

Torajas Carving Symbols and the Theological Meaning

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ABSTRAK

In the sense that God's salvation, we still have experienced in a sign or symbol that is the mystery of redemption that we experienced in the form of symbols. Thus the presence of Jesus Christ and His saving work in carving Toraja culture is presence in the form of signs or symbols. From the structure, symbols never appear for itself, but for which is symbolized. But what symbolized it can only be experienced and understood through the symbols. Therefore; culture is Gods manner to declared intention of His will and power to be able to dive in, to be understood and enjoyed by human beings, especially for the people of Toraja. Toraja society is a community that is rich with symbols narrated through engraving seen in traditional houses, fabrics and so on. The material presented in this section by the authors, only a fraction of the symbol in the Torajans people, who need to be revealed and given meaning in both the traditional order and culture, and in order of religiousness.

Keywords: *Torajas Carving Symbols, Theological Meaning*

I. Introduction

Torajas culture is full of symbols. The symbols are as the center of particular attention, communication tool and the foundation of mutual understanding. In every communication by language or the other medium is always using symbols. The society is hardly possible without symbols. The human mind is functioning symbolically when some components of his/ her experience arouse his/ her awareness, believe, feeling and the overview of the other experience components. The first component is the symbols and the next component constructs the meaning of the symbols.

A symbol is not identical with the object that symbolize. If this is the case, the symbol will not become a symbol of the things, but it is the things itself. It is a wrong assumption that a symbol meant to be the reproduction of the things. Actually, the symbol is intended not for reproduce the object but it is for enlighten it. The test which shows the success or fail of the symbol is not depend of the symbols loyalty in reproduce or doesnt reproduce the object indicate.

The test is whether the symbol that enlightens the object or obscure the understanding. The effective symbol is a symbol that enlightens the object and an essential part of our intellectual equipment. The symbol is a model if it is as the effective tool for intellectual action. The symbol should be simplified and sharpened so that it becomes similar with the map/ sketch of a reality that represented by the symbol as a guidance.

According to Komisi Liturgi dan Musik Gerejawi (KLM) Gereja Toraja in a topic Simbol Adat Budaya Toraja dan pemaknaannya dalam peribadahan Gereja Toraja; Simbol bagaikan darah dalam tubuh (Symbol like the blood in our body). The following explanation will explain the definition and the meaning of symbols.

Symbol is derived from Greek, Sym is together and San Ballo is throwing. Initially, symballo is a rite performed to remember and recognize each other between the sibling who met after a long separation. Each person threw a slab of their parts. They will understood that they are sibling if the slabs are directly fused. The meet,

throwing and understanding process is called a symbol where both of them do and have the similar understanding about the same that they have been done. The symbol not only proving the fraternity (objective) but also evokes the memories, history, bonding and the unity (subjective). So that symbol is the identification sign that describes and actualize an encounter and togetherness based on the obligation and agreements.

According to F.W. Dillistone in a book under the title *The power of Symbols*, explains that symbol derived from Greek Symbolon. The meaning is hurling together of two different parts. A symbol combine two different elements in form of images or language, both of them are include in the whole organism that embodies the future goals of the Greeks with regards to nature and society.

C.H.Suryanugraha states that there are three important elements is a symbol. Those are symbolic object (the symbol itself), the symbolsaction and the code of conduct , and the words or symbol language/expression.

However, in the context of a change of venue and time, symbols do not have a single meaning. This is what distinguishes the symbol with a sign that always have the sole and absolute meaning, for example traffic signs. In the Holybible, some symbols have ambiguity (ambiguous) in particular or a bipolarity (two opposite direction), which is a symbol that hint at life and also death, good and evil. For instance, the serpent in the third Genesis leads to death; Copper serpent in the wilderness gives the life. Water baptism symbolizes diving with Jesus in His death, in order to be resurrected, which means water baptism also brings to new life.

II. Discussion

The symbols are very important. It is widely recognized today. However, there is great uncertainty about how symbols appear, how influential symbols and how symbols often fade means. Can we agree on what the symbols and how symbols work?

Therefore, there are at least three meaning of the symbols:

1. The mystery of Jesus Christ tells us that

God wants to be human, living among us, to experience and to support all of our humanity with all its facets and dimensions, including cultural and even redeem our humanity. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Jesus is the Word made man is concrete, namely the Jews with all cultural and religious traditions. The whole symbolism used in Jewish culture and religious traditions imposed by Him again. God uses symbols to be human through the symbols in the culture that God can meet the human. That is why in Torajas carving culture is also one of the ways of God in met the Torajans people in their culture.

