

# **TORAJAN FEASTING IN SOUTH SULAWESI**

## **2000 PRELIMINARY REPORT\***

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study is to examine the ways in which traditional and contemporary Torajan feasting can be considered adaptive from a cultural ecological perspective. By “adaptive”, I mean the practical benefits that hosts and supporters of feasts hope to gain from their expenditures of time, effort, and resources. Cultural ecology principles maintain that when large amounts of time, effort, and resources are used in specific types of behavior that persist over time and are widespread, then these types of behavior should be adaptive and should have practical consequences for reproduction and/or survival.

In mainland and island Southeast Asia in general, elaborate feasting is widespread, as it is throughout most of the traditional world. It also probably has great time depth, and it consumes great amounts of surplus food, time, and effort. Therefore it should be adaptive. Torajan feasting is remarkable in that it probably surpasses most other traditional feasting in the consumption of surpluses. For example, the largest recent Torajan funeral involved the sacrifice of over 300 buffalo (more than 50 of which were a special breed--*Tedong Saleko*--worth about 5-6 times an ordinary buffalo), over 1,000 large pigs, and the construction of 200 temporary apartments (taking over a year to construct) for many thousands of guests. The main ceremony lasted over a week, with 4-5 days at the house and 2 days on route. As I have argued elsewhere, from an ecological point of view, it is not the symbolism or the emic

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\* Data in this report are largely derived from Agusthinus Galugu and 10 other informants.

purpose of such feasts that are important, but the people who are involved, the debts created, and the display of success used to attract labor, supporters, marriage alliances, power brokers, or others into relationships with practical benefits. The actual pretext of the feasts (for marriages, funerals, houses, or other purposes) are largely irrelevant. However these emic purposes and the symbols associated with them are often critical for the self-identity of ethnic groups. Such considerations are *not* my focus here.

In addition, when asked why such large feasts are given, the standard emic and anthropological reply is to increase “status” or “respect.” From an ecological perspective this must be viewed as a very superficial explanation similar to the celebration of Christ’s birthday as a Western explanation for why Christmas is celebrated. “Status” by itself has little if any power as a practical ecological benefit. As generally used, it only has value as a psychological gratification. To be useful in ecological terms, it must be viewed as a euphemism for other tangible practical benefits. Determining what those benefits are is one of the most challenging tasks of this kind of study because they are generally concealed by the benefactors with a thick blanket of more neutral ideological concepts (such as “respect” or “status”) and are often among the most covert relationships of power and economics in a society.

It is often in the elite members’ interests to keep the real sources of economic and political power well camouflaged in most traditional societies, usually using rituals. However, the systematic lavish consumption of surpluses, such as the example just noted, simply cannot be accounted for in ideological terms alone. In the traditional Torajan households interviewed in this study (and previous ones), there is a systematic relationship between feasting frequency and size on one hand, and the level of household or lineage surpluses on the other. Poor families do not engage in much feasting, rich ones do.

## **CONTEXTS**

In order to determine what practical benefits may be derived from the vast resources and efforts expended in Torajan feasts, it is necessary to establish some of the basic ecological and economic characteristics of Torajan society. Torajans probably arrived in Sulawesi around 3,500 years ago as a part of a general Austronesian expansion in Southeast Asia (Sandarupa 1998; Ames 1998:54). They are Malay speakers and presently occupy the calcareous and andesitic mountains in the northern part of South Sulawesi. Settlements are generally above 750 m. asl and concentrate in the broad valleys or on mountain slopes suitable for wet rice agriculture. Even including modern urban centers, the current population density varies between 35 and 200 people per square km. indicating high productivity of paddy fields, but also reflecting the large proportion of land area that is minimally productive. Traditionally, the people who owned rice paddies controlled the most concentrated and highest yielding sources of food and trade surpluses in the region. However, there have been some dramatic changes in the recent past of the region. We do not know when wet (or dry) rice agriculture was introduced into the area (see Glover in Van de Velde 1984), or what varieties of rice may have been used, or what other varieties may have subsequently come into the region. As in most of Southeast Asia, glutinous rice (*pare pulu*) is the traditional variety of rice used in many rituals and may be the original variety grown. However, after 1970, traditional varieties of rice were largely replaced by hybrid varieties (*pare resa*) introduced by a German agricultural team. This new rice variety radically altered the Torajan economy since it was far more productive. Traditional varieties of paddy rice (*pare kutu*) took a long time to mature (one harvest per year) and were subject to a number of natural adverse factors including: prolonged dry seasons, insects, caterpillars, “army worms” and other worms that eat rice leaves or buds, rodents, birds, cold weather, wind, storms, and buffalo that entered the paddy fields. Harvests were relatively unpredictable, with crop failures occurring every year somewhere in the area. Individual farmers could expect poor crop yields in one year out of four or five, according to Victor Patula’ (a retired agricultural engineer). He also noted that there had been a devastating drought after the first world war and during the Japanese occupation (S.S.). Many people were forced to forage in the forests

for wild taro (*sicapa*) requiring removal of toxins, for palm hearts, and leafy greens (*ambolong*) such as “elephant ears.” According to Stanislaus Sandarupa, there is even a traditional term for periods of starvation, *ra’ba biang* (fallen seeds), and many oral accounts of people eating buffalo dung (corroborated by A. Galugu). Their impression is that every 50-100 years severe droughts would cause starvation deaths of hundreds or even thousands of people, and that many people would sell themselves into slavery in order to obtain enough food to eat.

Disease was also problematic with high infant mortality rates, and at least one epidemic after World War II that was supposed to have resulted in 25% mortality in some areas, especially among the young. Under these conditions, rice was quite valuable and only eaten by the rich on a regular basis (Ames 1998:76). The poor generally only obtained enough rice (by growing it or working at harvest time for it) for about three months of the year and ate manioc, maize, taro, or sweet potatoes and vegetables the rest of the time (V.P.). Meat was primarily consumed by all classes only at feasts. The owners of major paddy fields became rich because of the high value of rice and the surpluses that they could produce in normal years, especially in contrast to areas outside the central valley where paddy fields were small and even more prone to fluctuations and depredations of insects, birds and animals. Rice was and still is clearly a prestige food together with domestic animal meat and fat. It is important to recognize the fundamental importance of paddy rice in the Torajan economic system. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, paddy fields were owned and inherited by Tongkonans. This fits a more general ethnological pattern of private ownership over any very productive valued resource requiring significant labor investment to develop (Hayden 1994:229-30). Coffee and cacao orchards on hillsides are also privately owned, but unimproved forests and swidden areas are not. This is essentially the same land tenure system used by Southeast Asian hill tribes, but in the Torajan case, the paddy component is greatly expanded and dominates the economy. Some swidden farming is carried out in the region, but it is relatively limited.

Rich families also grew substantial amounts of manioc, sweet potatoes, maize, and taro. In years when rice harvests were good, many of these crops appear to have been largely used to feed pigs. In years when the rice crop failed, they could be used to feed the family. Coffee, too, has been an important cash crop for at least 200 years, while cacao is a more recently introduced cash crop (c. 1980).

Thus, in summary, the Torajan region was a relatively poor agricultural region except for the broad valley bottoms and some mountain slopes especially suited for wet rice agriculture. It is interesting that some of the higher mountain ridges and slopes appear to have been among the earliest tongkonan sites, going back about 10-20 generations according to local genealogies. In some cases, such as the “royal” puang lineages of the Sa’dan district, these high mountain locations may have been used primarily to enhance defense and rulership status by dint of remote locations and difficult access.

Some authors think that traditionally there was not enough land or produce to feed the entire Torajan population (Andaya 1981; in Ames 1998:57) however, it was probably the unequal distribution of land that created food shortages. Harvests fluctuated dramatically from year to year, although most years were good, and rice surpluses were a major source of wealth for the rich who had scores or hundreds of hectares of paddy. Health problems also seem to have had a significant debilitating effect on labor before 1980.

Also, as is true for many grain crops, the production of surpluses was generally constrained by labor availability during the planting and especially the harvest seasons. With modest land holdings these bottlenecks in production were usually dealt with by work exchanges between families (*sisaro*) or by compensated work. With large land holdings, owners would be forced to find additional labor. People without enough productive land to provide food for the entire year came to work for the rich. In work exchanges, workers were paid by giving them the main meal of the day (plus a commitment to repay a day’s labor), except during the harvest when workers were given 10-16% of the rice they harvested. In the past, slaves were presumably also used by the rich for much of the work in the paddies and this was presumably one of the advantages of being able to call upon and command slaves, most of

whom otherwise seem to have been left to their own devices. Having enough labor to plant and harvest rice from large paddy holdings clearly was contingent upon the existence of a large segment of the population that could not produce enough food for their own needs, or upon the existence of slaves. This is demonstrated by the fact that with increased availability of rice and cash over the last 20 years, it has become increasingly difficult to hire laborers or even to rent out paddy plots. We can expect that in the past, large landholders manipulated the social and political system to generate labor pools that needed employment in order to survive.

Agusthinus Galugu estimated that a family of 5 would require about one hectare of paddy for its subsistence and social needs (gifts, guests, and ceremonies). This area should produce about 3-4,000 bundles of traditional rice (*pare kutu'*), i.e. about 20 quintal sacks. Another informant stated that 2,000 bundles unhusked (c. 900 kg) was enough for family subsistence needs. In Simbuang, 100 bundles (probably "di pongo" bundles of 5) were reported to last only two months, indicating a desired yearly consumption of about 3,000 regular bundles. Another estimate indicated that an average family would consume about 2-3 liters of husked rice per day (S.S.), while about 5 bundles equals one liter. Men in the family would normally spend about a month repairing the family paddy walls, and would normally enlist the help of 20-30 people (men and women) for planting (lasting at least a week) and about twice as many people (including children) for harvesting over a two day period. Rich people owned 5-10 or more hectares of paddy, and reportedly had no difficulty finding workers during peak agricultural periods. People would simply show up as soon as they saw the harvest or planting beginning and offer to work. I will deal with the socio-political implications of these conditions in the next section.

Developments in the last 20 years have dramatically altered the traditional economic foundation just described. Around 1970, a new rice variety was introduced which had a much shorter growing season, and which, with the aid of fertilizers, could yield two to three harvests per year. In addition, the use of pesticides with the improved varieties greatly reduced losses and fluctuations in harvest. Improved health services reduced the uncertainty of labor availability in family units, while

mechanization made it possible to prepare larger tracts. On the other hand, improved economic conditions and available wage labor have created labor bottlenecks that cannot readily be dealt with by traditional recruitment techniques.

One of the immediate consequences of these changes has been a population increase and a dramatic inflation in the outward signs of “status” and success displays. Agusthinus Galugu estimated that the largest traditional funerals would have involved the sacrifice of around 40-60 buffalo (compared to the current record of over 300 buffalo). The *saroan*, the main supra-lineage socio-political unit, has also fractionated and lost many of its original functions. Christian conversion, begun under the Dutch after 1908, has proceeded at an accelerating pace due to the costs of the traditional ritual system, the new options that the industrial economy has made available, and the disadvantaged position of non-nobles in the traditional system. Christianity, in turn, has actively promoted the abandonment of most traditional animist rituals, beliefs, and the socioeconomic system on which they were predicated.

## **TRADITIONAL SOCIOPOLITICAL ADAPTATIONS**

There are eight basic sociopolitical units that can be usefully examined from an ecological perspective: 1) the nuclear family, 2) the corporate tongkonan, 3) the *tondok* (household cluster), 4) the *saroan*, 5) the *lembang* (township), 6) the *kampung* (district), and 7) the Torajan classes. Other higher level federations of communities are mentioned by Ames (1998:84) but were only temporary alliances or of significance more for political rather than social or feasting reasons. I will therefore not deal with these higher level organizations.

1) **The Nuclear Family**. The nuclear family is a near universal social unit in human cultures and its basic form is certainly amenable to ecological types of explanations, especially those that focus on advantages of complementary subsistence strategies and other roles (e.g., defense) used by men and women; the advantages of cooperation in raising slow maturing infants who also require training; and the survival value of strong emotional kinship ties between parents and offspring, especially those living

in different communities. Given previous work on this topic, it is unnecessary to dwell further on it here. It is sufficient to point out that all the very old traditional tongkonan structures are extremely small (c. 4x8 m), suitable only for single nuclear families, although small extended families could conceivably reside in them (Figs. ). Today, with industrial materials and increased economic power, much larger houses have been built, although they are still generally used by single nuclear families.

2) **The Tongkonan.** Strictly speaking, the tongkonan refers to a traditional corporate socioeconomic unit and its associated structure. However, these structures differ from what are referred to today as “private houses” in that private houses are built and owned by individual families, whereas tongkonan structures are corporately owned and maintained by some subset of the original builder’s descendants. Traditionally, private houses were much simpler and less expensive than the elaborate tongkonan. There are a number of indications that tongkonans were originally *only* established by the most wealthy and powerful nobles. Stanislaus Sandarupa notes that early oral accounts refer only to the tongkonans of leading governing nobles and their “ministers”--only 4 tongkonans in Sangalla. Early accounts of marriages also only refer to marriages between tongkonans. Similarly, in Sa’dan and Balusu the “first” tongkonans in these districts were all founded by “royal” families, only some 10-20 generations ago. Most later tongkonans resulted from the fission of these families and some sons taking up new residences elsewhere (in these cases, it appears that the traditional pattern was for only one tongkonan to be built in the center of a local household cluster, or tondok). This same pattern still exists in Simbuang (Kanon) where only one functioning tongkonan (of an original 2) was present in a community of 30 households and where only one *ambe tondok* appears to have existed at a time.

The *ambe tondoks* in Simbuang served as organizers of all important events beyond the household level, whether for major irrigation projects, ritual events (in the absence of priests), funerals, village justice and penalties for transgressing traditional customs, or inter-village alliances and relations (probably including defense).

In theoretical terms, it is very important that the Simbuang *ambe tondoks* had almost absolute power in deciding and imposing fines or penalties for transgressions or misbehavior (see Hayden In press--Millennium volume). As in many other transegalitarian societies, such behavior was portrayed by the *ambe tondok* and his supporters as endangering the spiritual integrity (and hence, the material well being) of the entire community. If a person should fail to pay a penalty imposed by the *ambe tondok*, they would traditionally have to leave the village.

