development mentioned above.

After this remarkable statement, the author describes one of the *tongkonan* represented by Kis-Jovak's architectural drawings, a beautiful old house from Talion district. As far as the division of the interior is concerned, it is perhaps the most complex structure documented in the whole book. Not less than four rooms lie one behind the other and at changing levels, so that from the front room one steps down to the second, then up to the third, then once more up to the fourth. In spite of this complexity, expressed both in plan and section, Schefold does not classify the building as an example of a highly developed type. Quite to the contrary. Pointing to the unusual age of the house, which, judging from the family's genealogy, would have been built some 350(?) years ago, he accords it the position of the "archaic model" (91) in a three-step *chronological* series (70). In this series, the house is followed by a 75-year-old house from Kesu' district ("150 years old" on page 71 is a mistake; cf. 92-94), and this in turn is followed by a quite recently built house, also from Kesu' district (70).

This comparison, which seems to occupy a place of major impor-

tance in the book, calls for a critical comment, inasmuch as Schefold uses it for what I think is a vain attempt to bypass the difficulties connected with developmental studies.

As I have already pointed out, I do share Schefold's *intuition* regarding involutory changes in Sa'dan Toraja architecture. This does not mean, however, that I could also understand his attempt to pass this intuition off as a *conclusion* that would follow from the comparison of three selected houses of different age. While it is legitimate to use "genetic" typology for devising a *relative* chronology, in the sense of a theory, it should be considered methodologically unsound to try the reverse as well, namely, to derive a developmental view from the chronology of a few datable specimens of different types. Such datable specimens, rarely available as they are in ethno-architectural studies anyway, certainly have their value as *correctives* in developmental theories, but their chronological order alone often gives quite a distorted image of development. The three-room house of 150 years ago, shown on page 92, represents probably an older *type* than the similar four-room house that was apparently set up 350 years ago; and both might in some respects be *typologically* younger than the one-room hut seen by Grubauer in 1911!

In short, if we are seriously interested in a *developmental* diachronic view of such architectural traditions—and I personally am—then there is no scientific way to bypass the laborious, delicate, and rather unpopular, adventure of conceiving genetic typologies based on comparative studies that pay full attention to the "category of variation."

As regards the historically unknown older phases of Sa'dan Toraja architecture, Schefold stresses that the book "is not primarily concerned with the question of formal origins" (68). Nevertheless, he carefully marks off his position in this respect, even at the cost of having to resort to lengthy footnotes (73). His main view with regard to origins finds expression in his repeated reference to the idea that bronze-age Dong-son influence accounts for certain features of Sa'dan Toraja architecture.

Thus the observation that log-cabin structures were already known "as early as the Dong-son tradition" is for him sufficient reason to reject the native Toraja theory, advocated by TANGDILINTIN (1978, 3-7), according to which the now very rare *tamben* construction (piled up logs in the lower part of the house) would be older than the usual post construction (68). Believing in a Dong-son origin, Schefold considers it "perfectly plausible that the Toraja have always chosen between the two methods of construction according to individual requirements" (69). And he answers HAUSER-SCHÄUBLIN (1985, 74),⁶

who in a well-differentiating article has rather hesitatingly raised the question of whether in the history of the Sa'dan Toraja the pile-house might not have been introduced secondarily together with the water buffalo and rice cultivation, that "this does not seem a convincing argument for the greater age of the blockhouse type," for "both must be rooted in the Dong-son tradition" (73, n. 3).