2. The human cannot break away from the symbols. In fact, Ernst Cassirer called the humans as animal symbolicum - humans are creatures symbolic. What to wear, what to do, what to think, what the man is always symbolic. The language we use to compose your own thoughts or words are symbols. In fact, the man himself is a symbol. The whole presence and what is made by the faithful who are always characterized by a symbolic collection of human beings. In this case, Torajas carving is the meaning of a symbol for the Torajans people.
3. The encounter with God. On the 1 Cor 13:12, Paul is talking about you, but overall Paul mean that we have still experienced salvation or redemption of Christ has not been entirely. But when in heaven later, then we have experienced salvation in full by seeing God face to face. By other terms, Paul says that we are saved in hope (Rome 8:24). Our fellowship with God in today's world is still ongoing within the limitations of the body and well-being. Heavenly treasure that still we save and experienced in jars of clay (cp. 2 Cor 4: 7).

In the sense that God's salvation, we still have experienced in a sign or symbol that is the mystery of redemption that we experienced in the form of symbols.

Thus the presence of Jesus Christ and His saving work in carving Toraja culture is presence in the form of signs or symbols. From the structure, symbols never appear for itself, but for

which is symbolized. But what symbolized it can only be experienced and understood through the symbols. Based on the explanation above, it can be stated that the symbols of the Torajas carving in is expressing the theology in the context of Torajans culture. Some of TORAJAS Carvings: The theological meaning and significance:

1. Ne' Limbongan

Ne 'Limbongan is the name of a person. In Toraja society. Ne 'means grandmother that people who already have grandchildren and name behind ne' is the name of his grandson/granddaughter. Limbongan derived from the origin of the word Limbong which means lake or dam, stagnant water. This carving gives the meaning as: a symbol of prosperity, with the hope of descent and houses built will get sustenance. Ne'Limbongan is an architect that inventor of Torajas carvings (3000 years ago). (Sande', J.S, 1989).



Gambar 1: *Ne' Limbongan*

2. Pa'Allo Barre

Barre in Toraja mean spherical or round. Allo means the sun. So pa'barreallo is rounded carvings resemble the sun. The sun gives life. In Greek mythology, for example, we know that there is the sun god. Pa'barre allo placed on the Toraja traditional house and on the jut leaning of the riceburn (longa). Pa'barreallo is the epitome of greatness. Jesus is the sun of the life, so we may enjoy eternal life, that is salvation.

3. Pa' Kapu' Baka

Kapu baka was bond of the baskets that



Gambar 2: *Pa'Allo Barre*

strapped cover cross. Pakapu baka Carving 'immortal bond following the example of the basket cover. Baka usual kind of big baskets that usually used by the women, baka used for collect rice or vegetables. Additionally baka used as a place to store jewelry or precious fabrics. Carving is a symbol of unity Tongkonan family lineage. Tongkonan is shows the strengthen of the family as a kinship. Badan Pekerja Sinode Gereja Toraja Building of Toraja Church is Tongkonan Sangullele. The place that we believe ma'tongkonan as one family of God. Because the building is called Tongkonan Sangullele BPS Gereja Toraja.



Gambar 3: *Pa' Kapu' Baka*

4. Pa' Kadang Pao

Kadang means of hooks, being pao means mango. Kadang pao means the hook of ma-

Gambar 4: *Pa' Kadang Pao*Gambar 5: *Pa' Bulu Londong*

ngo. This engraving meaning that the treasures we have "entered into the house" like a crocheted honest way and the results will be obtained if through cooperation with other parties (Sande, J.S., 1989). Looking for the blessing needs to be done with honesty. So Paul says: "If anyone is not willing to work neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). This means that only by working with honesty we could eat in peace.

5. Pa' Bulu Londong

Bulu means feather; Londong is a rooster; so Pabulu Londong means rooster feathers; Londong also means a figure of speech for men like tiromi a'ganna Londong, it means look at deeds of men or Iondongna pia muane means the gallant and brave boys. Ma'kada Londong means saying the right and honest. Thus, for the Toraja; telling the truth in defense of truth should be placed above everything. Thus, every believer is supposed to brave ma'kada Londong, Always says the right things, if one says one.

6. Pa' Tedong

Tedong buffalo. Pa' tedong carving is the profile of the buffalo head. Buffalo in Toraja society has a high position compared with other types of pets. The buffalo is a symbol of prosperity, has a well-established means to live buffalo (cp. Goats, sheep owned by patriarchs in the Bible). Buffaloes usually becomes the measure of value in the sale; he also became the supreme sacrifice in religious

rites

Gambar 6: *Pa' Tedong*

7. Pa' Tangki' Pattung 1

Tangki means stake and pattung is a bamboo; pattung is a kind of greater bamboo. Family Toraja first create a drink from glasses resemble bamboo. The handle of the bamboo carved and painting profile that is called pa'tangki 'pattung. This carving a symbol of greatness for royalty Toraja (K. Occasionally, 1960). The theological meaning that the cup symbolizes the greatness of God from which we enjoy eternal life.