It may be that these original tongkonans were the only ones to own or develop paddy rice fields (Beatrix Buló stated that tongkonans were established first and *then* developed paddy fields), or there may not have originally been a close relationship between tongkonans and ownership of paddy fields (the notion that original political power and tongkonan development was based almost entirely on swidden agriculture and that wet rice agriculture was only introduced some 10-20 generations ago--as in the Vietnam highlands--is an interesting hypothesis to be examined. This would indicate a more transegalitarian social organization in the Torajan area until relatively recent times).

The situation appears to have changed dramatically in the last century or two, with tongkonans proliferating (perhaps as wet rice field systems expanded), to the point where *everyone* now belongs to a tongkonan, even poor commoners or slaves (S. Sandarupa). In contemporary usage "tongkonan" has become synonymous with any corporate (family) land-holding social unit.

Today, tongkonan structures are usually built when a group of siblings (perhaps with parental aid) decide that they have sufficient resources for the undertaking (perhaps in imitation of the original noble tongkonans), or when they disagree over corporate matters. Traditionally, tongkonans may have corporately held all productive land and resources (Ames 1998:67) including swidden and forest areas (S. Sandarupa), and conversely tongkonans could only be built if a lineage owned enough resources (today, mainly paddy fields). Use of tongkonan lands was decided by those most active in the construction of the tongkonan house and in its activities (and presumably by one's contribution to funerals of those using tongkonan lands). There is some confusion concerning land and produce rights

of tongkonan members. On one hand, Stanislaus Sandarupa suggested that there was no individual or family ownership of land or produce within the tongkonan. On the other hand, he (1998) and other informants clearly state that paddy land was inherited. Perhaps the most cogent approach is to consider tongkonan lands as “owned” on a usufruct basis, and reverting to the full tongkonan only when a person ceased their support of tongkonan activities or had no immediate heirs. This is perhaps why contributions to funerals (as demonstrations of involvement in tongkonan activities) was used in large part to determine the “inheritance” of land. How produce from these lands could have been considered as corporate goods to be managed and disbursed is more problematical. Commoners sometimes owned small paddy fields (less than one hectare) and built simple versions of the elite tongkonans.

Once inaugurated via a special feast, the value of elite tongkonan structures can be further enhanced by the owners hosting funeral ceremonies and having house ceremonies of various levels of status and cost depending on their class and wealth. While there is usually one titular leader (“He-who-stands-in-the-middle” before family members--often the *toparengue*, or *ambe tondok* for the highest class, and the eldest lineage member for other classes--*to ma kaka* for lower nobles, *tomatua* for commoners) all the descendants of the founding families are theoretically corporate owners as well but often reside outside the household cluster (discussed next), the neighborhood or even the village area. Today, even the leader of the tongkonan may reside outside the village area, especially if he is rich, leaving the tongkonan essentially uninhabited. However, it is my impression that families living together as household clusters usually constitute the most active and most influential core corporate members of the ancestral tongkonans (except for the most successful members who have acquired lucrative positions in the regional or national economies but still make substantial contributions to their tongkonans). Tongkonan administrative leadership and especially the title of *ambe tondok* are generally passed on from father to eldest son, but if the eldest son is not suited for the position, or does not want the position, another son or lineage member may be chosen (Ames 1998:85). Some of the older tongkonan structures that I saw were reputed to be 4-500 years old, and still maintained by corporate

owners although structural elements were periodically replaced, or entirely new structures built perhaps every 50-100+ years. Ames (1998:218) reports one tongkonan over 1,000 years old (i.e., social unit maintaining a house site), but this is difficult to validate.

The role of the *ambe tondok* (“father of the tondok”) is critical for understanding Torajan society and politics (see p. 39). Before the Dutch, there may have been only 1-2 *ambe tondoks* in each *tondok*. Today, within the corporate tongkonans of upper nobility, he is as indicated in old oral histories and in Simbuang responsible:

- 1) for organizing funeral and other ceremonial feasts,
- 2) for maintaining the physical structure of the tongkonan,
- 3) for inviting successful distant descendants of the founding lineage to become active participants of the tongkonan,
- 4) for settling disputes between members (or within kindred), and
- 5) for organizing members as a corporate unit for any other undertakings of mutual benefit, whether political, or economic, or perhaps military (in the past).

The differences in the roles of the *ambe tondok* and the person that “stands-in-the-middle” for the tongkonan need clarifying. In the tongkonans of lower nobles, if there are members with particularly good abilities in settling disputes or organizing labor (usually associated with wealth), they also are given the title of *ambe tondok*. It should be stressed that the *ambe tondok* role is exclusively an institution of the nobility, established for the political and social interests of the nobility.

Although the corporate tongkonan existed, and exists among the common or slave classes, the advantages associated with them in these classes (aside from access to land) are not as clear cut, unless they served a ranking function within those classes or a means of transcending one’s class. Certainly, the position of *ambe tondok* is exclusively reserved for the people of the noble class. The tongkonan is primarily a lineage institution serving to promote the success and interests of its active members.

Success is physically displayed in tongkonan ornamentation and rituals. It is important to realize that membership in (co-ownership of) a tongkonan entails significant expenditures of wealth beyond the initial construction since members will be called upon to contribute to all the ceremonial feasts of the corporate group. In this, and many other respects, tongkonans may have functioned very much like the Neolithic megalithic tombs in Europe. Benefits to tongkonan members are both economic and political in nature, at least for the noble classes, since membership in a tongkonan automatically makes an individual a member of the saroan for the area which is the principal institution for organizing labor between classes in some areas (see below). Thus, individual tongkonans also seek to attract more distant wealthy and influential individuals to its active membership, while individuals seek to become active in politically powerful, successful tongkonans that are part of saroans with good labor forces and powerful administrators. However, not all noble tongkonans were powerful or successful or prosperous. Tongkonans also sometimes create corporate graves (*liang pa* or *erong*) for members and take care of funerals, burying members in as lavish a fashion as possible. Individual families or lineages can do the same for their members if they have the resources.

Ideally, a noble family tries to actively participate in at least four tongkonans (e.g., 2 of his parents and 2 from his grandparents). However, rich nobles belong to 10-16 or more, while poor nobles who cannot make many contributions may be co-owners in only one or two tongkonans. Families that do not fulfill their economic contributions to corporate tongkonan activities are forgotten and omitted from the oral genealogical accounts given at each important tongkonan ceremony. They can be asked to leave and become outcasts of the lineage and kindred as well. The degree of one's participation in tongkonan activities determines to a large degree the influence one has in the decisions of the tongkonan.

To complicate matters further, one's rank within different tongkonans generally varies. It is possible to be the *ambe tondok* (and therefore of the highest noble class) in one tongkonan, but only a distant relation to the founding ancestor in another tongkonan in which case one would be considered of

lower nobility status (or almost a commoner) in that tongkonan. In all cases, some lineage link must exist in order to become a corporate member or “owner”.

From an ecological point of view, corporate tongkonans could provide many benefits, at least to the nobles. But to understand these fully, it is necessary to situate the tongkonans in the broader social, economic, and political context which will unfold in the next sections.

**3) Tondok: The Household Cluster.** There is great regional variation in the basic Torajan settlement unit, the “tondok.” The tondok is, moreover, a flexible term, somewhat like “home.” It can refer to a wide range of settlement units from a household cluster, to district, to region, to the nation. I will use it in its most limited sense. The term “sambanua” may also refer to this minimal tondok (check).

In much of northern Toraja, the tondok takes the form of household clusters, most prominently represented by a group of related tongkonans in close proximity to each other often derived from an original tongkonan in the cluster. Residents of the household cluster seem to be the most active owners of the ancestral tongkonan and each others’ tongkonans. They therefore appear to act as a political, social, and economic unit. Typically there are 3-10 tongkonans in a neat row facing granaries, together with a lesser number of adjacent or attached “private houses” of lineage families unable to inherit or afford founding their own tongkonans. In the past, and still in some cases today, some slave households were situated behind noble tongkonans and private houses (e.g., Rantewai). There were two important variations in this pattern. First, commoners and slaves also appear to have lived in household clusters (tondoks?), but separate for the most part from tongkonan tondoks (anywhere from tens of meters to over a kilometer from the noble tondoks). Little information on these pre-Dutch tondoks is recorded, although some of them have built traditional style tongkonan structures in the last few decades (contra instructions from local noble administrators--Beatrix Bula).

The other northern variation is represented by “royal” or chiefly tondoks. All of the examples observed in Sa’dan and Balusu conform to the basic pattern of a single tongkonan founded by a *puang*

(chief with royal heritage), associated with a limited number of private houses of closely related families (about 2-4), facing 5-11 granaries (*alangs*) with a combined capacity of 50,000 to over 100,000 bundles of rice (20,000 liters of husked rice). A number (perhaps 2-4) of slave houses also formed part of the cluster. Since sons had to establish their own tongkonans when they married (often in new locations) the seat of chiefly political power tended to move every generation (with the youngest son remaining in the ancestral tongkonan).

A third variation may be represented by small defensive tondoks such as *Ala'* (near Erong Lombok), although more data is required on the composition of these settlements.

In the south, in Simbuang and in Mamasa, the smallest settlement unit, tondok, was a more nucleated community of 20-50 households. The larger size and compactness of these settlements may have been due to greater concerns for defense, for many were palisaded in Simbuang.

All the household heads interviewed said they had been born into the household cluster where they now reside. Their wives were typically born within 2-4 km of those same clusters. As described, the tondok settlement pattern appears to be precolonial since many tondoks have tongkonans dating back several hundred years.

It is unusual to find household clusters with mixed classes of residents in the north. Other classes usually inhabit neighboring clusters. In Mamasa, Simbuang, and the south, they appear to be much more mixed together within the nucleated villages or lack class distinctions entirely as in Simbuang. In all cases, slave residences were located behind the tongkonans of their masters, or were spatially segregated to varying degrees from the residences of the other classes, and they also had separate graveyards.

The practical advantage of belonging to a household cluster are largely the same as membership in a tongkonan, probably with more emphasis placed daily on mutual help in economic activities (especially field work, borrowing, and in the past, defense), social events, and political support (especially in sarowan affairs), as well as being the main stewards of all tongkonan affairs for those who belonged to important tongkonans.

**The Dusun.** The dusun (probably the same as the *tepo padong* [one quarter] village divisions described by Nooy-Palm 1979:95) was a local territorial organization involving a number of elite tongkonans in the same neighborhood and probably a number of household clusters (it is unclear to what extent the *dusun* may have coincided with the tondok household clusters--including affiliated common or slave clusters,-- or the saroan). In areas like Simbuang, with more nucleated tondoks containing 30-40 households, the tondok is more clearly the equivalent of the contemporary *dusun*. Elsewhere the *dusun* may have been entirely the creation of the Dutch administration with no traditional equivalent. Today, the *dusun* populations range from about 50 to 200. In former times, there was a political head of the *dusun* (*anak to makaka*) who was chosen by all of the *ambe tondok* of the *dusun*. Today, there is still an administrative head (the *Kepala dusun*), but he is elected by the village (the *Kepala desa*), and the village administration seems to have taken over most of the former functions of the *Kepala dusun*.

4) **The Saroan.** The saroan in its present form does not appear to be present everywhere (it is lacking in Mamasa and southern Toraja and may not be present in the poorer areas with weakly nucleated settlements). I was told that in former (pre-Dutch) times, the saroan corresponded to what are today township (*dusun*) area political divisions. Nooy-Palm also clearly describes the saroan today as a residential subdivision of the township wards (*dusuns?*). Prior to the Dutch occupation, for instance, the *desa* of Sa'dan had 7 saroans. The saroan may therefore correspond to the household cluster today or perhaps to the *dusun* village divisions just discussed. In Simbuang, the proto-saroans (*sisaro*) clearly consist of entire tondok hamlets of about 30 households. The nature and functions of the saroan is somewhat unclear in the extant literature. It appears to be primarily a means of organizing labor for certain kinds of events on a local scale. Theoretically, everyone (all households) residing in a certain area belonged to a named saroan with 5-10 *toparengé*'s each representing a high noble tongkonan. Not all high nobles in a region became *toparengé*'s in the saroan; they were chosen for abilities by the *ambe tondoks* of the region (Nooy-Palm 1979:97, 103,297). She also states that the head of a tongkonan was

also the head of the saroan (not completely accurate). Decisions were made by higher ranking members the *toparengé* as to how to organize work projects and who would distribute awards for work completed. Ames (1998:94) describes the saroan as a mutual aid group of (ideally) related individuals (again, not completely accurate). In fact, as described to me, there were at least 2 levels of office: the higher level consisted of *toparengé's* from the high noble class (charged with general administration). The second level consisted of the *pa'dampí* (an assistant to the *toparengé*), and the *to makaka* who was responsible for undertaking all the actual arranging and for formulating initial plans for events (subsequent to their approval by the *toparengé*). Each tongkonan in a saroan sent a *toparengé*, a *pa'dampí*, and a *to makaka* to the saroan and were responsible for marshaling labor from their tongkonans (and affiliated slave or common households) for saroan projects. While the *toparengé* were from the high noble class, the *pa'dampí* and *to makaka* were from the lower noble class and acted essentially as crew chiefs for workers. The *to makaka's* were also responsible for meat distribution at funerals--including decisions about how many animals were to be given to each saroan. *Toparengé's* had the final say in all matters, and all *toparengé's* in a saroan theoretically have an equal voice in decision making. There are no formal saroan leaders. In reality, some *toparengé* are more forceful and represent more powerful tongkonans, so that the situation is probably more comparable to Thai hill tribe councils of elders as described by Clarke (1998), especially in dispute resolutions to which saroan leaders are often appealed to resolve. Nooy-Palm (1979:297) affirms a residential basis for membership (although there is one important exception discussed below), even maintaining that membership (individual or household) was obligatory and that fines would be assessed for those not participating. Today, I was told that membership by commoners was required for a proper burial, and that hypothetically a family who did not participate in saroan activities might be asked to pay a fine or even to leave the tondok--and certainly no one would help them--but that such occurrences simply never happen (J. Pabisa). Nooy-Palm also describes the deference of lower class members to upper class members in traditional saroans.