Now I, too, have serious doubts about the theory of the older age of the *tamben* type of substructure in the history of Sa'dan Toraja architecture. However, I think we have here to do with a kind of question that in this case is quite beyond the reach of historical investigation. It surely cannot be decided on the grounds of the equally doubtful and admittedly *controversial* (73, n. 2) theory that assumes that Dong-son culture influenced Indonesian building techniques in prehistoric times. As I see it, the only way of arriving at scientifically relevant statements on such questions of relative age, is—I repeat—to set up genetic typologies based on comparative studies. Either we do not deal with this kind of question at all, or we have to resort to a thoughtful application of the "developmental" method which a nineteenth-century American ethnologist once called "the historic method where history is lacking" (BRINTON 1896, 12). Or, to say it in more up-to-date words, we have to make attempts at reconstructing what NEEDHAM (1970, lix) means by "structural history" and characterizes as "history of a kind, but one without dates, events, or personages."

5

A question that is likely to come up when speaking of Sa'dan Toraja architecture is whether the roof with its far-projecting gable ends is to be explained by reference to some kind of "ship symbolism." As for this, Schefold thinks (73, n. 2) that the present reviewer has underestimated the importance of the ship metaphor in connection with this particular kind of roof (DOMENIG 1980, 11).⁷ Although this is not the place for entering into a serious discussion of this controversial question, I should like, in the interest of preventing further confusion, to propose here that in future at least three things should be kept clearly apart:

- 1) the cases where a roof is thought to symbolize a ship *turned upside down*;
- 2) the cases where particularly a "roof with projecting gables" is thought to symbolize an *upright ship*, so that the jutting gable ends would represent the ship's bow and stern;
- 3) the cases where the *floor* of a house is likened to the floor of

a ship, so that the *house as a whole* becomes a “boat that stands still” (as the Sahu of Halmahera say of their clan house; cf. VISSER 1984, 206).

As for the first and third kind of metaphor, I have no doubts about their importance in architectural symbolism, for there is sufficient evidence to make us believe that these two types of “ship symbolism” have played a part in many regions of the world. It is different with the second kind of metaphor. Regarding this I have indeed expressed my doubts, particularly about its explanatory value in connection with the question of the prehistoric origins of the “roof with projecting gables” (1980, 10–11), but also regarding the available evidence from ethnography.

To comment here only on the question of the ethnographic evidence, I may say that my reading of relevant literature continues to give me the strong impression that nearly all writers who have seen the form of a ship in roofs of this quite particular kind, were foreign observers who did not write that the natives saw it that way, too. It is true, there are exceptions to this rule, but they seem to be very rare. Years ago I mentioned the case from Tanimbar Island (1980, 11), but roofs somewhat similar to those on Tanimbar are known also from Savu Island between Timor and Sumba, and there the interpretation is quite different. Although on Savu ship symbolism is clearly expressed in the lower part of the house, the parts of the projecting gables carry names which mean “neck,” “cheek,” “snout,” and “breath” (KANA 1980, 223, 228). Moreover, a painting made on the occasion of Captain Cook’s visit to Savu in 1770 shows that formerly some such roofs even had long “horns” added at the gable ends, and this made the jutting parts look like buffalo heads growing out of the roof (Fox 1977, fig. on p. 116).

As for the Sa’dan Toraja, we find signs of a similar association of the *longa* with heads growing out of the roof (in this case either buffalo heads or bird heads, cf. DOMENIG 1980, 179, 182), but I still wait for someone to record a trustworthy local tradition that would clearly associate the two *longa* of the roof also with the bow and stern of a ship. The book under review offers nothing of the kind. True, according to Nooy-Palm, “It is said that the shape of a Toraja house or barn, with its swept up roof ends, represents the shape of the proas of the ancestors from Pongko” (34). This seems to suggest that the ship metaphor indeed refers here to the roof’s curved ridge and projecting ends. However, the two parallel verses from a ritual chant that are added for evidence (34–35) do not bear this out. The lines, worth quoting here,

are from the *Passomba Tedong* ("Consecration Invocation for the Buffalo"), a text with a rather complicated history, for it was recorded from oral tradition, translated into Dutch by van der Veen, and finally published in a rather free English translation based on the Dutch version (VAN DER VEEN 1965, 22-23):

*Kurre sumanga'na te alang dibando rara',
saba' parajanna te landa' siajoka.*

Hail to these granaries, the ends of their side and front beams curving splendidly, like a prau,
abundant be the blessing upon these storehouses, placed beside each other.