8. Pa' Tangki' Pattung 2

This Carving is a continuation or extension of the pa' tangke pattung I. When we considered there are 2 figure like the eight congruent. This means that in Tongkonan, all the families have equal rights to land and inheritance. In God, we are and the siblings, no Jews and Greeks.



Gambar 7: Pa' Tangki' Pattung 1



Gambar 9: Pa' Tanduk Ra'pe



Gambar 8: Pa' Tangki' Pattung 2

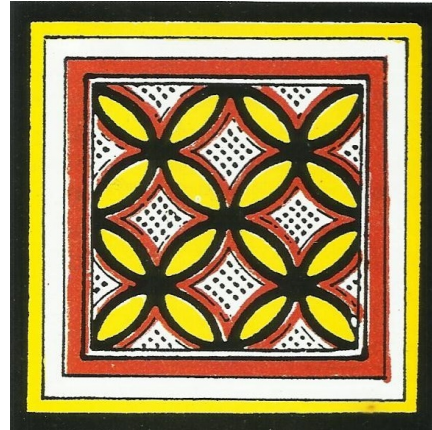


Gambar 10: Pa' Pollo' Gayang

status which was very expensive. In the past, the price is 16 buffalo. In and through Jesus Christ, every believer called children of God.

9. Pa' Tanduk Ra'pe Tanduk means horn. Ra'pe means curved downwards and ends up, like a buffalo horn (buffalo types healers). This engraving is usually placed on the wall of a traditional Toraja house, as memories of the animals that have a value in the life of Toraja people. But also a marker that is expected Torajans people blessing is getting up and grow prosperous. In God those who trust in Him will enjoy the blessing that is; ".... by him (Abraham) all the nations of the earth be blessed "(Gen. 18:18).
10. Pa' Pollo' Gayang
Gayang is a gold dagger, was pollo 'is the tail. Pa'pollo Gayang carving is a painting that is on the tail of gold dagger. Only the nobility and wealthy families that own these objects. Its use was limited that the orgy of death and glorious celebration (Sande ', J.S., 1989). The dancers at the party using this jewelry. Gayang is the symbol of social

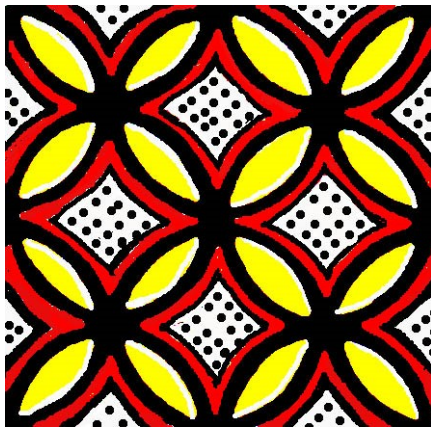
11. Pa' Ulu Gayang
Ulu means upstream (head), Gayang means Keris. Gayang ulu meaning head Keris. Pa 'ulu Gayang is engraving on the upstream Gayang. Gayang (keris) is sharp object that is used to keep away from the opponent's attack. But also heirlooms used clothing accessories complement traditional Toraja. For example, a bride wearing a traditional Toraja must also hold Gayang. Gayang also is a symbol of the greatness of the Toraja. The theological meaning: Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11).
12. Pa' Bombo Wai
Bombo means the souls of the dead. In the life of a traditional Toraja society, there is a

Gambar 11: *Pa' Ulu Gayang*Gambar 13: *Pa' Ulu Karua*

belief that there are certain people can see the bombo (souls of the dead). Pa 'bombo uai is not in the sense as the soul of the dead, but the profile of the type of water spider that very quickly floated on the water. Uai in Toraja language means sickle. This engraving meaning that a family / Christian would rapidly growing higher as it enjoys thanks to the agreement to Abraham, the father of all believers.

14. Pa' Manik-Manik

Manik is a traditional Toraja jewelry such as necklaces made of gold or silver in the form of granules by the hole and rope. It is the message to descendants as many grains of beads. The theological meaning of "I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.(Gen. 22:17).