The main role of the saroan today is to organize funerals. Nooy-Palm records many more agricultural functions of saroans before 1980. According to her, and Johanis Pabisa, a saroan leader, they were primarily agricultural work exchange groups that helped members create and maintain irrigation and paddy fields, sow and harvest crops, build houses, organize large feasts or ceremonies, settle disputes, or undertake other projects (possibly like building village defenses). The name “saroan” is in fact derived from the term “sisaro” referring to work exchange relationships (J. Pabisa). Sizes ranged from 3-8 members at the small end to 30-40 members for the largest saroan. Johanis Pabisa stated that 20 families made a small saroan and 100 families made a large saroan prior to the Dutch occupation. Agusthinus said that before 1970, saroan membership ranged from 400 to over 1,000, indicating a very different kind of organizational structure. Thus, the nature of the traditional saroan is still somewhat problematical.

Since elite funerals were very large, they probably required assistance from populations much larger than those available in a single tondok or even township, especially for such major projects as constructing the temporary housing for guests. Therefore, saroans from other localities were and are invited to help, in which close relatives of nobles are important members. However, not all members of guest saroans were obligated to participate, only the families related to the tongkonan making the request (plus as many other families as they could get to support the invited noble families--it is not clear what obligations commoner families has to nobles for support). Slaves of noble families would automatically support noble commitments for assistance. If one saroan invited another to help in a funeral or other project, it was expected that the original host saroan would reciprocate with assistance to guest saroans in the future, thus creating a regional alliance network. Similarly, while there might be no specific obligation to give guest saroans specified amounts of animals for their assistance, to give no recompense or gift for help would undoubtedly have been viewed as insulting, and some gifts were normal. When the original host reciprocated with help to the guest saroan, equivalent gifts, or more, would be expected to be received. The highly complex nature of elite funerals should be emphasized.

The noble funerals typically required more than a year of planning, construction, amassing resources, and obtaining commitments on the part of a small army of people. In return for their work on such projects, saroan members were given all of the meat from animals sacrificed at the funerals (except for the foreleg, the heart, the cheeks, tongue, skin, and rump, which went to the donor of the animal). Any guests who were not members of the saroan depended on the generosity of the funeral host or saroan members for obtaining meat. The meat was divided very strictly by class distinctions (and probably status) within the saroan. Nobles always received preferred portions (which should result in different archaeological bone assemblages at household clusters of different classes). Today, all members of a saroan sit together in the temporary structure closest to the granaries (*alang*). The noble members actually sit on the granary platforms.

The saroan apparently only came together on occasions when work was to be performed or disputes resolved. Hosting families always paid for all expenses. The saroan only provided organizational skills and labor. Feasting was generally part of all the saroan's work activities, and gatherings to resolve disputes or make decisions. In effect, the larger saroan feasts (e.g., the *ma'bugi* harvest feast, and even funeral feasts) constituted community celebrations and feasts. Feasting for saroan decision making (*Sirampun* "coming together", or *ma'kombongan* "to make decisions") also had a community solidarity character since every family attended and brought rice or fish or palm wine which was shared around as in a pot luck, divided by the *to makaka*. Additional feasting expenses were paid for by those in dispute. The *toparenge's* made all the higher decisions in the saroan (contra Ames 1998:84), including the settling of disputes, but they did none of the hard manual work. This fell largely to commoners and slaves, and perhaps poorer nobles in the saroans. This organizational framework was clearly advantageous for the nobility (saroans confirmed the class structure and got others to work for the nobles, they allowed the nobility to exercise political power on a regional level (as describe below), and they established relative ranking within their communities). It was also a means whereby commoners and slaves could participate in elite events and receive prestige foods (meat, rice, palm

wine) that would otherwise be inaccessible. Membership was and is necessary (even for commoners) for burial and marriage (today?). It seems that meat given to the saroan of one's home is never considered a gift to be repaid, but is more like a payment. On the other hand, when a saroan is invited to help another saroan, meat given to the invited group constitutes a reciprocal exchange and help relationship. Ames (1998:180,182,190) refers a number of times to buffaloes given to saroans at funerals to repay old debts, and this is probably what he refers to.

In the past, as today, it was possible for rich nobles with good leadership and organizational skills to become high ranking members of other saroans besides his home saroan. This option was not really open to commoners because, as will be seen, membership in more than one saroan entailed considerable expense which commoners could not sustain, besides which, being unable to occupy high ranking positions, they would have no real motive for joining another saroan.

Nobles could become members of other saroans if they had kin in the other saroan that would sponsor them, and if they were sufficiently rich with good leadership and organizational skills. Joining other saroans as a high ranking member entailed the responsibility of attending all of the ceremonies that each saroan was involved in (thereby benefiting from meat gifts given to the saroans) and reciprocally, inviting *all* the saroans in which the person was a (high-ranking) member to ceremonies for which the person served as an organizing member. The person would then be obliged to provide substantial meat gifts to all the saroans that he was a member of--hence, he needed to be rich to belong to many saroans due to the "debts" created by participating in more than one saroan.

The advantages for nobles of becoming members of many saroans seem to have been primarily political. Certainly, the additional amount of meat consumed does not appear to justify the great increases in time, effort, and expenditures entailed by multi-saroan membership. It may be true that for every large holding of paddy fields, several saroans may have been required for planting and harvesting, and this may have been a major factor. However, ambitions for greater and greater "respect" also seem to have been driving forces. In effect, the saroan network was one of the few means of creating supra-

local political systems, although these systems appear to have been inherently unstable and ephemeral, being based on individual personalities, abilities, and fortunes. They thus might best resemble a Big Man system unless warfare promoted a more permanent chiefdom structure as indicated by the creation of traditional Torajan districts.

The advantage to the individual with many saroan positions would be increased personal power, undoubtedly with many subsidiary material advantages especially in acquiring or creating larger paddy holdings. The *to parenge* was considered *the* person of power in traditional Torajan society. He could mobilize many people whether for economic production, defense, political disputes, building projects, or ceremonies. He could influence decisions at all levels of government and society. Such individuals sought membership in saroans that would best serve their political and economic interests, and conversely, there was considerable competition between saroans to attract powerful nobles from elsewhere who could best defend their interests on the regional level--in political, defensive and other terms. Even today, leaders of many saroans represent large constituencies and can exert considerable pressure on local or regional officials. Saroan networks can also be used to create blocks of votes in order to put preferred candidates or saroan *to parenge's* in political office.

Today, saroans often decide not to kill all of the animals they are given, but sell some of them and use the profits for community projects such as irrigation, community buildings or services. In the past, extra animals could have been used to underwrite similar projects (defensive walls, new irrigation systems, etc.--some of which may have benefited the saroan leaders directly or indirectly). Today, there is a proliferation of saroans due to the increased population, agricultural production, and wealth from wage labor. Many commoner families are reputed to bond together to create new saroans in which at least some of their members can assume prestigious titles and pretend to raise their social status to that of a new nobility.

Today, there have been some significant changes in the structure of saroans, and rich nobles are usually members of 6-10 or more saroans. I suspect that economically and politically ambitious nobles

would have done the same in the past (although for fewer sarouans) and that both they and their modern counterparts use(d) the sarouan structure to consolidate and promote their political and economic ties beyond the *dusun* level, similar to the functions of a secret society ( see Owens and Hayden 1997; Schulting 1995).

Today, with mechanization, hybrid crops, fertilizers, greatly increased family wealth levels, wage labor, the abolition of slavery, and the ability to hire workers, many of the traditional functions of the sarouan have withered or become obsolete, although its role in organizing funerals is still strong. (The size range of membership has shrunk to about 50 and is more or less congruent with the modern *dusun* subdivisions within villages--true?). It is interesting that the traditional *dusun* and sarouan village political roles seem to have swapped in importance with their modern counterparts. In the pre-Dutch period, the *dusun* seems to have been the strong unit of political organization with a formal leader whereas the sarouan and village had no formal head and was a loose political association. Today, the *dusun* seems to have fewer political functions and has become the focus of the sarouan organization, whereas local political power is vested in the *kepala desa* at the village level. This change may be due to Dutch or Indonesian efforts to create a more easily managed political hierarchy, or to changes in political organization stemming from more fundamental economic changes.

In any event, the basic criterion for membership in a sarouan seems to have changed little: according to Augustinus, one must be an active owner of a tongkonan or private house in the sarouan domain. Ames (1998:94) states that individuals are inducted into sarouans by older relatives. Because active tongkonan membership involves obligatory contributions of animals, rice, time or cash, poor individuals are active members in only one or two (or no) tongkonans and therefore belong to only one or two sarouans, presumably depending on the locations of the tongkonans (in the same or different sarouan domains). Rich individuals, on the other hand, can afford to be active members of many more tongkonans and a corresponding greater number of sarouans. It is tempting to see these connections as being used to promote elite economics and political interests. Moreover, because the sarouans today have

small memberships and domains, a number of cooperating sarouans are required to organize the larger ceremonies of rich nobles. However, in the meat distributions where multiple sarouans are involved, not all attending sarouans are given equal shares. The number and type of animals that each sarouan receives depends on the rank of the deceased person in that sarouan. Rank in a sarouan is partly determined by the rank or class of one's tongkonan in the sarouan as well as one's rank as an owner in the tongkonan. An active owner of a tongkonan who is the son of the founder is of higher rank than a sixth generation descendant or otherwise peripheral member who may be treated as a lower noble, or even as a commoner. Thus, an individual may be treated as a high noble in one sarouan, but have considerably lower rank in another sarouan to which he or she belongs.

5) **The Lembang** (township or municipality). It is not entirely clear to what extent an organization identifiable as a "village" or more appropriately a "township" existed before the Dutch imposed their administrative "desa" system on the area. Certainly, there do not appear to have been any large population agglomerations comparable to archaeologists' definitions of villages (see Adams 19 ). There are only small rural household clusters or hamlets with at most about 50 households. Thus, "township" or "municipality" seem to be preferable terms for whatever organization may have existed. Today, a village is a geographical area of land often 10-20 km<sup>2</sup> comprising a number of household clusters. In the past, the sarouan may have been equivalent of today's *dusun* or even "township" organization. There is considerable-often admitted- confusion even among older informants and those most familiar with oral traditions as to the traditional political organization at this and higher levels. Even terminology is inconsistently used. Thus, today's "desa" (usually translated as village) has been variously identified with the traditional sarouan, the *bu*a, a smaller variety of *kampung*, and a *lembang*--the latter two terms possibly being introduced by the Dutch or Indonesians (again, there is little consensus).

What does appear relatively clear is that some multi-tondok (and possibly multi-sarouan) political organization almost certainly existed traditionally. In Simbuang, there are alliances of about six tondoks

that formally constitute “*lembang*’s” that help each other (*sisaro*) in feasting, work, and probably defense in the past. There is no formal leadership (?) but the *lembang* constitutes a political unit that acts in concert and this cooperation is reflected in a special *masura tondok* feast held every 3-4 years. In other parts of Tana Toraja, leadership of such alliances may have been more formalized and entailed significant amounts of power, as reflected in the terms *kepala bua* and *kepala lompo* (“fat leader or head”) in Sa’dan. The traditional neighboring district of Balusu (governed by a related *puang*) was also divided into 3 subdistricts (*Anak talu* “3 children” which appear to roughly coincide with the area of a *lembang* in Simbuang or a large “desa” of today.

Chiefdom-level district organizations also seem predicated on the existence of intermediate levels of political organization such as represented by the *lembang*--although conceivably, the saroans could have filled such roles. This scenario is not supported by the Simbuang scenario where the *lembang* includes saroans. Whatever the case, I will provisionally assume that a traditional political unit on the scale of a township existed and I will refer to this as the *lembang*, following the pattern described for Simbuang and Sa’dan, although leadership may have been more centralized in Toraja.

**6) The District (bua community).** Little information was available concerning the traditional political organization at the district level, and much of it was contradictory. The district was perhaps the highest level of chiefdom organization prior to the wars with the neighboring Bugis and Luwu states in the nineteenth century. Everyone agrees that “kings” existed traditionally. The district chief was called the *puang*, *si ambe*, *kepala bua*, or *ma’dika*, depending on the region and he was chosen, apparently, by all *ambe tondoks* from the upper nobility in the north, and by more immediate family members in the south. No informants, however could provide a traditional name for a political unit like a “chiefdom,” (although at various times, *bua*, *kampung*, and *lembang* were all given as being comparable to the Dutch districts) or even denied there was any political organization beyond the *tondok* or “desa” level. Prior to the 19th century, *puang* chiefs in Balusu were reported to be very weak, whereas in the south near Sangalla, they were reported to be more autocratic (perhaps because of greater vulnerability to Bugis

attacks?). Several genealogies clearly identify the first royalty to have married into local families from the Luwu kingdom to the east. These first Torajan *puang* appeared about 15 generations ago (check) in the Sa'dan Balusu district. Beyond military organization, the functions of and the benefits to the chief are not very clear. Chiefs clearly had control over very substantial amounts of paddy fields and the requisite labor to work them. Chiefs also seem to have benefited handsomely from the feast and gift system by receiving live animals at the feasts they attended. As such, their political power base seems primarily to have been an elaboration of the traditional Torajan big man feasting complex.

It may thus, be worth considering traditional Torajan society as being more on par with North American Northwest Coast potlatching systems (which in some cases also developed chiefdom federations as responses to attacks and trade), rather than Polynesian chiefdoms. Possibly, the critical leverage that elevated some Big Men to chiefly status was the external threats from the Bugis and Dutch. On the other hand, some practical factors must have motivated the royal family of the Luwu to marry into families of the Torajan region about 10-15 generation ago. What those factors were at this point, are largely speculative, but possibly include: defensive allies against the Bugis; trade advantages for coffee, rice, slaves, or other products; the emergence of indigenous powerful elites and polities in Toraja due to increased surplus production from iron technology, new crops, or wet rice agriculture. I suspect trade and/or defense were probably the key factors, especially given similar intermarriages between Chinese royalty and petty polity rulers on Salayar Island for trade benefits. Specialized war leaders (*pong*) also seem to have emerged in some districts such as Sa'dan and Balusu, together with centrally controlled fortifications.

