

Terance W. Bigalke, *Tana Toraja: a social history of an Indonesian people*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005, xxv + 395 pp. ISBN 9971693155, price: SGD 63.00 (hardback); 9971693135. SGD 42.00 (paperback).

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This book is a welcome and long awaited addition to the literature on South Sulawesi and on the district of Tana Toraja, located in the northern highlands of this province. Originally written as a PhD dissertation defended in 1981, until recently Bigalke's study was only available as a photocopy or microfiche copy (Bigalke 1981). Yet in the past decades it has become a much-cited key source on the history of Tana Toraja and its population. It proved to be a rich and reliable source when I started my own explorations of regional history of the Luwu-Tana Toraja area. The book published now by Singapore University Press (and simultaneously by KITLV Press) closely follows the original text, with some updates and reorganization of chapters. One new chapter has been added, on developments in Tana Toraja after 1965.

One of the main merits of the book is its focus on social history rather than on 'culture'. Instead of presenting Tana Toraja as a museum of an assumed 'traditional' culture and its inhabitants as a 'cultural minority' threatened by the outside world, Bigalke approaches Tana Toraja primarily as a historian interested in the multiple forces of societal change. Though initially conceived as a study of religious change, Bigalke's research developed into a comprehensive study of a highland society in a period of rapid socio-political and religious change. The author gives in-depth analyses of the period before the arrival of the Dutch, the Dutch occupation of and administrative interventions in the highlands, Christian mission and the changes associated with it, and the educational system and emergence of organizations that reflect and represent 'Toraja' ethnic identity, mainly taking shape in contrast to the lowland Islamic Other. *Tana Toraja* also covers the turbulent periods of the Japanese occupation and revolution, the post-war social revolution, and the Darul Islam rebellion in the 1950s and 1960s.

Some major contributions of the book deserve special mention here. Chapter 2 analyses the trade networks in coffee, slaves, and firearms that were established between highland and lowland elites from the mid-nineteenth century under the influence of broader processes of demographic, socio-political, and economic change. These processes generated a lowland demand for slave labour from the highlands. Bigalke's analysis makes clear that this slave trade should not simply be seen as the exploitation of a vulnerable highland population by powerful lowland kingdoms (see also Bigalke 1983; Li 1999). Trade networks that joined together lowland and highland

elites were a crucial characteristic of this slave trade, which was closely related to the trade in coffee and firearms. These highland-lowland interactions also brought wider socio-cultural changes in the highlands: lowland court cultures became a cultural model for (especially) the southern highland elites, while the trade networks led to intensified power struggles and conflicts between highland elites.

In his analysis of the slave trade Bigalke also places South Sulawesi slavery in its Southeast Asian context. Upward social mobility was possible and even quite common for Toraja slaves in the lowlands. This form of slavery in the lowlands was the solution to a labour shortage problem; land was not the main limiting factor here. Many slaves originating from the highlands assimilated into lowland Islamic culture. Often they even preferred staying in the lowlands over returning to the highlands (see also Bigalke 1983).

Another important contribution is Bigalke's historical analysis of the 'invention' of Toraja identity. It was only in the first half of the twentieth century that 'Toraja' changed meaning from a general denominator used by lowland people to denote the upland population into a classificatory category of ethnic groups internalized and actively used as an ethnic label by the highland population of what is now Tana Toraja. 'Toraja' as an ethnic marker was a product of the colonial and missionary presence in the highlands from 1905 onwards. It also became instrumental in colonial plans for creating 'Greater Toraja', a Christian highland buffer region against the mainly Islamic lowlands of South and Central Sulawesi. After decolonization, this political ideal of Toraja autonomy from the lowlands, referred to as 'Toraja Raya', continued to play an important role, though the only tangible administrative product of the autonomy movement was the current district of Tana Toraja. In the early 1980s, when reification of ethnic categories was still quite common, Bigalke's analysis shows that 'the Toraja' were primarily a product of Dutch administrative and missionary intervention. Moreover, in their political use of this label they are themselves agents of change rather than merely passive objects or victims of outside agency (see also Li 1999).

The final and newly added chapter on developments since 1965 increases the relevance of this book. It discusses the important role played immediately before 1965 by Muhamad Jusuf's Regional Military Command in South Sulawesi (KODAM Hasanuddin), which brought to an end Kahar Muzakkar's Darul Islam and isolated the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) in the region. It is remarkable that in Tana Toraja, which had a long history of land conflict that provided a fertile ground for PKI political activity, no mass killings took place after 30 September 1965.

The same chapter also discusses the downfall of Protestant politics, represented by Parkindo (the Indonesian Christian Party), in the New Order period. In the 1950s mission-educated Toraja had still been able to capital-

ize on their educational advantage and occupation of crucial administrative positions. In the 1960s, however, the emergence of new Bugis-Makassarese elites brought radical changes. In the administrative and political system the Toraja were gradually marginalized. This trend continued in the New Order period, when Parkindo support declined steadily until the party was forced to merge into PDI in the mid-1970s. While leading to the demise of Parkindo as a political force, the New Order provided a major opportunity for the Toraja aristocracy to regain its lost power.

In some respects, this last chapter represents a break with the preceding ones. Though important as a post-1965 update, it misses a number of important developments that are closely related to issues discussed earlier in the book. Land pressure and out-migration are mainly discussed as phenomena of economic change: in terms of the cash flows they generate. Thus, Bigalke largely misses the politically very important and sensitive issue of Toraja out-migration to neighbouring Luwu. Resource conflicts translated into ethno-religious conflicts, and regular attempts to restrict or regulate out-migration to Luwu in recent decades testify to the sensitive nature of Toraja relationships with Luwu. Agriculture-based out-migration to lowland Luwu was, moreover, to a certain extent politically organized rather than spontaneous, forming part of the agenda of Toraja identity politics. Thus it has more than just an economic meaning: it touches on crucial issues of Toraja identity, of drawing or transcending boundaries between 'us' and 'them', and of the future of Tana Toraja in the political constellation of South Sulawesi (see Roth 2005 and forthcoming).

It is a pity that the book ends before the downfall of the Soeharto regime, which triggered new and important socio-political developments in the region. Recently emerging regional autonomy movements at various levels of government lay bare the fault lines originating in the period before the New Order. After 2000, the movement for (Greater) Luwu Province collapsed in internal squabbling over the identity of the province and the position of Tana Toraja within it. District-level movements for regional autonomy in Tana Toraja triggered heated debates about the consequences for Toraja identity of splitting up the district. Even though these recent developments are not covered, it is mainly thanks to Bigalke's book that we can now appreciate them in a context of 'changing continuities' (Schulte Nordholt 2003) over a longer time span.