What the English version of these lines actually suggests is that the curved projecting ends of beams (not of the roof!) remind one of the shape of a ship. And since only the beams that carry the walls at the level of the floor are curved, we are led to assume that these are meant.

The confusion regarding what is actually compared to a ship—the curved ridge of the roof, or the curved ends of beams at floor level—is symptomatic. We have here, I think, a typical example showing how preconceived opinions may inadvertently influence what we say about symbolism, even if it regards a people we know quite well. In this particular case, the worst is, however, still to come.

For if we also take the trouble to consult the native words, as they were noted down from oral tradition, we find in the above-quoted passage no Toraja word at all that might mean ship! What we find, instead, is the word *rara'*, which means a "neck chain, worn by women" (VAN DER VEEN 1965, 18). So the metaphor actually compares the four wall-supporting beams (if these are indeed meant) to a woman's neck chain, while the "prau" of the English version is nothing but the translator's interpolation. An added footnote makes at least an attempt at justifying this interpolation. It says that "the Toraja are well aware of the similarity between the up-curving ends of the longitudinal and cross beams of the walls of the rice granary and the upcurving ends of a prau" (VAN DER VEEN 1965, 23). But note that here, too, the reference is exclusively to the beams at floor level, not to the roof.

Now the comparison of these beams at floor-level with elements of a proa is a well-known type of imagery, as pointed out long ago by KRÄMER (1927, 9). This type, however, belongs in the third category listed above, that is, in the category of traditions that compare *the house from floor level up* to an upright "ship at rest." Also the reverse image, which likens the ship to a moving house, belongs of course in this third

category, and of this the book under review does indeed give us a good example. As Nooy-Palm writes (34), the Sa'dan Toraja say of the mythic ancestor Manurun diLangi' that he floated down from Heaven to the island of Pongko' in a dwelling called *Banua di'Toke*, which may mean "floating house."

6

To sum up, this book about the architecture of the Sa'dan Toraja offers both a beautiful and rich pictorial documentation and a number of informative text sections. For these contributions it can be warmly recommended to all who take an interest in vernacular architecture and in the relationships that may exist between built forms, world views, and religious rites. As a positive point we should also note that the diachronic aspect is not altogether neglected, as in so many otherwise interesting recent studies by social anthropologists who view Indonesian houses synchronically, as systems of hidden order based on symbolic classification (e.g. CUNNINGHAM 1964, BARNES 1974, 65-77, HICKS 1976, 56-66, KANA 1980, and FORTH 1981, 23-57). True, the way the problems of diachrony are tackled in the book we have reviewed here is far from convincing. But as a really adequate method for this particular kind of inquiry has yet to be developed, the attempts made might have a fruitful effect by provoking fresh discussion of a long-neglected problem of methodology.

To return, finally, once more to the four authors' manner of collaboration, a point mentioned in the beginning of this review, it seems to me that such teamwork could develop into something still more convincing if in future some anthropologists would get more seriously engaged in architecture and some architects in anthropology, so that then the specialists from both sides would be able to make *similar* kinds of contributions to a field of study lying *between* the two traditional disciplines. There are already a number of promising signs of new developments tending in that direction.⁸ The book here discussed is one of them, even though its presentation creates the (perhaps wrong) impression that in this case "expertise in form" and "expertise in content" were still understood to be characteristic of different disciplines, rather than being combined in each researcher, whatever the discipline.