Traditionally, all tongkonans in a district (presumably under one chief) shared the same customs and participated together in a district *bua* feast (see below, Ames 1998:67,84). There were 32 traditional districts, whereas under Indonesian administration there are now only 9 districts (check). With increasing population, the number of districts has recently risen to 15. Under Indonesian administration, the district administration head is called the *kepala ke camata* or *camat* , and he is appointed by the

regional administrative head (*bu pati*). Indonesian political offices are known for their lucrative benefits, a feature that I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

7) **Classes.** The Toraja class system might be more accurately described as a caste system, since birth determines one's major class and emically, there appears to be no means of changing one's class. Obviously, some mechanisms must exist, and must have existed, for advancing and regressing in class status, but few people would admit to the possibility, except for mobility between the lower and upper nobility and the creation of slaves by various means. The four Torajan classes consist of:

- Higher nobles: (*puang, si ambe, or to mang ika*, also referred to as *to paringe*). Three estimates that I obtained put the proportion of high nobles in traditional societies at 10%, (Ames [1998:248] gives a 41% estimate which is probably due to his sample biases).

- Lower nobles: (*to mokaka*). Three informant estimates of their proportional importance are: 25%, 50%, and 60%, (Ames' estimate is 22%).

- Common free people: (*to biosa*). Estimates of the proportion of commoners are: 20%, 30%, and 60% (Ames estimates 37% for the common and slave classes together).

- Slaves: (*to me balun*) apparently constituted about 5-10% of the population according to all estimates.

In former times, each class was strongly associated with different economic conditions. Only members of the noble class owned significant amounts of paddy fields, which, like class membership, were inherited (probably through tongkonan membership). Perhaps only nobles owned buffalo as well. This fundamental economic distinction and the owned, inherited nature of the most productive resources of the region (paddy fields) very probably played a key role in the emergence of the class system. As previously noted, the remaining land in Tana Toraja is of relatively poor quality, may be claimed but little used or unused by tongkonans (or unclaimed), and even today is only used for swidden agriculture to a limited extent. Some hill rice (*pare bela*), maize, taro, sweet potatoes and manioc are the main swidden crops. Anyone without access to paddy fields would certainly have far greater difficulty in

producing surpluses on a regular basis (especially before the introduction of metal tools, maize, manioc, sweet potatoes, coffee, and cacao), and would probably experience more severe and more frequent food shortages than those families with paddy fields and substantial granaries. These free-ranging hill farmers probably constituted the original common class in Tana Toraja. Their sociopolitical and feasting characteristics very probably originally closely resembled those hill tribes elsewhere in Southeast Asia. They may also have originally lived in different settlements than the paddy owning nobility, although, there must have been a continuous spectrum from large paddy owners, to nobles with very small paddy holdings (and therefore largely dependent on swidden agriculture) to entirely swidden based families. It should also be remembered that even rich nobles cultivated some manioc and sweet potatoes as hedges against failures of the paddy rice crop. Over time, and with periodic crop failures among the free common swidders and the creation of indebted relationships, people following these two different subsistence strategies probably created the more integrated class system that still exists today, characterized by tongkonans, saroans, and various types of ceremonial feasting. These conditions and the restricted ownership of paddy lands must have created great disparities in wealth and power as well as engendering competition for land, a class system, and the disenfranchisement or enslavement of part of the population.

People became slaves in a number of ways. They could be captives from battles or slave raids, or they could be poor people who could not produce or exchange their labor for enough for themselves to live on and so indebted themselves for life (sold themselves) to rich people. Similarly, individuals who became so overwhelmed with debts (from borrowed rice, fines, or general bankruptcy) that they were unable to pay sold themselves to rich nobles who paid off their debts. Such people could be forced into slavery by their creditors who lodged complaints with the *ambe tondok* or higher officials. Gambling was also a major cause of indebtedness and slavery. We do not know the details of slave economies or relationships, but presumably slave owners would try to minimize the maintenance costs of their slaves during non-productive parts of the year by making them farm or forage for themselves and live

separately from their owners. When labor was needed for the planting and harvesting of owners' paddies, or for sarowan activities, slaves would presumably be required to assist. Owners, however, could sell slaves (purchase being another means of acquiring slaves) and apparently had life or death control over their slaves. There is no recorded way by which most slaves could become a free person. However, slaves could own slaves, which were considered the lowest class of all. It is also reasonable to assume that slaves were partially used for prestige purposes and that politically powerful individuals sometimes used their influence to create slaves when they wanted to by manipulating the disadvantaged families in Torajan society in the same fashion that the hill tribes leaders did in Vietnam (Condominas 1977; Hayden and Tran 1995). The sarowan structure enabled nobles to access the labor of many slaves and commoners from a region for large seasonal and episodic undertakings.

Lower nobles simply seem to constitute the poorer and less powerful sector of paddy owning, or former paddy owning, families. Because individual family and lineage fortunes rose and fell over time (according to demography, health, weather, disputes, individual ambition and abilities, and other factors), individuals and their families could be promoted from lower noble status to *ambe tondok* (upper noble) status if they were successful and gifted. And if fortunes fell, upper nobles were probably eventually treated as lower nobles. In fact, the poor noble household that we visited in Bera was indistinguishable from a poor common or slave household in terms of its material contents, structure, behavior, and feasting. Above all, noble membership conferred the potential for accessing political power if a family developed the prerequisite economic ability and sociopolitical skills. This possibility was theoretically not open to commoners, however, I suspect that given enough advantages, genealogies were always susceptible to manipulation and pioneers in new paddy areas could always promote themselves as nobles, as is typical of many other areas of the world, including Southeast Asia (Leach 1954; Isikowitz 1951--see Millennium paper refs). Stanislaus Sandarupa noted on several occasions, genealogies could be and were frequently manipulated by the clever, ambitious, and powerful for their own benefit.

As is also typical of elites in other cultures, the Torajan elites tried to consolidate their control by denying others access to rights, or denying others class membership on the basis of a number of institutionalized distinctions. Thus, some of the feasts and rituals to be described in the following sections (Table 2) could only be hosted by nobles (including the erection of megaliths and high level funerals), or could only be performed with their permission (including house enhancement ceremonies), or were divested of any worth for commoners in terms of the use or display of surpluses (as in the first hair cutting ceremony, or a boy's circumcision ceremony). Similarly, only rich nobles could have the appropriate ceremonies performed for their ancestors (requiring many buffalo) which would enable their ancestors to enter heaven or even become deified and so become powerful enough to bring good fortune to their descendants (Sandarupa 1998). There were also sanctions against marrying between classes (death sanctions in the case of a slave marrying a noble [Ames 1988]), and there was an entire range of prestige items (Table 1) which lower classes were generally unable to afford, but which also included some sumptuary items, especially paraphernalia used in elite dances such as in the war dance, where horned headpieces were only worn by *ambe tondoks*.

The benefits of this class system for the nobles seems self-evident. They consolidated their privileged economic, social, political, and ritual positions. The class system also ensured that even if noble families fell upon hard times, they still had the potential of regaining their former advantages if conditions improved. It may not seem that commoners or slaves benefited from the system from a modern perspective. Yet, the alternatives (starvation, or death as a war captive) were undoubtedly even less attractive, and the entire system probably supported a higher population density than would otherwise have been possible since the classes seem to have followed largely different but symbiotic subsistence strategies.

However, when Dutch colonization, wage labor, education, industrialization, and a national economy opened up new options, many of the most disadvantaged in the traditional class system took up the new options, abandoned the traditional ideology (*alukta dolo*) and became Christian (Ames

1998). Interestingly, we were told that many of the upper nobles also perceived it in their best interest to integrate themselves as much as possible into the Dutch administrative network (Ames 1998:64-6). Since they would only be employed by the Dutch government if they were Christian, many of the upper nobles became Christian as well as enhanced their dominant position by heavily investing in education and capturing salaried, skilled professional, and lucrative government administrative or civil servant positions (Ames 1998:64-6). The Dutch also seem to have been keen on taking advantage of traditional noble administrative skills and networks, thus perpetuating the traditional political and social system in many cases--at least in the first decades of colonial rule.

It is also worth pointing out that in neither my data nor Ames's does the relative proportion of classes appear to represent the typical shape of a socioeconomic pyramid as exists in state level societies. Torajan elites make up half or more of the population whereas in states, elites make up 1-2% of the population. This is an important phenomenon for understanding the emergence of socioeconomic and political hierarchies. The pattern is far from unusual in transegalitarian societies, as I have stressed before (Hayden 1997, in press; Hayden and Maneeprasert 1997). Yet it is surprising to find this same pattern in a chiefdom level society. Either contemporary memories do not accurately reflect traditional distributions of classes, the Torajan society was more transegalitarian than portrayed in historical or oral accounts, or some types of chiefdoms may adhere to the same basic pattern as transegalitarian societies - - at least as far as their class distinctions ideology goes.

## **POLITICAL POWER**

In most societies, there exists an idealized version of how political power is exercised, which many people adamantly believe in; but this idealized system is usually quite different from the way political power is actually exercised. In the United States, for example, idealistic platitudes abound about equality before the law, but in reality abuses of power and inequalities occur widely in the system. Similar disparities have been documented in Southeast Asian transegalitarian societies (Leach 1954;

Clarke 1998). Thus, one might suspect that a similar discrepancy between *logos* and *praxis* might also exist in Torajan society, perhaps even accentuated by a tendency to idealize one's predecessors as events become more distant. Certainly, it would be surprising if elites who monopolized the most productive resources and created a class system involving the enslavement of 10% of the population, suddenly became virtuous and restrained themselves from taking full advantage of their political power whenever opportunities for privileged treatment occurred.

In my view, political power is primarily concerned with the resolution of disputes and conflicting interests. In traditional Torajan society, the conflicting interests are fairly apparent: nobles wanted to retain control of rich resources, surpluses, and labor; common and slave classes presumably would have liked more equitable sharing in these domains. In this section of my report, I will not be dealing so much with how such inequities emerged, but simply with the description of the traditional system as I currently understand it. Before proceeding, however, it will be useful to summarize the most common sources of disputes. Today, as in the past, by far the most common source of disputes involves inheritances. In theory, everyone in a corporate tongkonan cooperates for the common good. In practice, it seems that there are major stresses and conflicts within all families and tongkonan memberships revolving around the inherited portion of use-rights over productive land and corporate wealth items. In general, it appears that some portion of the elderly parents' estate was divided among their children (and/or siblings) prior to the parents' death. The remainder of the estate was divided after death on a proportional basis according to each person's contributions to the funeral costs (Sandarupa 1998).

Other major sources of conflict included divorce (since a party at fault would have to pay up to 12 buffaloes), crop damage from buffalo or pigs, and poor behavior by family members. On the basis of other Southeast Asian cultures, I would suspect that conflicts over the severity of penalties assessed for transgressing cultural taboos might also be an issue of contention (see Leach 1954; Condominas 1954). I also suspect that repayment of debts was a major source of contention, especially since debts that were unpaid at the time of death were passed on to one's children, and debts might also result in enslavement

(although the exact situations in which this occurred are not clear in terms of class, and repayment agreements). Gambling also appears to have been a major source of disagreement and indebtedness. Debts were also a major source of conflict elsewhere (Condominas 1977). In fact, Southeast Asian transegalitarian societies seem to have been very prone to indulge in all manner of litigations and negotiations concerning cultural rules and debts (Leach 1954; Condominas 1977). I suspect that increasing socioeconomic complexity only exacerbates this tendency.

In all cases where conflicts could not be settled by those in dispute or their families (surprisingly, tongkonans as corporate groups apparently did not function as political units in disputes--to be verified), the aggrieved parties appealed to one or more of the high ranking noble elders, the *ambe tondoks*, either in the neighborhood cluster, the *saroan*, or at higher political levels. The highest level of traditional appeal was probably the district chief, whereas today, appeals can proceed from local *ambe tondoks*, to *saroan* leaders, to *kepala desa*'s, up to the regional leader (*bupati*), the provincial head, and even to the national heads.

Whereas in hill tribe cultures political power is primarily vested in the elders of all families of a community (with some families exerting more power than others--Clarke 1998), in Torajan society, political power appears to be primarily vested in the *ambe tondoks* and *saroan to parenge*'s. Therefore, a more detailed exploration of their role is warranted. As I understand them, the *ambe tondoks* are primarily the lineage heads of the upper noble class. As previously noted, this role is frequently inherited from an existing *ambe tondok* who passes the role on to his eldest son. However, there are a number of qualifications. If the eldest son is unsuited for acting as lineage head, is inept at organizing people or settling disputes, or is simply uninterested in assuming the role, then the position can be taken up by another son, or presumably another lineage member. It should also be recalled that, lower nobles who are especially clever and talented in organizing people for major projects or settling disputes and who are rich (thereby demonstrating their organizational abilities) can become *ambe tondok* (and apparently change their class membership). Thus, there is a strong element of achieved status and ability

to perform associated with active *ambe tondok* roles. It seems that new *ambe tondoks* had to be validated by the other *ambe tondoks* already in the locality (saroan?, dusun?, village? with a feast?).

The situation is complicated, however, by the hereditary status of the role, which clearly has the potential for incorporating a substantial number of relatively inactive hangers-on. In fact, in contemporary usage, the term *ambe tondok*, often simply refers to all the males of the upper nobility. Thus, there are three levels of meaning to the term:

- 1) in its most general use, any male member of the upper nobility, (females are referred to as *indo tondoks*),
- 2) an active and effective noble dispute judge, and organizer of major events,
- 3) a noble lineage head.

As I understand it, besides organizing major events, acting as judges in disputes, and running lineage affairs, the roles of some *ambe tondoks* (acting as *to makoka's* in saroans) also include the distribution of meat at funerals and major events. Also at the saroan or higher levels of political organization, *ambe tondoks* acting as *to parenge's* helped to choose the *dusun* and district administrative heads, act as consultants or a decision making body for all important local and district affairs, and serve as liaisons to higher level authorities by passing on information or decisions to their respective lineages, tongkonans, or saroans. Whenever there is a project to be undertaken at the village level, the *kepala desa* gives the requisite money to an *ambe tondok* (or *to parenge's* of a saroan?) and lets them take care of organizing the workforce and completing the project (B.B.). Such a system seems to provide ample opportunity for *ambe tondoks* to obtain personal benefits as well as providing benefits to supporters. In this fashion the *kepala desa* can also reward those who support him. There were apparently sometimes only two or three *ambe tondoks* (*to parenge's*?) in a saroan. *Ambe tondoks* were apparently not paid for their services. As noted earlier, in many respects, the roles of the active *ambe tondoks* are very similar to the roles of the elders in hill tribes except that only high nobles serve as “elders” among the Toraja, and

there are supra-community levels of formal political organization in which some *ambe tondoks* (*to parenge's?*) are involved. In early colonial times, it was the *ambe tondoks* (*to parenge's ?*) alone who determined which of their members would become the local administration head (*kepala dusun*). Even in hill tribes, elders always make decisions concerning intercommunity affairs.

