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CHAPTER 2

Courting and Consorting with the Global

The Local Politics of an Emerging World Heritage Site in Sulawesi, Indonesia¹

Kathleen M. Adams

INTRODUCTION: LONGING FOR A GLOBALLY-ACCLAIMED TORAJA

October 2006 marked the launch of a much-publicized Toraja Culture Festival, a ten-day event that was to attract upwards of 30,000 visitors to the Toraja homeland in the highlands of Sulawesi, Indonesia, to celebrate Toraja heritage. Touted as 'Toraja Mamali' or 'Longing for Toraja', the event was heralded as a homecoming festival for Torajas living around the globe, a time for all those of Toraja ancestry to return to their homeland and strengthen Toraja unity and pride, nationally and internationally (www.torajamamali.com). Planned to coincide with Tana Toraja Regency's fiftieth anniversary year, organizers envisioned the festival as an occasion for overseas Torajas to return and demonstrate their commitment to developing the tourism, educational and agricultural realms in their ancestral homeland. As the Toraja organizers explained on the bilingual 'Longing for Toraja' web page:

Toraja is renowned for having maintained its traditional culture, from the unique funeral ceremony (*rambu solok*) to the distinctive handicrafts, also (...) the elegant and inspiring traditional dance and music. Life goes on as it has for centuries, carrying the rhythms of ritual, creativity and culture

as precious inheritance for the present generation and the generations to come. It is to continue and pass down this precious inheritance between the sweeping tides of [the] modern world that the Toraja Mamali was announced, forming up to be an act of concern [sic] in making Toraja a world class cultural centre as well as making Toraja a leading region in the sector of education, technology and agriculture. (www.torajamamali.com, accessed 28 February 2008)

Tens of thousands of Torajas and over 8,000 foreign tourists made the journey to upland Sulawesi for the 'Longing for Toraja' festival. Over the course of the festival these visitors, along with thousands of local residents, witnessed and participated in water buffalo pageants, model village competitions, healthy child contests, as well as the rehabilitation of 'tourist objects', schools, major infrastructure arteries and a traditional market. The pinnacle festival day drew 125,000 spectators and was officially opened by Indonesia's Vice-President Jusuf Kalla beating one of the 300 drums that had been transported from throughout Indonesia for the occasion. On this day Toraja heritage was showcased in a grand carnival fashion, with a parade of traditionally clad Torajas and decorated water buffalos, as well as a traditional musical instrument performance. Official speeches and the unveiling of a spectacular and enormous new monument to Toraja freedom fighters were overshadowed by the long-awaited 'Mamali Dance', performed by 2,000 local dancers. As a number of Torajas proudly recounted when I returned in 2008, the size of this traditional dance performance broke all Indonesian records and was widely covered in the Indonesian media.

Reflecting on the Toraja Mamali festival, Tana Toraja's Regent (*Bupati*) elaborated, 'Tana Toraja was in need of a trigger to jumpstart it out of its lassitude. We hope that the "Longing for Toraja" festival will be the embryo that revitalizes Tana Toraja' (quoted in Palar, 2006: 1). While some Torajas were sceptical, for a number of Toraja cultural and political leaders the festival was an opportunity to restore to Toraja what it had been poised to attain a decade earlier during the heyday of international tourism, prior to the current tumultuous era of 'Indonesian crisis', when the steady flow of tourists to the region fell to a trickle. That is, the festival carried the twin hopes both of revitalizing much-needed tourism revenues and of reasserting Toraja's place as a 'world-class' culture. In many ways, the 'Longing for Toraja' festival was an attempt to rekindle a courtship with the global that had gone badly astray. Just a few years earlier, when Tana Toraja had been nominated for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List,

this romance appeared poised to blossom into a long-term relationship. But after several years of little attention and scant visitor revenues, in the minds of some Toraja leaders it was time to call for the reanimation of the heritage-themed courting of overseas Toraja migrants, tourists and international bodies such as UNESCO.

This chapter is broadly concerned with the politics of heritage in upland Sulawesi. As the staging of the Toraja Mamali festival suggests, heritage is not only about individual and collective identity, but it is also entwined with economics and with symbolic power. Moreover, in today's world of global migrants and global bodies such as UNESCO and NGOs, 'heritage' is rarely of merely local or domestic concern. Heritage must be understood in terms of layers of local, national and international romances and rivalries. What many have underscored regarding contemporary tourism sites is equally true of heritage locales: in seeking to understand the dynamics at play in such sites, we must be attentive to the theme of 'contested heritage', and to engaging with not only local structures and rivalries but also international relations and global organizations and markets (Teo, 2002: 460; Teo, 2003a; Hitchcock, 2004: 463; Burns, 2006: 18–20).

More specifically, in this chapter I draw on the case of the emergence of Tana Toraja as a potential World Heritage Site to illustrate how so-called 'heritage landscapes' are, to some extent, products of local responses to and engagements with regional, national and global political, cultural and economic dynamics. While there are undeniably certain indigenous Toraja ideas about the meaning and manifestation of heritage,² these conceptions of heritage are also, to some degree, a colonial and post-colonial product. My aim is to problematize representations of such sites as pristine embodiments of local tradition. I suggest that World Heritage Sites are seldom simply the newly-threatened landscapes of tradition they are imagined to be. Rather, they are the products of a long interplay between the local, the national and the global.³

In chronicling the emergence of a potential World Heritage Site, I am particularly interested in illustrating how transformations of dynamic local places into fixed 'heritage sites' is not a 'natural' process but rather a political process that can be fraught with calculation, collusion, conflict, collaboration and co-optation. Recently, researchers have begun to push for more attentive analyses of the process of cultural objectification. Writing on the process of reactive objectification, Nicholas Thomas has observed, 'If conceptions of identity and tradition are part of a broader field of

oppositional naming and categorization, the question that emerges is not how are traditions invented? But *against what* is this tradition invented? Or, in general, how does the dynamic of reactive objectification proceed?' (Thomas, 1997: 190). In a similar vein David Harrison observes, 'Whatever elements of the past are presented as heritage (...) they have already passed through a complex filtering process whereby someone, or some group, has *selected* them. Nothing – but nothing – is automatic heritage material' (Harrison, 2004: 285; also see Hitchcock, 2004: 463–464). Turning a more refined lens to the history of one locale currently on the Tentative List of Indonesian World Heritage Sites enables us to gain a more nuanced perspective on the politics of the process of cultural objectification, and to better appreciate the complicated roles of local and international agents and agencies in 'fixing' dynamic locales. My use of the term 'fixing' here is deliberate and meant to evoke the multiple meanings of this word – in the sense of rendering something dynamic into something lifeless and immobile, as well as in the senses of renovating and repairing, and arranging and organizing. As I suggest, we can learn from this case study, for in today's globalized world even hinterland heritage sites are shaped by multiple forces, actors and agencies from within, around and beyond the nation.