NOTES

1. The authors usually write simply Toraja, instead of Sa'dan Toraja; this at times leads to confusion. Thus we read, for instance, that in 1902 the Sarasin cousins

crossed "the Toraja lands" but did not penetrate into "Tana Toraja proper" (p. 15). However, while Tana Toraja (literally, "Toraja-Land") is the name of the administrative unit established in the traditional dwelling area of the Sa'dan Toraja (anthropologically, a sub-group of the South Toraja), in 1902 the Sarasins crossed the lands of the West Toraja, lying much more to the north. In 1895 (not in 1902!) they also set out to cross what today is Tana Toraja, but failed because hostile natives forced them to return after they reached Kalosi, not far from the southern boundary (Sarasin 1905, II, 167-187).

2. This Japanese study contains mainly the following materials, which may be described here for the convenience of researchers who might intend to do fieldwork among the Sa'dan Toraja: (1) the plans of seven settlements (Palawa, Kete Kesu', Siguntu, Deri 1, Deri 2, Deri 3, Bori), each accompanied by a small-scale sketch showing the situation in a wider environment; (2) more detailed plans and cross-sections for three of these settlements (Palawa, Kete Kesu', and Siguntu), presented on folding sheets big enough to show also the layout and elevation of each individual building in some detail; (3) architectural drawings of nine houses and twelve rice barns from Palawa, each shown in a front and side view; (4) an extensive documentation of one house and one rice barn from Lemo(?), including for each building a number of plans, sections, and elevations, as well as a drawing giving a three-dimensional view of the constructive system. Apart from all these scale-drawings, the study includes also: (5) tables identifying for most houses in the first-mentioned seven settlements the owner's name, the size and composition of the family, and the number of rice barns that belong to it, and (6) comparative tables for Palawa, Kete Kesu' and Siguntu, indicating the varying size and slightly differing orientation of the buildings and other variables in terms of measured values. Finally there are two schemata on questions of evolution, one (7) regarding the room partitions of the house, the other (8) the construction of the house as a whole. Unfortunately, the low-cost printing of this research paper, good for texts and line drawings, makes it often impossible to make out the details of the approximately fifty additional photographs.

3. See the much better plans of Palawa in the study of CHATANI et al. 1981, 9, 29, 31.

4. See the general map of South Sulawesi in *Archipel* 10, 1975, and the hydrographic map of Tana Toraja in DOMENIG 1980, fig. 270. The latter is based on a 1:318,000 map of the Tana Toraja Regency, acquired in 1976.

5. Nooy-Palm rightly says that north is associated with the sources of the life-giving waters of the Sa'dan river, south with a region in Duri where Puya, the Land of the Souls, is said to be situated between Kalosi and Enrekang (37). However, she does not make it clear that Kalosi—and therefore Puya, too—is situated in the valley of the Mata Allo, not in that of the Sa'dan. Entirely misleading in this respect is her earlier monograph, where she locates Duri "on the lower part of the upper course of the Sa'dan River" (NOOY-PALM 1979, 7) and Puya "to the *southwest* of Tana Toraja, *further down the Sa'dan River*, somewhere between Kalosi and Enrekang" (1979, 112, my italics). From this we must assume that the author either is mistaken with regard to the position of Kalosi, and thus of Puya, or deliberately speaks here of the Sa'dan River in a very vague sense, using the name for the whole river system, including all its tributaries. In reality, Kalosi is (and Puya is imagined to be) in the valley of the Mata Allo, separated from that of the Sa'dan by a chain of mountains. It still marks the usual access route from the south (see PELRAS 1975, 31-32).

6. Hauser-Schäublin's paper includes architectural drawings of four houses with *tamben* construction in the lower part. One of these (fig. 1 in her article) is identical

with one of the two *banua tamben* that the book being reviewed here presents in (better) drawings by Kis-Jovak (76, fig. 13). Taken together, the two studies thus give details of five examples of this rare kind.

7. See the review in *Asian Folklore Studies* 1983, 297-299.

8. See, for instance, HAUSER-SCHÄUBLIN 1989 and WATERSON 1990, to mention only two of the most recent and highly interesting studies by anthropologists seriously involved in the subject of architecture.

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