Today, the political power structure is very hierarchical, and this may have been true of the traditional power structure as well. In fact, the highly competitive feasting aspects of contemporary and perhaps traditional Torajan society may make sense primarily in terms of benefits that derive from access to, or favors from, potent political powers at higher levels. Yan (1996) has documented and explained similar highly competitive feasting in China in terms of the benefits sought from hierarchical powers. I propose that the same situation characterizes Torajan society today. As explained to me, the political system as it now exists still emphasizes the ability and roles of the *ambe tondoks* or *to parenge's*. In essence, the *kepala desa* is the major power holder at the local level, and he is elected by an open vote of all mature adults (over 30 years old?). He is the only official in the entire political hierarchy that is more or less directly elected. All others are appointed or at least must be "approved" even after elections. The *camat* (district head) is appointed by the *bupati* (regional head) who is approved by both the regional and national assemblies after a screening by the governor. The governor was "elected" in a similar fashion. Due to government structure and practices, political power is largely synonymous with economic wealth and benefits for office holders, their family, and their supporters. The higher the political position in the hierarchy, the greater the benefits from all government and private projects, and the more intense the competition among contenders for political positions.

As with the recognition or validation of active *ambe tondok* status, ability is an extremely important criterion for appointment and advancement in the political hierarchy. In Southeast Asia in general, ability is largely judged in terms of economic success and organizational skills in marshaling large labor forces as well as large amounts of wealth. In concrete terms, ability in Indonesia is measured by the size of appointment payoffs given by lower officials to higher officials and in terms of the size

and cost of major ceremonies such as funerals and tongkonan feasts (which political officials often attend when their size warrants). Such events might even be considered similar to political rallies and dinners. Funerals of low magnitude probably serve to establish the relative importance or rank of tongkonan groups and *ambe tondoks* at the local level. Those people whose business structures depend on the cooperation of administrative officials may also seek to gain administrative favors or impress administrators and political collaborators using the same techniques as politically ambitious individuals. This, however, requires documentation.

While the village *kepala desa* is theoretically elected on his own merits by individual adults making independent decisions, in reality, the noble lineage heads (*ambe tondoks*) play a central role and the system appears to work much like the transegalitarian hill tribe political system, as it clearly did in the past when the *ambe tondoks* decided who would be the *kepala desa*. The *ambe tondoks* (and *to pareng*'s) represent the interests of their respective lineages and tongkonans (and perhaps saroans) like the elders of hill tribes. Also like elders of hill tribes, coalitions of *ambe tondoks* (perhaps with the support and in consultation with their lineages) tend to control significantly large blocks of votes to determine electoral outcomes and other political decisions. Therefore, the power of the *kepala desa* is directly dependent on the support of the dominant faction of village lineages and tongkonans. *Ambe tondoks* from that faction therefore very likely feel entitled to approach the *kepala desa* whenever they want favors at the village or higher administrative levels. Of course, traditionally, local officials were *ambe tondok* themselves (as well as the district leaders), and this is still largely true today.

The situation is apparently complicated, however, since one informant stated that even at the village level, there is a major influence from higher level officials. According to this interpretation, the district head (*camat*) solicits bids or payments from all candidates for positions of village *kepala desa*. The coalition which provides the largest payout for its candidate obtains the endorsement of the *camat* who then instructs all the *ambe tondoks* of the village as to which candidate is preferred, and the *ambe tondoks* in turn, inform their lineages and tongkonan members as to whom they should vote for if they

want to stay on good terms with the *camat*. Presumably, the *camat* has some powers of retribution that could be used against any person or group that did not comply with his wishes, but this is not clear.

What does seem clear is that key figures (*ambe tondoks*) who help the *kepala desa* get elected, or who help the *camat* or *bupati*, are rewarded with salaried positions in the local administrations. It may be that coordinated action on the part of all *ambe tondoks* of a village or district could successfully oppose decisions by a *kepala desa* or *camat* that were clearly not in the interests of the community or district. However, the exact balance of power at the village and district requires more investigation.

While *kepala desa*'s and *camats* tend to be chosen from local *ambe tondoks* with limited (high school level) education, the *bupati* tends to be chosen from nobles in a region with university or professional training such as doctors or engineers. *Camats* tend to be chosen from the district *kepala desa*'s and it appears possible for some *camats* to become assistants to *bupati*'s and possibly become *bupati* candidates themselves. In all cases, the pattern of marshaling support through coalitions of lineages, tongkonans, saroans, and lembangs (as well as through payment) is still the major means of attaining these lucrative and politically powerful posts for the Torajan regency. In creating these coalitions, the displays of wealth, influence, and labor organizations at funeral and house feasts undoubtedly played critical roles and affect alignments of political support. The system of periodic elections and the limited terms of appointment probably was instituted not so much so that people could select better office holders or so that bad ones could be replaced, as much as to enable those with political ambitions to periodically compete for higher offices and greater benefits, while also renewing the purses of those in higher offices on a regular basis.

While the practical advantages of a hierarchical political structure to the top ranking elites seem self evident (more wealth, more power), it is also important to point out that there are, at least initially, very real benefits that accrue to those who support such systems (see Hayden 1995, In press). These benefits derive not only from favors doled out by those in high positions to supporters, but also benefits to a wider range of community members as well. Certainly, the rich and powerful can help supporters

procure desirable wives, obtain loans for events, help organize prestigious displays, loan prestige items, and provide political support. Beyond this, powerful elites also protect communities from armed or political attack far more effectively than communities without elites generally can. In brief, by supporting powerful elite hierarchies, many people probably felt that they were increasing their survival and reproductive (if not general well being) advantages over others who lacked such powerful patrons (ibid). These considerations represent essential ecological imperatives. Those who refused to participate in such systems were soon isolated, marginalized, and disenfranchised both within their community and in society in general. They were the ones who remained commoners or became slaves. From this perspective, one can appreciate the very real practical benefits of supporting hierarchical political systems when they are just emerging.

As mentioned previously, there is usually a discrepancy, or at least ambiguity, between the professed idealized system and its actual operation. Thus there are contradictory statements concerning the administration of political decisions. On the one hand there are statements to the effect that when disputes arise, the *ambe tondoks* (and higher appeal officials) are totally impartial and show no favoritism to individuals or groups on the basis of their class, their “respect” in the community, their wealth, or other similar factors. Judgments in disputes are supposed to be made purely on the basis of the allegations and the evidence that can be presented.

On the other hand, there are statements to the effect that “If you have no high status, then you have no power.” “If you are of slave status, then your dispute is your problem.” “If you have a good name, then you have good connections with people that are important” (i.e., the *ambe tondoks* and people in government). “Even if you commit a big mistake the *kepala desa* can help you to reduce the seriousness of the problem.” Similarly, Sandarupa (1998) makes an explicit link between wealth and class status on one hand, and this kind of political power on the other hand. Of the two versions of how the Torajan political system works, I find the exercise of power in favor of vested interests much more believable on an actual behavioral basis than the more idealistic version. I suspect, the vested interest

version is also much more consistent with other ethnographic evidence from Southeast Asia. In all cases, however, decisions by judges and administrators would have to be weighed in terms of their benefits and costs to those making the decisions (in terms of their own erosion of support vs. accruing or repaying debts).

## **STATUS AND RESPECT**

I believe that it is in this context that “status” and “respect” have their most meaningful practical relevance. I argue that, in effect, “status” and “respect” constitute euphemisms for political power, economic credit ratings, and desirable marital alliances. When asked about the practical consequences of having high status and respect, some informants stated that it was easier to get help (e.g., borrow things, especially since people have a high level of trust in you), and easier to find good marriage partners for one’s self or one’s children. Similarly, if one is a commoner and has a high level of respect, then one has more influence. It should be pointed out that for the Torajans that I interviewed, “status” referred to one’s social class. “Respect” referred to the extent to which one’s status was validated by achievement (mainly wealth accumulation and the organization of major ceremonies or assumption of active *ambe tondok* positions).

Mirroring these benefits of status, if a person did not maintain his respect, or did not even make a reasonable effort to do so given his economic means, then he would have had problems within his family and with other members of society. It was repeatedly stated that such a person would become socially and economically, and therefore politically, isolated. Even if an individual was rich, people would look down upon him and no longer trust or believe him. Such people would have difficulty marrying as well as borrowing when in need. In marriage, the first criterion in selecting a marriage partner was (and is), their respect and attitude, then their class, then their wealth. As previously noted, those who did not pull their weight in tongkonan events like funerals could be deleted from the tongkonan genealogy and would effectively be excluded from benefits.

## DEBT STRUCTURES

Before ending the discussion on political power, it is worth emphasizing the importance of debts stemming both from reciprocal ceremonial gifts and from more business like borrowing and loans. Debts probably constitute one of the most important areas of contention and litigation in most traditional societies. We require more information on all aspects of debts and loans in Tana Torajan. As Marcel Mauss (1924) noted long ago, and as Yan (1996) has demonstrated in detail, “gifts” are never altruistic or disinterested in most traditional societies. Occidental ideology about why gifts should be given is aberrant in this respect, although there may be many unrecognized motives that can be identified in behavioral terms.

Here is the breakdown of the funeral gift system as I understand it.

- 1) The organization committee for the deceased should consist of the deceased’s children, his wife or husband (if living), plus the brothers and sisters of the dead person (or parents if living).
- 2) Animals provided by any of these members are not returned and create no debt (need to check if they constitute the basis for inheriting rice fields, swidden fields, or other property--e.g., who gets the dead person’s house).
- 3) Gifts from outside the organizing committee must be given to a specific member of the committee to be chosen by the donor. That gift constitutes the basis for a debt between the person/family on the organizing committee receiving the gift, and the person/family giving the animal (or is the repayment for a similar previous debt). This is like a loan for members of the organizing committee, who present all of the animals they can borrow (plus their own) as their contribution to the funeral (and therefore the basis for inheritance?). Animals are ONLY presented at the funeral under the names of the members of the organizing committee--NOT under the names of the subsidiary/supporting donors.

As Rappaport (1999: ) notes in another Southeast Asian context: supporting donors can choose whichever member of the organizing committee they want to loan/give an animal to--and this is crucial

for understanding the economic and political formation of factions in the community. Children of the deceased person's brother or sister usually give animals to their parents as support (no real debt is created since they are enhancing their own self-interest-- i.e., re: inheritance), but if they give an animal to another person in the organizing committee, then a return debt is created.

Debt gifts *must* be returned to the specific person or household when there is a funeral in which the person owing a debt is on the organizing committee or when that person dies. The deceased's brother's wife's family usually gives an animal to the deceased's brother (but is this true of both husband and wife, and brother and sister of the deceased?). I assume giving pigs operate in a similar fashion, but this needs to be checked.

So for someone who helped organize a funeral, one needs to know:

- 1) How many animals he gave in total.
- 2) Whether he got any animals from other people as gifts.
- 3) If so, what the relationship is between giver and receiver (and the deceased person).
- 4) Whether it was a new gift or a return payment.
- 5) How many animals total were involved in the funeral.
- 6) How many animals were given to each saroan (alive and sacrificed).

What seems fairly clear is that ceremonial "gifts" entail contractual reciprocal returns of approximately the same value. As might be expected (Hayden 1995), in poorer and less productive areas like southwest Toraja, much less emphasis is placed on the return of exactly equivalent value; in fact, the size of the animal given is not even recorded in the gift lists. In all cases, contractual gift returns must apparently be made in exact kind as the original gift. A gift of a buffalo cannot be repaid with pigs, labor, cash, or any other item of value, but this needs confirmation (Ames 1998:91). In more productive and richer northern Torajan areas, sizes of animals given or received are not only recorded, but it is

considered a major loss of “respect” to give a smaller animal as a return gift than the original gift. In most cases, efforts are made to give back larger animals (and more rice or palm wine?). This is typical of entrepreneur transegalitarian and perhaps chiefdom level societies in which competitive feasting occurs (see Hayden 1995). People repeatedly stated that ceremonial gift debts are inherited by children if unpaid at the time of the parents’ death. It seems difficult to believe, however, that there would not be some sort of time limit on repayment before creditors took some sort of action. In general, it is expected that a gift of support to the organizer of a funeral will be repaid when the donor is part of the organizing team of a funeral, or is repaid at the donor’s own funeral (whichever occurs first). This reciprocal system enables individuals to marshal much larger displays than could be managed using only immediate family surpluses. The number of animals sacrificed at a funeral is thus more a display of lineage size, political support, and credit rating for individual organizers than it is of individual productivity. The number of buffalo horns affixed to tongkonans are like billboards proclaiming the breadth and depth of political support for its members in the region.

While failure to repay ceremonial debts at the next appropriate event may be excused for temporary economic or other misfortunes, repeated failure to repay debts is taboo (*pemals*) and results in social ruptures that ultimately will probably be played out in political arenas over manufactured disputes where the defaulting party will always lose if the case is brought before any traditional authority. Commoners who fail to repay such debts may well have become slaves.

It is not clear how often renewals of exchanges might take place. Theoretically, all responsibilities are fulfilled with the return of an original gift. New wealth exchange relationships can then be negotiated between the same families or with new families, depending on the current desirability of creating or maintaining social ties with specific families. Gifts can also be downsized or increased in magnitude in every new cycle, thereby adjusting them to the current economic realities of family life rather than locking exchange partners into an unending inflationary cycle of increasing reciprocal debts, although inflationary pressures are certainly present both within single cycles and in the overall

competitive feasting system. In order to prevent individual families from becoming overwhelmed by gifts and crushed by debt obligations to repay unwanted gifts, there is a system of checks by which individuals and families must be consulted before any large gifts are given. Families must explicitly solicit or agree to receive large gifts before they are received and officially acknowledged as contractual debts. Thus, the entire process of ceremonial gift giving takes on the form of a formal contract.

