

2. South-west Celebes: the Buginese communities. 1P 1-5

What sort of position did a king have, in theory and in practice, among the Buginese, a people who came to distinguish themselves by their successful pursuit of power throughout the Malayo-Indon. world? Two sources of info: 1). trad. stories, widespread among the Buginese communities, re. the origin of kingship 2). Buginese adat - law and custom and traditional sayings re correct way of behaving and procedure.

Myths re origin of kingship generally take this form: in the beginning there was chaos. Then the gods of the Upperworld and the Underworld decided to transform the chaos on earth into a habitable place. A god of the Upperw. and a goddess of the Underw. are wed and begin a civilisation which gradually spreads. These gods and their descendants continue to rule on the earth until one day, for some unexplained reason, the gods return to their worlds and leave mankind without their divine rulers. For seven generations mankind is left without rulers and becomes "like fishes devouring one another". This situation only ends when the people of each community find a heavenly ruler to be their king. Usually they are said to have seen him come down from heaven, in the midst of thunder and lightning, and w. a retinue carrying the regalia of royalty. They approach him and say: "We come to you to beseech you to have pity on us and stay here with us forever. We have neither ruler nor Hadat ( Council of Elders ) in our land and we beg you to become our ruler....." He then becomes ruler and starts introducing regulations and institutions for the ~~community~~ running of the kingdom. The regulations specifically mention in these myths are those concerning property rights, transferral of property, etc. He also forms the Hadat to serve as the court of highest appeal in adat decisions and as advisor to the ruler himself.

In these myths, the ruler is regarded as possessing special divine powers which could be harnessed for the welfare of the community. Having descended from the heavens and having agreed to remain on the earth, he is seen as occupying a unique position from which he could intercede with the gods for mankind. The sacral, divine aspect of the ruler and his descendants in the

myth is reinforced by the mysterious manner in which they vanish rather than die. One queen is said to have been spirited away by a flame from heaven. In the adat works however, it is not this divine aspect which is emphasized, but rather the king's role as an arbiter among men. This role of the ruler can only be understood by examining how and why kingship was introduced in Bone.

Before the appearance of the ruler, there were a number of small communities known as wanua ( centred around a sacred object called a gaukang ) Various sorts of relationship existed among these little communities, e.g. there were offshbot small communities from the mother community and there were examples of two wanua communities joining together for strength; also there were quarræls between the communities over disputed land boundaries, fishing rights etc. These disputes were impossible to arbitrate because there was no superior authority recognised by the various wanua. This is the situation described in the myths as men being like fishes devouring one another. Therefore the ruler and his Hadat were set up as an over-arching federation structure. The individual communities, however, retained a firm hold on the new govtal apparatus, since each of them was represented in the Hadat by its head, the arung. The role of the ruler was that of arbiter, when there was disagreement between the communities. Despite his divine qualities, the ruler was by no means absolute. See adat sayings: " A ruler who does not consult w. his ministers will be destroyed " " Whenever the ruler forgets something, the ministers must remind him, and whenever the ministers forget something, the ruler must remind them ". The ruler is subordinate to the adat and thus to its guardians, the Hadat. He can be deposed if he does not act properly. He is supposed to maintain the welfare of his people, is advised to mix with them to learn about their daily work, and is not to allow his relatives to oppress them.

To sum up, the ruler has a dual function - as <sup>a mediator</sup>~~an arbiter~~ between the people and the gods, and as a mediator between the individual wanua communities to ensure the smooth functioning and the prosperity of the soc. The second function seems to have been far more important.