I begin this chapter with a vignette concerning the events that led to the selection of a particular Toraja hamlet (known as Ke'te' Kesu') for tentative inclusion on UNESCO's List of World Heritage Sites. In this portion of the chapter I also unpack some of the local reactions to this selection, and contrast these reactions with an analysis of UNESCO conceptions and assumptions pertaining to World Heritage Sites, many of which are entwined with romantic assumptions about ancient life-ways under siege by the contemporary world. I then turn to trace the history of Ke'te' Kesu', from its colonial roots to the present, illustrating how the birth of this hamlet as well as its rise to pre-eminence was part and parcel of colonial and post-colonial dynamics. Finally, I turn to address how local contestations over whose heritage was to be elevated to fame ultimately fuelled a re-framing of the World Heritage Site nomination, such that Ke'te' Kesu''s nomination was broadened to all of Tana Toraja. Finally, I close with a discussion of the broader lessons emerging from this case study.

UNESCO ENCOUNTERS KE'TE' KESU' AND TANA TORAJA: THE MULTIPLE AND SHIFTING MEANINGS OF HERITAGE SITES

In April 2001 there was cause for jubilation in the highland Toraja village of Ke'te' Kesu' on the island of Sulawesi. Residents had just learned that their rural hamlet was poised to achieve international fame and reverence, on a par with Borobodur or the palaeolithic caves of Lascaux. For their village had just been officially selected for consideration as a World Heritage Site by the Southeast Asian members of UNESCO. Over the previous week Southeast Asian delegates and UNESCO representatives had gathered in Tana Toraja Regency to attend a UNESCO Global Strategy meeting devoted to nominating and reporting on Southeast Asian World Heritage Sites. The selection of Tana Toraja Regency as the venue for this meeting was far from haphazard; it was, in part, the culmination of years of lobbying by local Toraja cultural activists and Indonesian politicians. At the official opening ceremony of their gathering in Tana Toraja, UNESCO delegates were regaled with Toraja dances and ritual processions set against the backdrop of the finely carved ancestral houses that form the core of the hamlet of Ke'te' Kesu'.⁴ These UNESCO delegates toured the area in their leisure hours, becoming acquainted with the cultural richness and natural beauty of the region. Ultimately, a UNESCO team appraised the touristically touted Toraja village of Ke'te' Kesu', determining that it satisfied many of UNESCO's criteria for World Heritage Sites. According to Indonesian news reports, Sulawesi government officials and locals were optimistic that Ke'te' Kesu' would soon join the ranks of official Southeast Asian World Heritage Sites (Hamid, 2001).⁵

UNESCO has a clearly articulated definition of what constitutes a World Heritage Site. The groundwork for UNESCO's role in determining, preserving and protecting World Heritage Sites was established at the 1972 UNESCO General Conference in Venice. At this meeting, UNESCO delegates ratified the World Heritage Convention. As decreed by this convention, UNESCO would embark upon compiling a 'World Heritage List', registering unique sites of supreme universal value. The convention stipulated that the governments of UNESCO member countries could nominate sites for inclusion on the World Heritage List. If it is determined that a nominated site meets the established criteria for inclusion on the list,⁶ it could potentially merit resources for its protection and preservation. In short, the underlying motivation for creating the World Heritage List

was the notion that certain locales embodied properties of 'outstanding universal value' and deserved international conservation efforts. Today, in keeping with the 1972 Convention, *cultural*, *natural* and *mixed sites* are included on the World Heritage List. *Cultural heritage sites* are monuments, groups of buildings or locales with historical, archaeological, aesthetic, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value. *Natural sites*, in contrast, are locales that embody outstanding examples of the earth's history, biological or ecological evolution, habitats of biological diversity or threatened species, and exceptional natural beauty. Finally, *mixed sites*, also termed *cultural landscapes*, 'encompass both outstanding natural and cultural values that illustrate significant interaction between people and their natural environment over a period of time' (Villalon, 2001: 1).

The Toraja hamlet of Ke'te' Kesu' was nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List as a *mixed site* or 'living cultural landscape'. Located on the Indonesian Island of Sulawesi, four kilometres southeast of Rantepao (Tana Toraja Regency's main town and tourist base), the hamlet of Ke'te' Kesu' has long been a magnet for anthropologists, historians, architecture students and tourists. With such local celebrity, it seemed fitting that Ke'te' Kesu' would also capture the fancy of the Southeast Asian UNESCO meeting delegates. Heralding the traditional ancestral houses (*tongkonan*) that comprise the heart of Ke'te' Kesu', one of the attendees at the UNESCO meeting commented,

The *tongkonans* [ancestral houses] of Tana Toraja are living heritage in the true sense. They go beyond the sense of 'home', being regarded as living symbols of local families who insist on maintaining their religious, cultural and environmental traditions. The *tongkonan* does not exist in isolation in the Tana Toraja landscape. The vista of Tana Toraja villages – sweeping roofs of parallel rows of *tongkonan* built at the foot of a hill where ancestors are buried and surrounded by communal rice fields – shows the long interaction of the local population and their environment. The landscape demonstrates a deep relationship with nature that has existed for generations. Preserving the *genius loci* of Tana Toraja villages goes beyond protecting the unique architecture of the dwellings. It means preserving a total lifestyle while attempting to make the traditional lifestyle, severely threatened by 21st century influences, continue to be relevant (Villalon, 2001: 3).