Loans and debts of a non-ceremonial nature also appear to be generally drawn up as formal contracts with specific due dates, specific interest rates (*taro*), and specific penalties. Terms are somewhat ambiguous, and more detailed information is required for a full understanding of this part of the debt system. On one occasion, I was told that no interest was charged on loans, which seemed surprising. On other occasions, I was told that very short term loans of rice or animals did not usually entail interest payments, but that longer term loans did, depending on the contract and the length of time of the loan. Interest rates seemed to vary by region, probably reflecting the relative regional productivity, but it was denied several times that interest rates varied according to kin relationship, class, "respect," or relative wealth, which seems surprising if it is true. Examples given of interest rates were: that commoners pay 50% interest for borrowing rice for about one year (Mamasa and Toraja) or cut twice the amount borrowed in harvesting rice for a creditor (Toraja). When borrowing animals for a year, a portion equivalent to one quarter of the animal being borrowed (or one leg) must be given to the lender before the animal is borrowed (Mamasa, Simbuang, and Toraja). However, the borrower is supposed to receive the same portion when the lender kills the animal with no net gain or loss on either side. Clearly, there is great scope for disputes in all these situations, especially in determining faults and liabilities should animals be injured or die while on loan, or if borrowers cannot meet their payments and try to find ways of wriggling out of various contracts. Nor should debts which arise from labor exchanges, contracted rice harvesting, divorces, adverse dispute judgments, and other fines from taboo

transgressions<sup>1</sup> (to be documented) be forgotten. All such debts provide fertile ground for the growth of disputes, and fields upon which political brokers can play their games of power. Control over the lucrative surplus producing paddy rice fields provide another key component in the politics of power.

## **TORAJA FEASTS**

With the previous background discussion in mind, it is now possible to discuss Torajan feasting. Although the information I have is incomplete, somewhat inconsistent, and needs refinement, it is adequate for an initial attempt at a cultural ecological analysis. Because the feasts in Simbuang are substantially different from those in Toraja, they are discussed elsewhere (see Adams). Table 2 summarizes my preliminary assessment of Torajan feasts at different levels of social organization for various major purposes or functions. As can be seen, the greatest number of feasts tend to cluster in the domains of household and lineage solidarity, and lineage-tongkonan promotion- competition. This, by itself, says a great deal about the organization and internal dynamics of Torajan society. Theoretically, feasts should mirror the most important social relations in a community or polity. It might be noted as well, that as the size of the social unit increases, the size of feasts (and their expense) also tends to increase. I will discuss Torajan feasts classed by their sponsoring (and benefiting) social units since this probably corresponds most closely to archaeologically interpretable remains (Clarke 1998). Underwriting of Torajan feasting is almost exclusively on a pot luck, host with lineage support, host with reciprocal loan support, or corporate basis. Interest-bearing investments do not appear to be represented.

### **Household Feasts:**

#### Solidarity Feasts

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<sup>1</sup> One such taboo was bearing a child out of wedlock without a recognised father. Women in such situations could be killed by their family, presumably with the agreement of one or more ambe tondoks.

The importance of the household as a cooperative economic and social unit has been discussed previously (see Clarke 1998). Thus, one expects to find solidarity type feasts at the household level that both emphasize the equality of members (there are no competitive aspects) but that also reinforces the hierarchy of power that exists between generations and between the sexes. Thus, many household feasts are held to honor ancestors (and their supernatural authority) or deities that reflect parental values. In Torajan household ceremonies, priests are often the only non-household members present. They are called in to validate the values and relationships expressed in the feasts. Ceremonies typically revolve around the agricultural cycle, the domain in which household cooperation is most essential. Household solidarity feasts include:

*Mang tenen pare:* An annual household feast held before the planting of paddy rice in which the household kills a chicken for a meal with sticky rice, virtually the same ritual that hill tribes also carry out. This feast is held by any family cultivating paddy (not hill) fields, whether slave, common, or noble, as might be expected.

*Me sun (me sakke, pionsakke, sorongan tallo):* There are some contradictory statements about this household feast and its regional variants, but most indicators show this to be a ceremony held when the paddy rice is still growing (about 1-2 months old) for its successful development. The ancestors and gods are invoked, and asked for a favorable crop or other things. An egg (or perhaps chicken) with sticky rice form the ritual meal. This ritual is held every year (with a priest assisting?) and has been described as like “going to church”. Again, it can be carried out by cultivators of paddy fields from any class. Nooy-Palm (1979:61) describes a small Torajan agricultural New Year feast for fertility (a small *bua* ritual), but gives few details. This may correspond to one of the household agricultural feasts described above, or it may be altogether different.

*Ma'tomatua:* This is a feast for asking blessings (material well being) from household ancestors. It is described by Ames (1998:219-22) as the same as the *ma nene'* (see lineage feasts below) but, according to accounts I have received seems quite different. The *ma' tomatua* Ames describes takes

place entirely in the household (vs. the cemetery), on a yearly or more frequent basis (it does not seem tied to specific agricultural events) with the assistance of a priest. The household head purchases chickens and/or pigs for the event and the meat is distributed to everyone in the “village.” Because of this large-scale give-away aspect, I have classified this feast as a promotional feast for the household. The relatively public display of part of the event in front of the house, rather than inside, also indicates promotional intentions for the feast. No information was obtained on how many people, or who attended these feasts.

*Me tang do*: This feast is described as being slightly larger than most household populations, with about 10 participants. However, it is not large enough to encompass a full larger social unit such as a lineage or even a house cluster, and is probably sponsored by the household, so I include it here. *Me tang do* is performed when a person or household has a problem that they would like an alukta priest to assist them with. As a part of the ritual, they eat a meal of sticky rice and chicken. This seems to be a ritual for the commoners and noble classes only.

*Suru' Reresan Manuk Do Lu Banu*: is also probably a solidarity household feast for the upper class. It was described to me as a curing feast for tongkonan members, but since it only involves a chicken, the feast was probably only for the immediate residents (to be verified).

In addition to household solidarity feasts, I was told that it was the household's responsibility -- not the lineage of tongkonan's -- to pay for penalty and conflict resolution feasts. This last is called *si petarianan* and consists of the party judged at to be at fault providing two pigs which are eaten together by the families concerned. It is not clear whether only the immediate families attend or whether larger groups including officials also attend. This kind of conflict resolution feast seems only to have been used by noble families, although simpler forms may have been used by other classes. Again, more information is needed.

#### Work and Promotional Feasts

Households also hold work feasts for building new houses, reroofing old ones, and undertaking other large projects like making and moving menhirs although these large scale events are often lineage sponsored.

### Investment Feasts

*Ma'Kai'*: There are possibly three ritual feasts between birth and marriage that function to increase the value of essentially noble children for marriages in order to increase access to paddy lands, wealth, and power through marriage. The first is the *Ma'kai'* held for the first haircutting of an infant. All classes can carry out this feast, but only nobles have a corresponding ritual component and kill a buffalo, a pig, and a chicken. Commoners only kill a pig, and slaves only kill a chicken. While the heads of common and slave children are completely shaved, noble children retain a patch of hair over their foreheads. The noble feast is a large affair with all close relatives and neighbors, plus the priest and other important people attending, perhaps one hundred people in all. Its status as a lineage vs. household feast needs to be evaluated (as do other investment feasts). The slave version of *ma'kai'* is clearly a household solidarity feast since only the household attends.

*Ma sunna*: is the second feast that raises the value of noble children. It is held for the circumcision of boys at about the age of 4 or 5 years old. The upper classes kill a pig and a chicken, but only the family attends the event. Lower classes do not kill any animals or have any special ritual. Thus, today, the *ma' sunna* feast for the noble classes seems to play a relatively small role in increasing the worth of children, and may be primarily a family solidarity type of feast.

*Bua feasts*: are the third type of events that may enhance the worth of elite children for marriage, although descriptions of these feasts are very limited and somewhat confusing. Nooy-Palm (1979:61) makes a distinction between a relatively small scale *bua* ritual (perhaps on the household level as suggested earlier, but also possibly sponsored at the lineage or tongkonan level) and a much larger type of *bua* feast between communities united as allies or in a federation. She describes the emic reason for these feasts as being to obtain agricultural prosperity as part of the agricultural new year

celebration. Ames (1998:89) describes the *bua* feast as the restoration of good relationships between the human and the supernatural communities by making (some, one of?) the women of the tongkonan into heavenly brides. Sandarupa (1998:38) adds that this feast is part of a 3 year training ritual for elite women, and that it constitutes the highest ritual in the alukta tradition. It is this last aspect which seems to constitute a means of enhancing the value of family (or lineage or tongkonan) women for marriage, I suspect. Clearly, the topic requires considerably more investigation and clarification.

In general, feasts at the household level are small, non-promotional events that only involve the eating of chickens, eggs, and special rice. This level of feasts would be difficult to identify archaeologically.

### **Lineage Feasts:**

House cluster feasting generally appears to be incorporated into tongkonan and lineage feasting so it will not be dealt with separately. Lineage feasts appear to differ from tongkonan feasts in that the full, extended tongkonan corporate organization is not specifically on display and guests are largely lineage members and neighbors. There is a wide range of feasts that seem to focus on the lineage, as might be expected.

### Solidarity Feasts

*Ma nene'*: The major solidarity feast of the lineage is the *ma nene'* ancestral feast held yearly after the harvest. At this time, each household or lineage visits the ancestral tomb, opens the tomb and leaves offerings of food and betel nut to the ancestors in front of the grave. A pig is killed, cooked, and eaten at the gravesite. Ames (1998:219) describes what seems to be a household variant that takes place entirely at the host household. Most often, the graves are corporately owned lineage rock cut megalithic tombs with numerous individuals enclosed although rich individual families can also build them. Other forms of corporate tombs (see Sandarupa 1998) can also be used. The *ma nene'* is only conducted by common and noble classes.

*Ma Kure Summanga:* This is a fairly straightforward solidarity feast given on the occasion of a reunion with family or lineage members who arrive from elsewhere after a prolonged absence. This feast can be given by members of any class, and sometimes involves the arriving guest purchasing one or more chickens or pigs. If neighbors are invited, there can be up to several hundred guests during the day, although at night there are generally no more than 50 people, mainly kin of the principal guest.

*Headhunting Feasts:* Such feasts are mentioned by Ames (1998:99) but no details are related. If these took place before the forays, they were probably solidarity events at the lineage or household cluster level. If they took place after successful forays, they probably took on promotional characteristics. Such feasts have probably not taken place in the last 70 years or so.

#### Promotional Feasts

*Funeral Feasts:* By far, the most promotional and status display Torajan feasts are the funeral feasts. These vary considerably according to class and wealth. I include them with lineage feasts because it is primarily the close family members of the deceased (siblings, children, grandchildren) who organize and underwrite these events, with substantial help from other lineage (saroan, and tongkonan?) members. To what extent is a tongkonan or saroan event a family or lineage event? As Ames (1998:94,96) observes, the entire lineage shares in the status gained at funerals, although the host household clearly gains the most status. The use of funerals for status promotion and ranking is a common feature throughout Southeast Asia and many other parts of the traditional world. Researchers have often wondered why funerals are so commonly used this way. I would like to suggest that they are promoted as obligatory status display events by leading aggrandizers in order to provide an empirical demonstration of the relative ranking and power of competing socioeconomic units.

Countervailing claims to relative ranking, status, and power were undoubtedly common in traditional societies. The only way of testing or proving such conflicting claims would have been physical confrontations or other displays of power. Funerals provided periodic and unavoidable occasions when such displays could be required of any social group that wanted to stay in the power

network being brokered by local aggrandizers. Those not willing to engage in funeral displays were probably relegated to poor commoner or slave status. Marriages and house repair or rebuilding events provided other similar periodic situations that could be used for status display and ranking. These, in fact, were often used in the same way, but generally to lesser degrees, since deaths carry so much more emotional power which can be manipulated or used as leverage by aggrandizers (Dietler, n.d.).

There are many levels of funeral feasts and many subfeasts within the major types. There are far too many aspects to note here. But it is worth noting that the making, transport and erection of megaliths forms part of the highest level of funeral ceremony. It is also important to note that reciprocal contractual gifts of buffalo, pigs, and other items form part of these funerals, and that precise gift lists are maintained. In terms of the quantity of surpluses amassed and given away, as well as the competitive drive to display and give away as much as possible, the Torajan funeral (and *to merok*) feasts can be compared to the potlatch on the North American Northwest Coast. The erection of menhirs might well be compared to the carving and erection of Northwest Coast totem poles. To move the largest menhir (c. 4 meters tall) in Salaga dusun a distance of one kilometer took 1,000 people (in shifts) three days requiring many pigs and one buffalo each day. The largest menhir at Bori took 1,500 people consuming 100 pigs and one buffalo every day for a week to move two kilometers. The stone was over 5 meters tall. Making the largest menhirs at Bori required 4-10 workers a full year working every day. During this time they were fed and lodged at the work site. Raising the menhir was reported to have been accompanied by the sacrifice of 1,000 pigs and over 24 buffalo. Such work feasts may be archaeologically visible especially the larger feasts in non-residential locations.

*Mang pa'esun*: In one instance, I was told that the *pa'esun* is the household feast for young rice. However, this corresponds almost exactly to the *me sun* feast described for households. Therefore, I am provisionally using the term *pa'esun* to refer to a much larger feast described by noble residents near Bera. At this event, all the main branches of the lineage came together from other villages or dusun, each bringing a pig to sacrifice and eat. It was not clear if this was also a tongkonan event or not since

most participants were also tongkonan owners. Immediate neighbors also attended but did not bring pigs to sacrifice. In all, there were about 2-300 people. The stated emic purpose for this event was to give thanks to the gods for good economic conditions. In this respect, it is similar to the *to merok* given by tongkonans as described by Ames (1998:310-19). Solidarity functions of the feast are indicated by the equal contributions of all main participants, while the magnitude of the surplus amassed also represents a significant status promotional statement for the lineage in this relatively poor area. The promotional aspect is also indicated by the relative rarity of these feasts (the residents we interviewed had only ever held one *pa'esun*). As with most promotionally oriented feasts, there is an indication (to be verified) that *pa'esun* was a feast restricted to nobles. The lowest classes also had feasts for thanksgiving (*ma kerering manuk*) but these seem to have been household solidarity events involving only chicken.