Gambar 12: *Pa' Bombo Wai*Gambar 14: *Pa' Manik-Manik*

13. Pa' Ulu Karua

Ulu Karua in means eight heads (Ulu = head; Karua = eight) According to the myth of Toraja in the past eight Toraja ancestors who each have expertise and knowledge of this life (Sande ', J.S., 1989). Therefore the meaning of this carving is used with the hope that the family has the knowledge for the benefit of society. That we are called to be a blessing to the world with the knowledge and advantages we have.

15. Pa' Sekong Kandaure

Sekong means arch-shaped hooks. Kandaure is plait jewelry from beads with arch right-angled swirling. This carving similar to this kandaure called pa 'Sekong kandaure; the meaning is offspring children and grandchildren live in happiness and prosperity. The theological meaning: a happy life enjoyed by those who believe. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. And the peace I give you my (Jn. 14:27)



Gambar 15: *Pa' Sekong Kandaure*



Gambar 17: *Pa' Sepu' Torongkong*

16. Pa' Sekong Anak

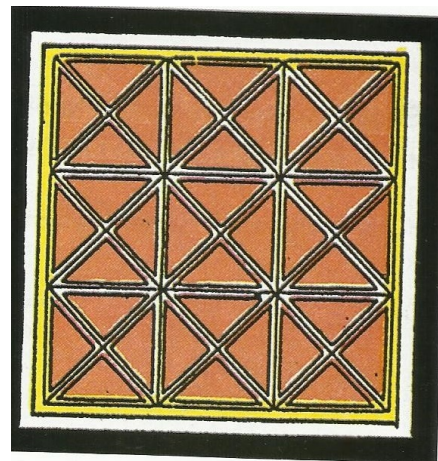
These carvings has the same shape as pa 'Sekong kandaure, but the carvings can be seen that the tip was found in the deepest circle as the location of the baby in his mother's womb. Its meaning must not be closed and convoluted but should be open for everything that facilitate the resolution of issues (Sande, J.S., 1989). The theological meaning: If yes let you say yes, if it does not let you say no. , , , (Matt. 5:37, Jas. 5:12).

18. Pa' Sala'bi' Biasa

Sala'bi 'means a fence made of bamboo cleavages. Hemisphere was plaited and serves to hold or blocking everything that is not good. This carving means that in this life we must be careful of all the possibilities that are less good. Beware lest anyone you captive through false and blank philosophy according to the teachings of hereditary and spirits of the world, but not according to Christ (Col. 2: 8).



Gambar 16: *Pa' Sekong Anak*



Gambar 18: *Pa' Sala'bi' Biasa*

17. Pa' Sepu' Torongkong

Sepu 'means small purse where the betel nut in clothing. Torongkong means people from Rongkong, an area in Luwu region. Pa 'sepul' To Rongkong means resembling small purse Rongkong person. It remembering that people Rongkong included in the Toraja ethnic. The theological meaning: Christians are part of God's family ethnicity.

19. Pa' Sala'bi' Dito'mokki

Sala'bi means fence, to'mokki means is pressed with a finger. Sala'bi hemispheres made of woven bamboo and serves as a fence to hold back or hinder everything is not good. Engraving is meaningful so that children and grandchildren to avoid all sorts of dangers. Theological meaning: the Lord's prayer Jesus taught us to pray: ... lead us not into

temptation but detached us from the evil one. (Matt. 6:13)



Gambar 19: Pa' Sala'bi' Dito'mokki

20. Pa' Siborongan

Siborongan means the divided groups. For example in doing something, a certain group completing certain parts. But this group remains in a single entity. The carving pa' siborongan indicates that the descendants of Tongkonan been growing but remain in the alliance. (To sangrapu = one big family). The theological meaning: "that they may all be one as you, Father, are in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us (Jn. 17:21)



Gambar 20: Pa' Siborongan

III. Conclusion

The society is hardly possible without the symbols. In every communication by language or

other medium such as customs and culture are using symbols. According to Ernst Cassirer humans are "animal symbolicum". Only by the symbol, the man can achieve his highest potential and purpose. The phrase is a symbol of the way to freedom inventive. According to Thomas Mann, "Life symbols in the true meaning of freedom" In the world of the Old Testament we find a lot of meaning of the symbol. Likewise in the world of the New Testament; Jesus himself taught by using symbols so easy to understand and be understood. Christ is the symbol of God that unites and reconciles. Therefore; culture is Gods manner to declared intention of His will and power to be able to dive in, to be understood and enjoyed by human beings, especially for the people of Toraja. Toraja society is a community that is rich with symbols narrated through engraving seen in traditional houses, fabrics and so on. The material presented in this section by the authors, only a fraction of the symbol in the Torajans people, who need to be revealed and given meaning in both the traditional order and culture, and in order of religiousness.

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