As this commentary underscores, 'preservation' is a key theme in the UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. In tandem with this preservationist orientation is the attendant assumption that the 'traditional'

is under assault by contemporary '21st century influences': The Toraja village of Ke'te' Kesu' is celebrated as a utopic⁷ and quintessential ancestral 'home' where humans live as they always have, in harmony with the environment. However, as the UNESCO narrative suggests, this idyllic Eden is endangered, warranting the protection of World Heritage Site designation. Ironically, as this chapter illustrates, the very globalizing forces that prompted Ke'te' Kesu's discovery by UNESCO (tourism and accelerated discourse with the outside world) are now deemed threats to its '*genius loci*'.⁸

When I first learned of UNESCO's interest in this Toraja hamlet, I shared in some of the jubilation of Ke'te' Kesu's inhabitants. In the mid-1980s, while conducting research on Toraja art and identity, I resided in this highland Sulawesi village for twenty-two months and have made frequent return research visits in subsequent years. While mulling over the implications of Ke'te' Kesu's candidacy as a World Heritage Site, I received a call from a Toraja friend who had been a young boy during my initial research in Ke'te' Kesu'. My friend was now based in Florida and employed by an international cruise ship line. His income from his job had enabled him to erect a spacious new home with an electricity supply for his mother on a hilltop above Ke'te' Kesu' village. My friend's cruise ship position afforded him regular opportunities to tour celebrated World Heritage Sites and I was anxious to hear his reflections on Ke'te' Kesu's candidacy. Expressing his delight at the designation, my friend immediately underscored that the new status promised to revitalize lagging tourist visits. As he lamented, recent political violence and economic instability in Indonesia had eroded tourism to Tana Toraja, resulting in economic difficulties for village souvenir sellers. With World Heritage Site designation, residents' livelihoods (now largely dependent on tourism revenues) would be reassured, enabling Ke'te' Kesu'ers to pay off debts, stage long-postponed mortuary rites, and modernize their homes. The more we talked, the more apparent became the disjunction between his conceptions of the meaning and value of heritage and those of UNESCO. Whereas my Toraja friend stressed the changes and affluence this new status would bring, UNESCO's emphasis was on the preservation of an imagined past that would stave off modernizing influences. Subsequent conversations with other Ke'te' Kesu'ers revealed similar disjunctions. Several residents noted that becoming a World Heritage Site would affirm for the world that the Toraja could no longer be dismissed as a backward hill people: now they would become world stars. For this group of Ke'te' Kesu'ers, World Heritage Site designation was not

about the preservation of an imagined past, but rather about *amplification*, be it amplification of wealth for some, familial prestige for others, or ethnic identity for still others.

Some time later, I had the opportunity to talk with several Toraja acquaintances in Jakarta about Ke'te' Kesu's new-found fame. These acquaintances, whose ancestral villages were in other regions of Tana Toraja, had markedly different reactions from those of my Ke'te' Kesu' friends. As one declared to me, more heatedly than I'd anticipated, 'I'm all in agreement with Tana Toraja being a World Heritage Site, but Ke'te' Kesu'? I don't agree! That is a political play, not heritage (...)' While his comments suggested that heritage and politics were separate realms, the more we talked, the clearer it became that he and his friends were willing to do their own political lobbying to ensure that Ke'te' Kesu'ers could not hijack the fame that was due to all of Toraja for themselves.

As the above vignette suggests, ideas about the meaning and value of World Heritage Site designation are multiple and variable. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), Keesing (1989), Linnekin (1990, 1991) and others have adeptly illustrated how ideas about 'tradition' and 'heritage' are infused with the politics of the present. Building on their foundational work, this chapter argues that today, as in the past, heritage sites are stages on which various groups and actors inscribe competing and commingling histories and meanings. In the context of globalization and international tourism, 'heritage' and 'tradition' become all the more intensely rethought, rearticulated, recreated and contested, both by insiders and outsider packagers, politicians and visitors. Tourism does not simply impose disjunctions between the 'authentic past' and the 'invented past', as earlier researchers suggested, but rather blurs these artificial lines, creating new politically-charged arenas in which competing ideas about heritage, ritual and tradition are symbolically enacted (cf. Hitchcock, King and Parnwell, 1993a; Wood, 1993; Adams, 1995, 1997a, 2006; Bruner, 1996, 2001; Picard, 1996; Picard and Wood, 1997a; Erb, 1998; Cartier, 1998).

I turn now to trace the politics, rivalries and colonial and post-colonial forces behind the rise of Ke'te' Kesu', from obscurity to touristic fame to its (ultimately temporary) status in 2001 as one of the newest sites on Indonesia's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.⁹

The Toraja village of Ke'te' Kesu': from colonial heritage to 'tourist object'
 What is thought of as Ke'te' Kesu' today consists of four stately ancestral houses (*tongkonan*), an imposing museum shaped to resemble a traditional house, and numerous carved rice granaries and souvenir and handicraft stands. Around the fringes of the plaza are homes of local residents, some Bugis-styled on stilts, others of wood or bamboo, and still others of concrete. A footpath behind the central ritual plaza of the village winds down through a bamboo grove to cliff-side graves. Here visitors can gaze upon ancestral skulls, weathered wooden effigies of the dead, carved sarcophagi, and more recently erected ornate cement tombs. A hundred years ago, this village, as such, did not exist. In stating this, however, it is *not* my intention to suggest that Ke'te' Kesu' is a spurious pretender to World Heritage Site status. In fact, I would emphatically champion Ke'te' Kesu's inclusion on the list of World Heritage Sites, as it is very much a landscape upon which ancestral memories have been inscribed and enacted.

At the turn of the century, the four ancestral houses, or *tongkonan*, that comprise the heart of Ke'te' Kesu' were scattered on various peaks, some miles from the current site. It was the advent of colonialism that triggered the birth of Ke'te' Kesu' village. Prior to the 1906 arrival of Dutch colonial forces, kin groups lived in scattered mountain top settlements, maintaining ties through an elaborate system of ritual exchanges (Nooy-Palm, 1979, 1986). The *tongkonan* played (and continue to play) a central role in these inter-group relations. In recent years, Toraja has been discussed as a 'house society' in that it is challenging to fully comprehend its cognatic kinship system without an understanding of houses as the orienting point of this system (Waterson, 1990, 1995: 47–48).¹⁰ In short, the *tongkonan* is more than a physical structure: it is a visual symbol of descent and a key marker of heritage for most contemporary Torajans (Adams, 1998a).¹¹ At various *tongkonan*-centered rituals,¹² histories of the founding ancestors and their descendants are carefully recounted and all who trace their descent to the *tongkonan* being fêted are expected to contribute financially or materially to the ritual expenses. Just as *tongkonan* are closely tied to ancestry, they are also linked to ideas about rank. Elaborately carved *tongkonan*, such as those found in Ke'te' Kesu' today, were associated with the elite. Commoners and (former) slaves were traditionally barred from embellishing their ancestral homes with such ornate carved motifs. Affiliation with an older named *tongkonan* established by early, elite ancestors carries more prestige than affiliation with a more recently established splinter-group *tongkonan*.

Tongkonan Kesu', from which Ke'te' Kesu' takes its name, is one of the older, most prestigious *tongkonan* in the region. In the early part of the twentieth century, the leader of this *tongkonan* was a politically astute member of the elite named Pong Panimba. Observing that Dutch authorities conferred leadership roles on the nobles located closest to Dutch headquarters in the Rantepao valley, Pong Panimba sagely perceived the disadvantages of his *tongkonan's* remote hilltop location. Recognizing that propinquity to Dutch headquarters was a key ingredient for one's continued authority in the new era of Dutch colonialism, Pong Panimba had his home and seat of authority (*Tongkonan Kesu'*) relocated from its remote mountaintop site to the valley, clustering it with several other family *tongkonan* (*Tongkonan Tonga, Tongkonan Sepang and Tongkonan Bamba*). Since fathers buried the placentas of newborn children adjacent to their *tongkonan*, these ancestral houses become closely tied to the lands on which they were constructed. Thus, in general practice *tongkonans* were not to be moved, as their physical sites took on added importance with each generation.¹³ The decision to break the tie between site and structure would have weighty, requiring lengthy discussions amongst all those affiliated with the ancestral house. Pong Panimba would have had to exercise all of his political skills to grease the path for the move. No doubt, the exigencies of the colonial era made what may well have been a controversial relocation decision more viable – especially since, during this period, Dutch officials began forcing some Toraja families to relocate into the major valleys for administrative convenience (Bigalke, 1981). According to my Toraja mentors, ritual prescriptions were followed that enabled the relocation of this celebrated ancestral house.¹⁴

Tongkonan Kesu's new site was strategically selected, for it was not only physically lovely, but it was also a mere four kilometres from the Dutch colonial headquarters. The move, completed in 1927, proved to be a successful scheme for currying authority in the new colonial context. Pong Panimba was soon named the second head of the colonial 'Kesu' District'.

By the 1940s, however, the Second World War, the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, and Indonesian independence posed new threats to the family's security and standing, as well as reinvigorating old rivalries between competing Toraja elites. In the late 1940s, when the newly independent Indonesian government established the government seat far from the Kesu' District in the southern city of Makale, near the Sangalla *adat*¹⁵ region of Tana Toraja, Ne' Reba Sarungallo¹⁶ (Pong Panimba's grandson and then-

leader of *Tongkonan Kesu'*) became concerned. As the new *Tongkonan Kesu'* leader, Ne' Reba observed that rival Sangalla nobles and Sangalla *adat* were threatening to overshadow those of the Kesu' area. Ne' Reba's misgivings cemented in 1950 when, following independence, the subdistricts of Tana Toraja Regency were formally established: a Sangalla District (*kecamatan*) was delineated, but no provisions were made for a Kesu' District. Ne' Reba astutely recognized that with this new political geography, the name Kesu' would be lost, as would Kesu' heritage, traditions and the authority of the Kesu' nobles. If Kesu' were to survive in the new post-colonial order, a strategy was needed. However, the 1950s and 1960s were tumultuous times in South Sulawesi (as Muslim insurgencies and secessionist movements posed constant threats to Toraja highlanders), and it was not until the late 1960s when the region was calmed that possibilities to reinvigorate Kesu' heritage presented themselves.

As the first off-the-beaten-track tourists began to trickle into his hamlet in the late 1960s, Ne' Reba perceived an avenue for ensuring that the name Kesu' lived on. Drawing on his authority as an elected politician, aristocratic leader and Dutch Reformed Church elder, as well as his substantial charisma, Ne' Reba lobbied local government authorities to declare his hamlet the first official 'tourist object' (*obyek wisata* or *obyek turis*).¹⁷ Significantly, the name he proposed for this 'tourist object' was Ke'te' Kesu'. In 1974, Ke'te' Kesu' was officially recognized as a 'tourist object', along with two other sites (Londa and Lemo, both burial sites rather than villages). This was prompted, in part, by a PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association) conference held in South Sulawesi that year. South Sulawesi police and government officials were drawn upon to promote Tana Toraja and to transport PATA delegates interested in touring the region. The PATA tour featured the three newly-designated 'tourist objects'. At Ke'te' Kesu', delegates admired well-rehearsed dance performances, carving demonstrations and weaving displays. They also listened raptly as Ne' Reba recounted the history of the development of *tongkonan*, and the significance of those found in Ke'te' Kesu'. The tour and Ne' Reba's lesson on *tongkonan* heritage were deemed a success. PATA delegates returned home and began promoting the region as a pristine and fascinating destination for foreign tourists. In these early promotions, as in current-day advertisements, the 'traditional village' of Ke'te' Kesu' was prominently highlighted.

THE POLITICS AND PRACTICALITIES OF PROMOTING HERITAGE

Around the same time that tourists were discovering Tana Toraja, so were anthropologists and historians. As the reigning Kesu' noble and as an exceptionally knowledgeable elder, Ne' Reba was increasingly sought out by foreign and domestic researchers. By the 1970s and 1980s, Sulawesi scholars were making routine pilgrimages to Ke'te' Kesu' to interview Ne' Reba. These scholars later returned home and chronicled Ne' Reba's accounts of Kesu' heritage in their English, French, German, Japanese and Indonesian books and monographs. In this fashion, Eastern and Western academics and their institutions were entwined with the cementing of Kesu' heritage and the concomitant growing celebrity of Ke'te' Kesu'.¹⁸

After successfully enshrining the name Kesu' on the touristic and anthropological map of Tana Toraja, Ne' Reba produced a written history of *Tongkonan Kesu'*, and began to offer lectures at tourism, architectural and university seminars on the historical significance of Kesu'. By the mid-1980s, Ne' Reba was one of the key lecturers at training sessions for local tour guides and in 1985 he was ceremonially recognized by Indonesian government officials as the 'founding father' of Tana Toraja. When Ne' Reba passed away in 1986, Indonesian dignitaries who had met him on prior trips to the highlands returned for his elaborate pageantry-filled funeral at Ke'te' Kesu'. A foreign ambassador, several governors, four Indonesian Cabinet Ministers and thousands of guests converged on Ke'te' Kesu' for the ten-day ritual. The funeral received ample coverage on national television, radio and in newsprint, and was also documented by several anthropologists, further propelling Ke'te' Kesu' and the Kesu' story on to the national and global stage.¹⁹

Following Ne' Reba's death, it was unclear who was to succeed him in his role as maintainer of Kesu' s prominence. His brother, Renda Sarungallo, inherited his position as *Tongkonan Kesu'*s elder, but he resided in Jakarta, too far away actively to serve as a local promoter of Kesu' heritage, identity and authority. Those of Ne' Reba's sons still living in Ke'te' Kesu' were either too young or reluctant to compete with one another for the role of 'local authority'. All agreed, however, that although tourists still flooded to the village, without Ne' Reba to promote the kin group's heritage, the family's continued prestige was in jeopardy. Once again, they risked being overshadowed by other elites with competing ideas about the meaning of Toraja heritage and competing claims to ancestral glory.

Initially, Ne' Reba's surviving siblings and children decided to pursue the traditional avenue to reaffirm the kin group's status: they opted to stage a re-consecration ritual (*mangrara tongkonan*) for their ancestral *tongkonan*, *Tongkonan Layuk* at Ke'te' Kesu'. Typically, for Toraja such rituals are visual affirmations of the glory of the kin group affiliated with the *tongkonan* being celebrated. All members of the kin group associated with the *tongkonan* are expected to contribute to the ritual, lending their energy, savings, raw materials, construction skills, vehicles and livestock to the cause. After several years of planning and fund-gathering, the family staged the ritual on 20 January 1990. The event was deemed a magnificent success, drawing thousands of guests, tourists, and even the Jakarta media. A two-page article on the ritual, illustrated with colour photographs, appeared in *Kompas*, the nation's premier newspaper. Also, with the aid of local and Jakarta-based sponsors, the family published a 50-page booklet detailing the meaning of the *mangrara* ritual and the history of the *tongkonan* at Ke'te' Kesu' (Panitia Mangrara, 1990). Published in Indonesian, the booklet not only offered anthropological accounts of the buildings, but also listed the names of the elites currently playing leadership roles in each of the Ke'te' Kesu' *tongkonan*. Today, the booklet is offered to visiting researchers and was most likely circulated as part of the lobbying effort to secure the attention of UNESCO.

In addition to staging the *tongkonan* consecration ritual, the family devised other plans for their re-emergence on the local political stage. In the late 1980s, the family embraced a new avenue to regain their ebbing authority: the institution of a museum. The urban Jakarta kin were well aware of the political role of museums in Indonesia and elsewhere, particularly as the 1980s were a decade of museum mania in the country (with new museums opening on a regular basis). Likewise, propelled by the touristic celebrity of Ke'te' Kesu', several of Ne' Reba's son's had spent time overseas, carving traditional houses in museums in Japan and elsewhere. On these trips, they had gained a fuller appreciation of the heritage promotion potential of museums. At the time, the only existing museum in Tana Toraja Regency was a small museum in the Sangalla district, run by a competing elite family. As the Sarungallo family recognized, with Ne' Reba gone and with no museum of their own, they would be disadvantaged in their ability to receive the same level of recognition as these local rivals. By 1988, the Sarungallo family had opened the Indo' Ta'dung Museum in one of the ancestral *tongkonan* in Ke'te' Kesu'.²⁰ The museum was named

after Ne' Reba's deceased sister, who had sold Toraja sculptures, antiques, trinkets and textiles out of her home in Ke'te' Kesu' until her death in 1985. The core of the museum collection had come from her inventory and the family felt it fitting to honour her memory with the museum. Indo' Ta'dung had been a popular local figure, with a surplus of humour, charisma and some claim to local fame. Not only had she been married to a Toraja freedom fighter during the revolutionary struggle against the Dutch, but she was recognized as the first courageous Toraja to raise the Indonesian flag in Rantepao following Indonesia's 1945 declaration of independence. This original flag was still amongst Indo' Ta'dung's belongings and was envisioned as a cornerstone of the future museum's collection.

Initially, the museum space and displays were simple, comprised largely of traditional eating utensils designed for elites, ancient knives, relics, and prized ritual textiles. By the mid-1990s, however, the vision expanded. Renda Sarungallo had received an unexpected windfall from an Indonesian cabinet minister to help fund a new museum and 'bibliotheek'²¹ structure in the heart of Ke'te' Kesu'. By my 1995 visit to Ke'te' Kesu' construction of the new, expanded museum was well under way. The new museum was designed in the shape of an oversized *tongkonan* and dominated the hamlet's plaza. The first floor was to be devoted to displays of Kesu' heritage objects and the lofty second floor was envisioned as the library and future headquarters for research on Toraja culture and heritage. Here would be housed a collection of scholarly books and manuscripts concerning Toraja culture. In short, as family members told me, the library would ensure that, even though knowledgeable elders such as Ne' Reba were now deceased, people would continue to perceive Ke'te' Kesu' as a source of ancestral knowledge (a legacy no longer embodied in a person, but now in a library and museum structure). That is, the borrowed institution of the museum was to become the font of Toraja culture and heritage.

In the spring of 1998, just prior to the collapse of Suharto's New Order, the Sarungallo family plan appeared to be poised for success. The construction of the new museum was nearly complete and the building was slated to open the following year with a grand traditional *mangrara banua* ritual (a *tongkonan* consecration ritual). However, the vision was derailed by the Asian economic crisis and Indonesia's decline into political turmoil. International and domestic tourist flows to Ke'te' Kesu' abruptly dwindled to a trickle and villagers whose livelihood had come to rely heavily on tourist expenditures were increasingly anxious about their futures. On my most

recent visit, Ne' Reba's eldest son, a quietly reflective middle-aged man, voiced not only his concerns about Toraja's future economic livelihood, but also his fears that, without village-based tourism revenues, the young generation of Ke'te' Kesu'ers would come to view their culture and heritage as irrelevant. As he confided,

I worry that my children's generation isn't going to be interested in their heritage any more. They will see our cultural problems and traditional etiquette as ancient and old-fashioned. Yet, I *know* that out of ten ancestral Toraja regulations (*aturan Toraja*), at least five of them are always going to be relevant, no matter when. I am sure of that. What is the proof? The proof is in our architecture. Our *tongkonan* are held up as examples by people who are not even Toraja – Europeans, Japanese. Even in your Pasadena Rose Bowl parade a few years back, remember, it was the float modeled after a Toraja *tongkonan* that won the first prize. This shows that Toraja culture is relevant to the rest of the world. We should all be proud of our heritage, and of those accomplishments.

As a twin-pronged approach for tackling the economic and heritage-confidence challenges of the post-New Order era, Ne' Reba's son had been training young Ke'te' Kesu'ers to carve utilitarian objects embellished with Toraja designs for export to both the domestic and international market. As he explained to me, in carving utilitarian objects such as coffee tables, clocks and Kleenex boxes embellished with traditional Toraja designs, these young people would discover that their heritage still has value and is still valued in the world. In addition, they would one day take pride in seeing these Toraja-produced objects in homes throughout Indonesia and the world.

The penultimate chapter in this saga is the 2001 UNESCO nomination of Ke'te' Kesu' as a World Heritage Site. By late 1998, Ne' Reba's son had become increasingly concerned about what he perceived to be cultural slippage, as he observed that the new generation was paying less heed to Kesu' and Toraja traditions. Given the trends he was observing, he feared that Kesu' and Toraja would soon be lost to new buildings and new people, with traditions and heritage paved over and forgotten. He reflected on how best to convey to his own people as well as to the world that their 'cultural heritage was a form of wealth that could not be measured in rupiah (...) and that the Kesu' and Toraja way of life should be preserved'. Drawing on all of his political skills, he slavishly lobbied various ambassadors and politicians, eventually gaining the moral support of the Indonesian

Directorate of Culture and earning the assistance of the Japanese Cultural Center. Eventually he and his growing chorus gained the ear of Indonesia's Minister of Tourism, who then invited the UNESCO Conference for the Asia-Pacific Region to convene in Tana Toraja Regency. As a result of this meeting, through the efforts of Ne' Reba's son and others, Ke'te' Kesu' was registered for candidacy as a World Heritage Site (receiving registration No. C1038). This designation promised not only renewed celebrity and respect for Kesu' heritage, but also suggested a timely infusion of financial capital into the village. Initially, the publicity surrounding the UNESCO nomination as well as Indonesia's enhanced political stability with Megawati Sukarnoputri's installation as President prompted a resurgence of tourism to Tana Toraja Regency and gave the residents of Ke'te' Kesu' reason for optimism. However, following the aftermath of the Islamist suicide aeroplane hijackings and crashing of 11 September 2001 and the Islamist bombings in tourist enclaves in Bali in 2002 and 2005, the short-term future of tourism in Indonesia began to look precarious.

'FIXING' WORLD HERITAGE

By 2004, Ke'te' Kesu's trek to global celebrity had ended. Apparently, the core issue that toppled the hamlet's candidacy for World Heritage Site status centred on the thorny concept of authenticity. Although it is possible that local Toraja rivalries and resentments over the hamlet's rise to UNESCO celebrity were also at play in Ke'te' Kesu's derailing,²² the Regional Adviser to UNESCO for Culture in the Asia Pacific does not acknowledge these issues. Rather, he summarizes why the hamlet was removed from consideration as a World Heritage Site as follows:

Both the tourism industry and the heritage profession risk becoming confused about what is real and what is fake. A nomination for World Heritage inscription of the Tana Toraja homeland was put forward recently to the World Heritage Committee, prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (which at that time were part of the same ministry). However, and in spite of the rhetoric about the importance of protecting the cultural landscape and traditional practices, when the nomination maps were closely examined it was clear that the area that was in fact nominated for protection under the World Heritage Convention was limited to only five structures in the compound of the local tourist office, one of which was a totally new construction in modern materials made to look like a traditional house, while the other four were moved from their original location and

rebuilt to the tourist office premises, with considerable alteration to their form and material – and a complete loss of original function. The rejection of this nomination by the World Heritage Committee caused consternation among both the tourism industry and the heritage management office, neither of which understood what was inappropriate about the nomination – a circumstance which demonstrates just how confused the heritage tourism industry has become about what is real and what is not. Local inhabitants, however, welcomed the rejection of this nomination and took advantage of the confusion caused by this so-called ‘set-back’ to heritage tourism to retake control of how – *and even if* – Torajan heritage is to be shared with visitors (Engelhardt, 2007: 6).

Striking about this summary is the assumption that the movement of the ancestral homes almost 100 years ago, the more recent attempts by local tourism agencies to improve the village by adding features such as sidewalks, as well as one local family’s addition of a museum in the form of an ancestral house all added up to what this UNESCO adviser deemed to be ‘fake’. That the ancestral homes continue to be the centre of local ritual activities, that the village has long been home to multiple families and that these families themselves were responsible for many of the village’s transformations did not enter into this particular UNESCO consultant’s calculus of Ke’tete’ Kesu’s authenticity. For him, the yardstick of authenticity had been fixed at some imagined point in the distant past. As he went on to conclude, this was an instance of ‘staged authenticity’ which ‘is always inappropriate and culturally unacceptable’ (Engelhardt, 2007: 6). While Ke’tete’ Kesu’ers would be the first to acknowledge that they are savvy players in the game of cultural politics, they would be startled by this characterization of their ancestral hamlet as an inauthentic fiction rebuilt to tourist office specifications.

Ultimately, as Engelhardt alludes to in the above quote, other Torajas ‘took advantage of the confusion’ to navigate for a broader conception of the entire region as a heritage site. In June 2005, Indonesian authorities submitted a draft nomination of all of Tana Toraja for consideration as worthy of inclusion on the World Heritage Site List. However, the region still sits on the sidelines awaiting global recognition, as UNESCO deemed its documentation incomplete and advised authorities to finalize it for re-submission (Feng Jing (UNESCO official), personal communication 7 March 2008).

As the Tana Toraja case study illustrates, the emergence of heritage sites is not a ‘natural’ process, but rather one born out of complex exchanges, competitions and collaborations between local groups, as well as national and international entities. While there are important ‘Toraja’ indigenous ideas about heritage inscribed in the *tongkonan* that comprise the village of Ke’tete’ Kesu’ (cf. Adams, 1998a, 2006), the hamlet itself is also very much a product of the Dutch colonial past. Moreover, in the course of its evolution over the past century, Ke’tete’ Kesu’ has been shaped by other processes and institutions that stretch far beyond the local. While local actors and rivalries between local elites are salient to understanding Kete’ Kesu’s trajectory to candidacy as a World Heritage Site, as well as to understanding its replacement on this list with the broader category of ‘Tana Toraja’, a more informed analysis requires situating this particular cultural landscape into a larger national and global context.

As we saw, the mid-twentieth century uncertainties of Indonesian national independence were not without ramifications for Ke’tete’ Kesu’, as local districts were reshaped and renamed by new government bureaucrats. This threat of administrative erasure of the Kesu’ name prompted Kesu’ elites to search for alternative means to ensure the longevity and prestige of their heritage. International tourism and foreign and domestic social science researchers became avenues for Ke’tete’ Kesu’s survival. In a similar vein, as Kesu’ers gained in experience outside the region, the western institutions of museums and libraries were embraced as supplementary avenues for fortifying Kesu’ heritage. Finally, as the Asian economic crisis reached Tana Toraja and Indonesian political stability eroded in the late 1990s, Kesu’ers explored new non-touristic avenues to promote their economic survival and simultaneously their heritage. Through marketing modern utilitarian wooden objects embellished with carved Toraja motifs nationally and internationally, Kesu’ers’ livelihood and involvement in producing traditional symbols was assured. In short, while certainly a ‘*genius loci*’, Ke’tete’ Kesu’ is not the static and unchanging embodiment of tradition imagined by UNESCO. And, in fact, when UNESCO advisers became aware of the broad strokes of Ke’tete’ Kesu’s history, it was promptly discarded as a candidate for World Heritage Site status, ultimately to be replaced by the broader (and less rivalry-inciting) site of Tana Toraja.

The Tana Toraja’s Tentative World Heritage Site status is the product of a long interplay between the local, the national and the global. As we have seen, Ke’tete’ Kesu’ers were reshaping and rethinking their notions

about heritage, as they encountered multiple forces from within, around, and beyond the nation. Examining Ke'te' Kesu's derailed ascendance to candidacy as a World Heritage Site, and the shift to the broader category of 'Tana Toraja', offers insights into the process of cultural objectification, as we come to appreciate better the complex roles of local and international players in 'fixing' and promoting this dynamic locale. Moreover, it is highly probable that the case of Ke'te' Kesu' hamlet, and ultimately Tana Toraja, is not a unique tale in the annals of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Rather, it would seem that most locales that successfully gain candidacy for UNESCO World Heritage Site status are places that have undergone similar trajectories, where local, national and international forces have conspired, wittingly and unwittingly, to project these 'endangered' sites on to the global stage.

NOTES

- 1 This chapter is a revised and up-dated version of 'The Politics of Heritage in Tana Toraja, Indonesia: Interplaying the Local and the Global', originally published in *Indonesia and the Malay World* in 2003 (a condensed version of that earlier article also appeared in *Current Issues in Tourism* in 2004).
- 2 Here I do not mean to reify the sense that there is a universal 'Toraja' perspective on the meaning of heritage. Clearly, ideas about heritage vary between different sectors of the population (elites and those of 'low' ancestry, urban Toraja and hinterland villagers, etc.) and also vary regionally.
- 3 Moreover, it may well be the case that it is precisely this history of overlooked discourse with the wider world (and the concomitant notion of newly-arrived endangerment from the wider world) that enables heritage sites to gain UNESCO pre-eminence.
- 4 For a brief video clip of this opening ceremony, see the 'Global Meeting' section of the web page <http://jakarta.unesco.or.id/prog/clturetoraja.html>.
- 5 As of 2008 the World Heritage Committee had 878 sites on its list; of these 679 were cultural, 174 natural and 25 were mixed sites, and only 29 are located in Southeast Asia (see introductory Chapter 1 and Table 1.1). As some Asian observers have noted for some time, the Asian sites have been under-represented (Villalon, 2001: 1). Calling for 'brotherhood despite diversity' some Southeast Asian cultural observers have urged that Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage site nominating should not be done in isolation, but rather Southeast Asian sites should be proposed strategically with an emphasis on selecting sites that 'identify the common cultural thread uniting Asians despite their differences' (Villalon, 2001: 2).
- 6 Among the criteria for inclusion of cultural properties on the World Heritage List are the requirements that the nominated site, '(i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; or (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world (...); or (iii) bear a unique or at least

- exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; or (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; or (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal' (<http://whc.unesco.org/opgutoc.htm#debut>, downloaded 21 May 2002). Criteria for inclusion of natural properties include the following: That the sites '(i) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history (...); or (ii) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; or (iii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; or (iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation' (<http://whc.unesco.org/opgutoc.htm#debut>, downloaded 21 May 2002).
- 7 See Andrew Causey (2003) for a stimulating discussion of the concept of utopias in contemporary tourism practices and fantasies.
 - 8 Bruner's observations that tourism has recuperated the major binary oppositions such as 'traditional-modern' long since discarded by anthropology appears to apply to international heritage organizations as well (Bruner, 2001).
 - 9 Because of limitations of space, this chapter's discussions of Toraja conceptions of these matters concentrates primarily on Ke'te' Kesu' elite perceptions and their representations of heritage.
 - 10 In recent years there has been much discussion of the idea of the house as a specific form of social organization. This proposition has captured the attention of many Austronesianists, as it appears to have a great deal of explaining power for many dimensions of kinship practices and orientations. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, 1983, 1987; Waterson, 1990, 1995; Fox, 1987, 1993; Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995, and Erb, 1999 for further explorations of this concept.
 - 11 Waterson notes that the salience of the *tongkonan* may well have grown in recent years, as tourism and cultural efflorescence have become increasingly important in Indonesia (1990). Architecturally, *tongkonan* structures have become more exaggerated over the past two decades, with the rooftops of newer *tongkonan* flaring ever-higher and Toraja families incorporating *tongkonan* motifs into their homes (cf. Kis-Jovak, Nooy-Palm, Schefold and Schulz-Dornburg, 1988).
 - 12 Such as the *mangrara tongkonan* ritual.
 - 13 As Waterson notes, 'Some origin-houses associated with very important ancestors have in fact long ceased to exist, but their sites are still well remembered and in theory if the descendants willed it, they could be rebuilt' (Waterson, 1997:65). Indeed, friends who traced their ancestry to *Tongkonan Kesu'* always pointed out its original site when we found ourselves in its vicinity.

- 14 I was told that certain highly symbolic pieces of the *tongkonan* would be relocated in such a move, but that generally the entire house is not dismantled and relocated (although this is done with Toraja rice barns, when circumstances call for their move). Beyond this, my mentors did not provide further clarification on the physical logistics of the *tongkonan* relocation process. Given that it is common practice for Toraja families to completely rebuild *tongkonans* that fall into disrepair on the same site, using new wood, new carvings and new roofs, I can only conclude that this was what was done with *Tongkonan Kesu*'.
- 15 The term *adat* is ubiquitous in the Malay world and carries complex multiple meanings. Generally translated as 'custom', 'customary law', 'tradition' or 'behaviour', numerous writers have explored the nuances of this concept. C. van Vollenhoven published one of the early texts on *adat* in the Netherlands Indies in 1918, establishing the foundation for subsequent works on the topic. Drawing on ethnographic research, he created classifications for various *adat* or customary law regions in the Netherlands Indies (1918). Contemporary scholars have turned their attention to examining subjective dimensions of the concept of *adat* and to chronicling its political manipulations. Zainal Kling, for instance, defines *adat* as the 'indigenous body of knowledge and law of the Malay world' (1997: 45) and discusses *adat* as the folk-model whereby Malay self-identity is maintained. Ultimately, he suggests that *adat* is most aptly understood as 'the subjective understanding of the Malay society of their cultural formations and cultural constructs' (1997: 46).
- 16 In previous writings I have used the pseudonym Ne' Duma. However, he is now deceased and his descendants have expressed their desire to have his memory and contributions better known, be it through anthropological writings aimed at the English-speaking world or via more Toraja-oriented memorials.
- 17 *Wisata* translates as 'tour', and *obyek wisata* can be translated as 'tour object' or 'tourist object'. The Indonesian government has promoted the use of these expressions as part of its tourism development project. The very use of these terms suggests a reconditioning of the local gaze, as village inhabitants come to perceive their homes as 'objects' for tourists.
- 18 See Adams 1993a, 1995 for further elaboration of the role of foreign researchers in amplifying particular versions of Toraja heritage and identity.
- 19 On the final day of the funeral, Ne' Reba's body was enshrined in an enormous and spectacular modern cement tomb behind the village by the cliff-side graves. Today, almost twenty years later, guides still pause by his tomb to recount the story of this *Kesu*' elder and his final send-off.
- 20 For a more detailed discussion of this museum, as well as the museum in Sangalla, see Adams, 1997b.
- 21 It is noteworthy that in describing his vision to me, Renda Sarungallo chose not to use the Indonesian term for library (*perpustakaan*) but rather the Dutch term. As a Dutch-educated Torajan whose first wife had been Dutch, Renda Sarungallo was clearly inspired by this European institution.
- 22 As noted earlier, people in other regions of Tana Toraja felt their own villages were equally deserving of World Heritage Site recognition and were irked by Ke'te' *Kesu*'ers' attempt to grab the limelight for themselves.

CHAPTER 3

The Reconstruction of Atayal Identity in Wulai, Taiwan¹

Mami Yoshimura and Geoffrey Wall

INTRODUCTION

Cultural expressions come in both tangible and intangible forms, with associated stories and interpretations. Selected cultural expressions may be commodified as heritage and sold to tourists, and in the process their meaning and significance may be changed. This chapter addresses both the heritage of the Atayal in Taiwan, parts of whose cultural activities were suppressed by colonial powers, and their attempts to reconstruct their culture, identity and heritage within the context of tourism. The contribution addresses questions concerning the changing relationships between culture, identity and tourism as this indigenous people strives to recover from a marginalizing situation that has resulted from colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The Atayal are one of thirteen officially-recognized indigenous groups in Taiwan. Although Taiwan is not a Southeast Asian country, the Atayal are speakers of an Austronesian language with many affinities to Southeast Asia. They have experienced both colonialism and tourism development. During Japan's occupation (1895–1945), they were forced into village settlements and were required to abandon certain socio-cultural activities: facial tattooing, head-hunting and weaving. The Atayal lost most of their original textiles because, during the Japanese colonial period, many of them were taken to Japan. Today, these textiles, most of which are in storage, are preserved in a few Japanese museums, and are brought out only when

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Edited by
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