As already noted, the *mang pa'esun* seems to have many lineage promotional aspects as well as solidarity aspects. In fact all promotional feasts are usually also occasions for reinforcing and demonstrating the solidarity and mutual support of the sponsoring social unit (Dietler, n.d.). Further details are described below.

*Mang pepara* (probably equated with *ma rinding terong*, *ma kererung bai*, and *me lambe*): This feast is given for the stated emic purpose of either giving thanks for good fortune (e.g., as fulfillment of promises made to the gods for good trips, large herds, spotted buffaloes, good health, long life, etc.), or so that good fortune will come to the hosts (e.g., as seen in dreams, on trips, etc.). It is not entirely clear how this feast differs from the *mang pa'esun* corporate thanksgiving feast described above, and perhaps they should be combined (to be determined). Both involve large numbers of people, particularly lineage, household cluster, and kin members, with neighbors attending but not significantly contributing; both involve giving thanks or soliciting good fortune; both involve the sacrifice of substantial economic surplus in the form of pigs or buffaloes, rice, and wine; and both seem to only occur at long intervals (about once per generation). Despite the fact that the host household provided the buffalo and five pigs for the *ma rinding terong* that we recorded from Mamasa, I suspect that the many lineage attendees also

supplied considerable support help (but if not, perhaps this and its previous thanksgiving feast should be classified as household feasts). This may also be a distinctive variant of the more general *mang pepara* (thanksgiving) feast, since there are three distinct levels of increasing cost in Mamasa, and only nobles are reported to offer this feast, while in Toraja, commoners or nobles appear to have had the right to offer *mang pepara*.

*Mang Ika, Mang Ulai, Mang Palin:* All three of these feasts are for similar funerary purposes and seem to differ from *ma nene*' ancestral feasts primarily in terms of their ostentation and frequency (although more information is needed on *mang palin*). It is also not entirely clear to what extent these feasts are lineage vs. household sponsored. While the main costs may have been born by one household, I suspect that broader lineage support may have characterized them. *Mang ika* is similar in its emic purpose to *ma nene*', that is, to honor a deceased parent. However, *mang ika* is only performed once and only if there was no funeral sacrifice after the parent's death. Only buffalo are sacrificed at this feast, no pigs, and the pattern of meat distribution is unclear. This feast is only performed by noble families. *Mang ulai* is essentially similar but is performed to specifically honor those who have died outside the village or for whom no corpse can be found. *Mang palin* differs in that it is for the moving of bones from an earthen burial (if no communal rock grave existed at the time of death) to a subsequently created megalithic rock cut grave (for the lineage?). Apparently this kind of ceremony (and the owning of rock cut tombs) was open to all classes including slaves. I suspect that this may have been an occasion for lineage promotion, but perhaps not.

*Mang rara banua:* Feasts for re-roofing or re-building parts of (houses? or) tongkonans may also be viewed as lineage or even household promotional events, or as simple work feasts. This needs to be clarified. When held for tongkonans, these feasts are clearly promotional and will be discussed primarily in the tongkonan context.

## Investment Feasts

The *bu*a feast described for households in order to elevate women to high status may operate at the lineage or the tongkonan level.

## Conflict Resolution and Work Feasts

These are probably the same as those described for the tongkonan and saroan (see below).

## Alliance Feasts

*Marriages:* While there are many major feasts in which alliances are brokered or maintained in the form of reciprocal contractual gifts (notably funerals and house ceremonies), the major function of these other feasts is promotional, or status display. In contrast, the only purpose behind the traditional marriage ceremony is to create an alliance, most probably between two lineages or household clusters, although I suspect that the wider corporate tongkonan is also implicated even though it may play no active role in either the marriage arranging or the feast. The traditional marriage feast is surprisingly simple, involving only the arrival of the groom and 8 members of his lineage (or household cluster?) at the bride's residence, where a meal is shared. Today, marital alliances are especially important for marshaling the great quantities of food, materials, and labor necessary for holding large feasts and thus gaining fame (Ames 1998:91; Nooy-Palm 1979:27-8). In the past, relationships with a wife's parents may have been critical in using feasts to wield political power, to access large areas of rice paddy, to generate wealth, and to provide for defense. Thus, it is surprising to observe such diminutive feasting associated with the creation of marriage alliances. Perhaps other alliances were more important (as represented by the saroan and tongkonan), but this remains to be investigated. It is possible that marriage was considered primarily a household type of alliance, rather than an alliance between lineages or tongkonans. Marriage feasts in Simbuang are more typical of other transegalitarian societies in being large events.

## **The Corporate Tongkonan:**

While the lineage or household cluster appears to have been the major supra household feasting and socioeconomic unit on a routine basis, the full corporate tongkonan membership appears to have been called upon for special occasions in order to demonstrate the relative rank of the tongkonan, as well as to revalidate individuals' membership in the group. Ames (1998:212) reports that this might occur only once every century, but such estimates barely seem credible for most tongkonans. There is a difference between the lineage and the corporate tongkonan membership, so that it is sometimes difficult to determine which group is actually hosting some feasts (*mang pa esun* (thanksgiving feasts) and funerals in particular). At the extreme, it is clear that the range of "house feasts" (*to merok*) and house rebuilding feasts are corporate tongkonan events involving active contributing members from a broadly based kindred (the ancestral father's lineage plus the mother's lineage). Where several related tongkonans form a household cluster, this unit may also form an extended lineage and tongkonan social unit.

*To merok*: House ceremonies can be held for any number of reasons in order to celebrate good fortune together with other members of the tongkonan. Typically, they are held when fortunes are on the rise. Active or immediate tongkonan members are expected to make equal contributions to the feasts and no gift lists are kept or reciprocal repayments expected for tongkonan members. However, gift lists are kept and repayments expected for friends and distant relatives (Ames 1998:218). Typically, these are large events and involve large numbers of sacrificed animals, and they are graded so as to confer at least 3 levels of title on the tongkonan (reflected in the decoration of the structure).

*Mang rara banua, mang rara alang*: In order to demonstrate the relative economic status of a tongkonan on an obligatory periodic basis, the tongkonan membership is expected to come together in order to underwrite the reroofing or rebuilding of rotted portions of the ancestral tongkonan and rice granary (*alang*). In addition to the work feasts necessary to accomplish these rebuilding tasks, there is also a general feast to display the prosperity and power of the corporate tongkonan. These events are called *mang rara banua* for the residence, and *mang rara alang* for the granaries. One example that we

recorded of such a feast involved several thousand people and the killing of over 100 pigs. I have limited information on tongkonan work feasts other than that it took about 100 people three days to reroof a tongkonan house during which pigs were killed and eaten; while to construct a tongkonan required work crews of about 4-8 people took about six months during which time chickens and palm wine were provided, and salaries were given to contractors.

### **Saroan Feasts:**

It seems that virtually every saroan project is accompanied by some form of feasting. Some projects such as planting rice fields may be more like work feasts in character; other saroan feasts such as harvest feasts may resemble community solidarity feasts; and still others such as funeral feasts may be occasions for ostentatious display. The *menammu pare* feast held at the time of the harvest as recorded by Nooy-Palm (1979:95) appears to have been a solidarity feast in which all of the households of a saroan residential area contributed and participated. In addition, when saroans convene to make decisions or resolve disputes (*sirampeen* [“coming together”] or *ma’kombongan* [“to make decisions”]), the events are clearly solidarity in nature and feasting is “pot luck” in nature. Every family brings a food contribution of rice, palm wine, or fish, while those in dispute furnish pigs. The *to’makaka’s* of the saroan distribute the food. All families are expected to be represented.

### **Class Feasts:**

Surprisingly, too, there are few class solidarity or alliance feasts in which members of a single class are the exclusive participants. There are no diacritical feasts purely to display membership in a particular class, as described by Dietler (1996, n.d.). Perhaps some of the feasts already described may serve this purpose, however, this is not clear. Perhaps there was traditionally too much rivalry between contending factions of each class to make such feasts realistic. The closest approximation that I recorded to such a type of feast was the *casi rampunan* which was held in order to conduct the business of the

*ambe tondoks* of an area and presumably enhanced political or class solidarity. Few details were available.

### **Community Feasts:**

#### Solidarity

Aside from the sarolan events there are remarkably few community feasts in the central Torajan area, although a few are notable. Simbuang has much more developed community feasting (merged with what might be considered proto-sarolan feasts related to agriculture).

*Mang rakan:* This is a feast held prior to the harvest by each household that owns paddy fields. Each household brings 20 stalks of rice from their fields and cooks the rice. All the families buy pigs to cook with the rice and they eat in the evening. Portions are given to neighbors and family. There is some confusion as to what aspects of this were participated in by the entire community and which were done by households (meat was apparently cooked in individual households). After the ceremony, families went to the harvest.

*Ma maro:* We recorded one other type of feast that appears to have been for community solidarity. This was the *ma maro* (also *ma bugi*) which was held for everyone in the community that wanted to ask for curing. It involved communal dancing at night and was open to everyone in the community. Each participant was expected to bring a chicken and some sticky rice. Typically, one household initiates the feast and most of the participants may be related to the host.

#### Alliance

*Bua:* As previously discussed, the large version of the *bua* feast is recorded as having been held for members of inter-village alliances and federations (Nooy-Palm 1979). Unfortunately little other information is available, but the general outlines of such feasts can probably be guessed fairly accurately. Apparently, each community in the alliance hosted the feast in turn during successive years, beginning and ending at the village of the paramount chief of the alliance or federation. Alliance feasts

were certainly held in Simbuang, but do not seem to have rotated among allied villages (to be confirmed).

### Hierarchical Political Feasts

Since the traditional political hierarchy disappeared in the early decades of the twentieth century, details of feasting at this level are sketchy. Nevertheless in Balusu, we were told that if any one of the *anak talu* (regional assistants to the chief) held a funeral (or other?) feast, then they had to give gifts to the *puang* chief. These gifts appear to have been substantial since they usually involved live animals (presumably because there were too many to eat). Conversely, when the chief held a funeral (or other?) feast, he had to give gifts to those who had previously given him gifts (presumably all three *ambe tondoks* as well as other ambitious, rich, or high ranking nobles). Whether this was on a strict reciprocal basis or was an asymmetrical exchange is not clear. What is apparent, however, is that the political feasting and power structure of the chief essentially represents an extension of the tondok and saruan feasting structure where gifts are exchanged primarily at funeral (and perhaps other) feasts requiring some sort of reciprocal return. Political power is largely structured--or at least reflected--by the system of debts created in this fashion.

As with other social units eager to promote their own importance, the traditional chief undoubtedly held a range of other promotion feasts besides funerals (e.g., house feasts, and special status feasts).

The only other feast we obtained information on was the *to maro* feast (*to ma bugi* in the west) held exclusively for curing members of the chiefly family. This feast featured ecstatic or trance ("crazy") dancing with superficial cutting of dancer's throats followed by the use of special leaves to instantaneously stop the bleeding. Close family members brought chickens; the chief supplied pigs. This was a small feast exclusively for chiefs.

*Masura talang* was also mentioned as a chiefly feast but no information was given. Hierarchical political feasting undoubtedly continues to exist in contemporary Torajan society and is discussed in more detail on pages 71ff.

## **FEASTING SUMMARY**

In examining Table 2, it becomes immediately apparent that the real locus of social and economic activity is at the household and especially the lineage or tongkonan level. This is a very similar structure to that found among the hill tribes of mainland Southeast Asia (Clarke 1998). It appears that these are the core institutions of the Toraja and the hill tribes, and that the other organizational levels are merely superficially overlaid on top of the basic lineage structure, and could be easily stripped away without affecting the basic core of Torajan culture.

Given this interesting similarity, it may be worth pursuing some of the other similarities and differences between Torajan and hill tribe cultures, especially, if, as suggested earlier, the dry hill farmers on the periphery of the wet rice areas in Tana Toraja do constitute a type of hill tribe subculture.

## **HILL TRIBE AND TORAJAN CULTURES**

At the production level, while the same range of dry hill cultivation and wet rice cultivation occurs in both cultures, there is a far greater preponderance of highly productive wet rice cultivation in the Torajan area. This has permitted the development of more complex political hierarchies, class systems, and far more elaborate and competitive feasts than has ever been possible among the hill tribes. As a result the structure of power and the nature of feasts also appears to have changed.

In the hill tribes, there is little overt centralization of power. Political or economic power are both remarkably unstable due to fluctuations in harvests. Under these conditions, lineage elders are the major decision makers and power brokers, and lineages are the major political power blocks. Lineages also provide the major safety net for their members whether in political, economic, or social terms. Feasting in these societies tends to be strongly focused on frequent reciprocal invitations to a wide range

of both small and large scale emic events on the part of allied lineage elders or members within a lineage.

In contrast, Torajan political structure is much more centralized. While lineage heads still play a local role in brokering political power, this role seems lessened by the current (and perhaps traditional) relationships. I did not see the intense and frequent kinds of small scale reciprocal feasting between lineages or within lineages in the Torajan area as I did in the hill tribe areas. The establishment of saroans, a powerful noble class, and authoritative *dusun* or village or district figures seem to have taken away many of the lineage safety net or political functions. In some respects, the *ambe tondoks* of the nobility appear to operate like hill tribe elders but at a higher, elite, level; and the Torajan village councils structurally resemble hill tribe counterparts. However, there are clearly other factors also involved.

The greatly increased resource productivity in the Torajan area has also resulted in a remarkable increase in the scale of feasting. In the hill tribes, it is relatively easy to record all the significant details of the vast majority of feasts because they usually do not involve more than 50-100 people and rarely is more than one animal killed for consumption. While reciprocal invitations to feasts are common, the giving of reciprocal contractual gifts is rare. Even the largest feast only lasts a few days. In contrast, many Torajan feasts involve hundreds or thousands of people bringing scores or hundreds of animals (reciprocal gifts) to be slaughtered, divided up, cooked, and/or given away. Traditional funerals lasted for several months and had many subsidiary constituent feasts. Trying to keep track of all significant activities, gifts, and relationships is an almost impossible task. The Torajans themselves assemble a small army of workers to take care of all these tasks.

There is also a significant difference in the types of disputes most frequently found in each culture. There is little private land among the hill tribes, and therefore there are few disputes over land or inheritance, whereas for the Torajans, this is probably the major source of disputes.

Finally, in the material realm, hill tribes use almost no feasting or display items that can be construed as prestige items used in any competitive fashion. It is only with the much more productive resources and competitive feasting contexts of the Torajan culture that prestige items (including serving vessels) begin to appear (Table 1). Megalithic funeral monuments are the most extreme expression of such prestige display items. These monuments are much more similar to the mortuary poles of the Northwest Coast, and I think many more interesting parallels might be drawn between the feasting events, economy, and sociopolitical organization of the Torajan and Northwest Coast cultures.

### **PROBLEM AREAS AND FUTURE TRENDS**

While the previous pages have shown that there are still many outstanding issues to be resolved concerning the feasting behavior and sociopolitical structure of traditional and contemporary Torajan culture, there are also some basic fundamental issues that should be addressed if possible. For instance, it is not clear why rice has had such a pivotal role in Torajan (and general Southeast Asian) culture. Many groups seem perfectly capable of growing large amounts of sago, taro, or manioc on the hillsides or valleys throughout Sulawesi and many other parts of Southeast Asia. It is not clear why these crops are not sufficient for adequate family subsistence and why there should be such a high demand for rice as a preferred crop. It is also not clear when dry rice or wet rice were introduced to Sulawesi and how they affected cultural development.

In terms of prospects for the future of Tana Toraja, there are two basic scenarios. The first is that competitive feasts will continue to be used as a criterion for promotion to positions of political or financial power, or at least as displays of support potential. Funeral feasts are still the most prominent local and regional displays of wealth, corporate strength, and political alliances in the Torajan area. As long as regional and national administrators keep attending these events in order to assess individual's suitability and support for political advancement, funerals will continue to be highly competitive among the ambitious and will involve the major Torajan power blocks. As the regional economy and

population grows leading to needs for new villages, administrations, and positions of authority, so too should competitive feasting. Given these circumstances, there is an increasing in opportunity for non-nobles to attain important local positions. In order to enhance their appearance as qualifying individuals for such political (and business?) positions, it is normal for many upwardly mobile families to hold large and impressive funeral feasts that mimic traditional noble feasts but which may be based on individual wealth earned in the cash marketplace rather than corporate or kindred wealth gained through the manipulation of surpluses and debts.

In turn, such pressures from non-noble families will probably push noble families to even greater efforts in their own funeral feasts in order to distinguish themselves from non-nobles and validate their claims to being members of a distinctive nobility. It is important to realize that these last situations involve very different dynamics of feasting from traditional situations in that the goals of many hosts do not appear to be focused on the creation of socioeconomic debts via feasts, as in the past, but only concerned with displays of wealth to validate status claims.

The second scenario is that the traditional lineage structures are breaking down under the weight of wage labor and other national programs (education, religions conversion, social programs). In this scenario, increasing numbers of people will find more benefit in using their cash for other desirable goals such as material purchases, education, business ventures, and investments. These considerations should result in a marked reduction in the scale and cost of funeral feasts over the next decades, and the disappearance of its competitive nature. Ames (1998) has already documented the beginnings of such a trend for the lower and middle class in Tana Toraja. On the other hand, it is clear that some funeral feasts continue to grow in size and cost to new undreamed of limits, also indicating that at least among the most ambitious sector of the population, large feasts may continue to be used as a means of political and economic advancement for the foreseeable future. Thus, both scenarios may in fact be taking place simultaneously among different segments of the population. Whatever the outcome, we can be certain

that the study of feasting behavior will provide many key insights into the structure and functioning of Torajan and other societies whether under traditional or new and changing circumstances.

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**TABLE 1: TRADITIONAL TORAJAN PRESTIGE ITEMS**

(see also Nooy-Palm 1979)

| <u>Item</u>  | <u>Torajan Name</u>   | <u>Sumptuary</u> | <u>New Value</u><br>(Rupiahs) | <u>Antique Value</u> |
|--|---|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| -Corporate house   | <i>tongkonan batu a'ri're'</i>  | No               | 30,000,000                    |                      |
| -Carved Corporate house (3 levels)                                 | <i>tongkonan perkamberan</i>  | Yes              |                               |                      |
| -Corporate house (3 levels)  | <i>tongkonan layuk</i>  | Yes              |                               |                      |
| -Spotted buffalo   |   | No               | 6-30,000,000                  |                      |
| -Normal buffalo  |   | No               | 5,000,000                     |                      |
| -Pig (c. 200 kg)   |   | No               | 2,000,000                     |                      |
| -Rice or palm wine jar (glazed)                                    |   | ?                | 300,000                       |                      |
| -Gold/silver jewelery  |   | Probably         | ?                             |                      |
| -Gold/silver bracelet  | <i>ponto lola</i>   | Yes              |                               |                      |
| -Necklaces (with gold, shell & glass)                              | <i>rara</i><br><i>manikata</i><br><i>mastura</i><br><i>mauk manik</i> |                  |                               |                      |
| -War dance Necklace  | <i>manik tura tora</i>  | Yes              |                               | 200,000              |
| -Ceremonial bronze serving plate for betal & cigarette at funerals | <i>tapare</i>   | Yes              |                               |                      |
| -Porcelain wares   | <i>pinden</i>   | Yes              | Very High                     |                      |
| -Funeral gong  |   | Yes              | 10 buffalo                    |                      |
| -Old knives  | <i>la'bo</i>  | ?                |                               |                      |
| -Short sword & scabbard  | <i>guyang</i>   | Yes              |                               | 1-2,000,000          |
| -Ceremonial spear  | <i>doka, la'bo piudi</i>  | ?                |                               |                      |
| -Armor   | <i>karnarran</i>  |                  |                               |                      |
| -Horned helmet   | <i>tanduk galun, parending</i>  |                  |                               |                      |
| -Shield  | <i>lui</i>  |                  |                               |                      |
| -Ritual baskets  |   |                  |                               |                      |
| -Brass teapot  |   |                  |                               |                      |
| -Silver/Gold coins   |   | Probably         |                               |                      |
| -Funeral stone menhirs   | <i>simbuang batu</i>  | Yes              | 2-3 buffalo + workers food    |                      |
| -Wood menhir (pine, palm, bamboo)                                  |   | ?                | low cost                      |                      |
| -Rock cut tomb   | <i>liang</i>  | No               |                               |                      |
| -Lineage coffins   | <i>erong</i>  | ?                |                               |                      |
| -Sacred clothes  | <i>sarita, roto</i>   | Probably         | 3-500,000                     | 2,000,000            |
| -Sacred hat  | <i>sarong delo</i>  | No               |                               |                      |
| -Beadwork (glass)  | <i>kandaure</i>   |                  | 2-400,000                     |                      |
| -Pedestal wood bowls   | <i>kandien dulang</i>   | Probably         | 50,000                        | 1,000,000            |
| -Wood serving dishes   | <i>pa'patan</i>   |                  |                               |                      |
| -Drums   |   | Yes              | 2-500,000                     | 2,000,000            |
| -Amulets   |   |                  |                               |                      |
| -Skull war trophies  |   | Probably         |                               |                      |
| -Elaborate ceremonies (Table 2)                                    |   | Yes              |                               |                      |

**TABLE 2: TORAJAN FEASTS**

| <u>SOCIAL LEVEL</u> | <u>FEAST FUNCTION</u>                    |   |                                     |                  |
|---------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|
|                     | SOLIDARITY                               | SUMPTUARY, PROMOTION, INVESTMENT                            | CONFLICT RESOLUTION                 |                  |
|                     | ALLIANCE                                 | & COMPETITION   | & PENALTY                           |                  |
| WORK                |  |   |                                     |                  |
| HOUSEHOLD           | -Suru'eresan manuk<br>(curing)           | -Ma'tomatua<br>(ancestral)                                  | -Ma sunna<br>(circumcision)         | -Si petaria nana |
|                     | -Me tenen pare (bua?)<br>(rice planting) | (Ames 1998:219)   | -Ma'kai<br>(first haircutting)      |                  |
|                     | -Me sun (growing rice)                   | -Masura Kale (S)<br>(purification)                          | -Bua<br>(ritual training for girls) |                  |
|                     | -Ma'nene (ancestor)                      | -Sumarong (S)<br>(HH curing)                                |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Surubati (children) (S)                 | -Ma pipan (S)<br>(new house)                                |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Ma Kurruui (S)<br>(cutting baby's hair) |   |                                     |                  |
| LINEAGE             | -Ma'nene                                 | -Funerals   |                                     | -Ma bugi         |
| (harvest)           | -Mang Rapa' (S)<br>(honor ancestors)     | -Marriage   |                                     | (Ames 1998)      |
| (home building)     |  | -Mang pepara /  |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Ma kurre summanga                       | -Ma'rinding terong  |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Ma papa' (S)<br>(reunion)               | (giving thanks)   |                                     |                  |
| (re-roofing)        |  |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Pakaropakan,<br>-Menhir                 | -Mang palin (moving bones)                                  |                                     |                  |
|                     | Ma'pelian, Me tua (S)                    | -Mang ulai (special for dead)<br>(funeral for close family) |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Mang ika (honor dead)                   | -Mang pa'esun (give thanks)                                 |                                     |                  |
|                     |  | -Manrara banua (house)                                      |                                     |                  |
|                     |  | -Ma burake (S-house)  |                                     |                  |
|                     |  | -Marriage (S)   |                                     |                  |
|                     |  | -Ma peyundi (S-ancestors)                                   |                                     |                  |
| COMMUNITY           | -Mang rakan (preharvest)                 |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Mang Rapa' -Bua                         |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | - To maro (curing)                       |   |                                     |                  |
| (S-home building)   | -Masura                                  |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | - Ma doya (S-singing for the dead)       |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Ma papa' tondok                         |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | - Ma aluk pare (S- series)               |   |                                     |                  |
| (S-re-roofing)      |  |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | - Pangataron (S-curing children)         |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | - Sumarong tondok (S-village purifying)  |   |                                     |                  |
| INTER-COMMUNITY     | -Bua (district)                          |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Masura tondok (S)                       |   |                                     |                  |
| ELITE / CLASS       | -Casi Rampunan (Ambe tondok business)    |   |                                     |                  |
| SAROAN              | -Menammu pare (Nooy Palm 1979:95)        |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Sirampua (coming together)              |   |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Ma'Kombougan (making decisions)         |   |                                     |                  |
| TONGKONAN           |  | -House ceremonies & Funerals                                |                                     |                  |
|                     | -Planting?                               | -House ?  |                                     |                  |

(thanksgiving)  
HIERARCHICAL POLITICAL  
S= Simbuang

-Funerals ?

-Mang rara Banua (home & granery repairs)

-Mang pa'esun ?

-Thanksgiving?

## APPENDIX: GATHERING DATA ON TYPES OF FEASTS

-Name of feast:

-Traditional / Christian / or modified: (how?)

-Emic purpose:

-Inferred ecological functions: (solidarity, alliance, promotion, etc., specific observations)

-Sponsoring (cost-bearing) group:

-Participating individuals or groups:

-Number of people attending: (approx.)

-Number and identity of sarolan attending:

-Principal guests and relationships:

-Gifts: Gift List Data (distinguish new vs. old gifts):

Gifts from household members: (how many people & what relationship?)

Gifts from lineage members: (how many people & what relationship?)

Gifts from Household cluster members:(how many people & what relations?)

Gifts from tongkonan members: (which tongkonan & host's position in each)

Gifts from other relatives: (relation & distance of each or grouped)

Gifts from sarolan members: (which sarolan & position of host in sarolan)

Gifts from friends: (distance)

Gifts from business acquaintances: (specify)

Gifts from government officials: (specify)

Others:

-Other reciprocal obligations:

-Feast frequency:

- Foods served & quantity:
- Location of feast:
- Food eaten together or in guests' own houses:
- How much food taken away (vs. consumed on location):
- Who takes largest portions:
- Total costs: (cash, buffaloes, pigs, chickens, wine, rice, structures, cloth, other)
- Special structures used: (map & dimensions)
- Class exclusiveness:

## GATHERING DATA FROM HOUSEHOLDS

- Name of village, dusun, and cluster:
- Map of household cluster: (indicate relation of families & classes & religion)
- Tongkonans in cluster with titles: (and age of structures)
- Owners of tongkonans:
- Name of informant, age, place of birth (distance), class, religion, place of birth of wife (distance):
- Last name and relation to others:
- Forfeit penalty for divorce in marriage:
- Brothers and sisters residing in the village:
- Membership of ego in tongkonans and saroans:
- Who is ambe tondok in the cluster?
- Events in the last 3 (or 5 or 10) years when any animals were killed for feasts in the household cluster:  
(ask about all feast types in Table 2)
- Other ceremonial feasting events in the last 3 years (with eggs, sticky rice, or other):
- Village or local feasts: (last 3 years)
- When were the last buffalo horns or pig jaws put on house, and what was the event: (record details)
- Events at which the informant gave buffalo, pig, or chicken in the last 3 years (5 or 10 years): check list in Table 2.
- Number of buffalo, pigs, and horses the person owns (as well as his brothers/sons in the cluster):
- In former times, how much *pare kutu* could the person's family harvest (good vs. bad years):
- With new rice, how much can be harvested: (good vs. bad years)
- How many bundles can the rice barn hold:
- How much corn, coffee, cacao, cassava is harvested:
- How much received from other households:

- How much land was inherited (from whom & has any other land been acquired):
- How many buffalo inherited:
- How much hill farming is done (area & crop):
- Any salaries or wages (bringing animals or cash) in the last 3 years: (Approximate)
- Any family members in government, police, business, or other important positions:
- Any disputes involving any members of the household cluster that were taken to an ambe tondok or higher official:
- Gift lists:

#### INVENTORY & MAP OF HOUSEHOLD

- Size of rice barn:
- Record prestige & ritual items visible in the Household: (drums, gongs, swords, &c)
- Number of buffalo horns and pig's jaws on house:
- Decorations on house and rice barn:

#### Kitchen:

- Count by size (specify approximate size in cm) & material all cooking pots, woks, plates, cups, glasses, & serving vessels (especially fancy or expensive ones):
- Ask to see "stone" (glass or ceramic ) plates:
- Ask to see plates used for last or largest feasts (if not in the house, where were they borrowed from?):
- Ask to see any kandien dulang or other common prestige display items: