

Die heutigen *bogolan*-Handwerker und Künstler verfolgen nicht das Ziel, die Tradition nahtlos fortzusetzen, vielmehr dient sie ihnen als bedeutungsvoller Referenzrahmen, den sie zur Befriedigung moderner Bedürfnisse nutzen. Die vielfältige Anpassung eines lokalen, traditionellen Textils an so unterschiedliche Marktverhältnisse, Rezipienten und deren Wünsche und Träume in globalen Verhältnissen ist ein eindruckliches Beispiel für die Flexibilität und Dynamik von Tradition in Afrika.

Ilsemargret Luttmann

Schefold, Reimar, Peter J.M. Nas, Gaudenz Domenig, and Robert Wessing (eds.): *Indonesian Houses*; vol. 2: *Survey of Vernacular Architecture in Western Indonesia*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008. 716 pp., photos. ISBN 978-90-6718-305-5. (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 251) Price: € 39.50

Indonesian houses have fascinated tourists and artists, architects and anthropologists alike. Indonesian houses have been the object of description and analysis for many decades. Given the attraction and appeal of many of these houses this is not surprising. What is astonishing, is a growing intensity of anthropological research on houses. It all started with Lewis Henry Morgan's vivid description "Houses and House Life of the American Aborigenes," published in 1881. Morgan analyzed the house community in terms of an early stage of what he had called the gens society. The tinge of communism in Morgan's ideas, the growing nationalism in much of Western academic work, and the delegation of "material culture" to the ethnographic museums, these and other factors brought the innovative ideas of Morgan to an early end. Insofar, Reimar Schefold, Peter Nas, and Gaudenz Domenig are correct in stating in volume 1 of "Indonesian houses" (2003: 1): "Until the 1960s, anthropological interest in material culture was largely restricted to a museum context and focused on diffusionist studies. This was also true of the study of vernacular architecture. Research concentrated on the documentation and classification of the traditional forms of houses and their decorations, with the final aim of reconstructing the historical spread of building types. Of course, references to symbolic meanings of dwellings and to customs relating to their habitation can be found in many anthropological monographs, but rarely as research topics in their own right, and even more rarely in a comparative perspective."

As for Indonesia, this situation has changed completely. Starting with Clark Cunningham's "Order in the Atoni House" of 1964 there is an ever-growing literature on houses and house life in Indonesia and in wider Southeast Asia. The publication under review forms a culmination within this line of research. Since some of its basic ideas appear in contributions to volume 1 and only occasionally in volume 2, I will briefly refer to them. A starting point is the explicit interest in the cooperation between architects and anthropologists. The editors are convinced that while the "traditional houses and settlements of the several hundred ethnic groups of Indone-

sia are extremely varied and all have their own specific history. Underlying this rich diversity are fundamental correspondences rooted in the ancient heritage shared by all the peoples in our field of study" (2003: 5). From this follows that while "the main issue is change 'through time,' synchronic variation or change 'through space' also receives much attention." Two ideas are thus closely tied together, a Weberian ideal-type of the Indonesian house, and the concept of the field of anthropological study (FAS) put forward by J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong in 1935 under the name of 'ethnologisch studieveld.' These ideas are elaborated in Schefold's chapter "The Southeast Asian-Type House. Common Features and Local Transformations of an Ancient Architectural Tradition." Schefold, while being one of the prominent supporters of the concept of the FAS, also presents some difficulties which arise from its application. Conceived as an area which offers itself through some common major cultural traits to an intensive study of varieties of these and other traits, it promised a high degree of mutual elucidation in the cultural analysis. Indonesia with its many languages, of which the vast majority belongs to one major branch of the Austronesian language family, seemed the ideal area for this notion of the FAS. Problems arise because the distribution area of varieties of the house type conceived of as Southeast Asian stretches right into non-Austronesian areas. One of the constituents of the original concept of the field, i.e., the belonging to one language family, is not met with sufficiently. Schefold proceeds with the establishment of the Southeast Asian-type house by discussing seven formal features which shall be presented here: 1. tripartite house; 2. the multi-levelled floor; 3. the outward-slanting gable; 4. outward-slanting walls; 5. gable finials; 6. the saddle-backed roof; and 7. differential treatment of root and tip in the use of timber.

These features are explained at varying length. Sometimes explanations seem to follow functional lines easily. But Schefold insists that there is more to be explained than the sheer view "form follows function," and that the phenomenon of "form follows meaning" is also present. The cooperation of anthropologist and architect comes clearly to the fore here. While Schefold stresses the existence of ideational elements, Domenig, in his "Consequences of Functional Change. Granaries, Granary-Dwellings, and Houses of the Toba-Batak," views architectural change as function of changing ways of life. An analysis of social change becomes an obligatory precondition for the analysis of buildings in their history, while these changes allow for inferences in social life. "Old" notions of survival and revival are paid honour again as methodical instruments. It is surprising to see how in the wider historical frame many of the traits presented by Schefold can be traced back to the Đông-sơ'n period. Finally, a chapter in volume 1 has to be mentioned, which is highly valuable but which is not taken up again in volume 2, the glossary of technical terms, compiled and illustrated by Domenig.

While the huge project "Indonesian Houses" is concentrated on Western Indonesia, volume 1 features also

several articles on central and eastern Indonesia to illustrate the variety of houses within Indonesia. The second volume contains only articles on western Indonesia, more precisely on Sumatra and Java, and two additional chapters on specific house forms. While in volume 1 the stretching of the Southeast Asian-type house into Austroasiatic and Tibeto-Burmese language areas was seen as a necessity to use “Southeast Asian” instead of “Indonesian,” we now find the field of research restricted to the two major islands mentioned above. The criteria for this choice do not become completely clear. But all major areas of vernacular architecture in this field are covered.

Schefold, Nas, and Wessing inform in their introduction that in addition to the relationship of continuity and diachronic change, which were prominent topics in the contributions to the first volume, the reader now encounters “a precise technical description of the prevailing building types, their ornamentation, the processes of their construction, and their spatial arrangements; an account of the daily and ritual uses of houses in their relationship to the local social organization; the symbolic role of a building and its spatial orientation as a repository of (and eventually as an effective ritual instrument for) ideas about meaningful relationships in the surrounding cosmos; historical processes and the role that the construction or maintenance of a building can play in internal and external social interaction” (1 f.).

This is quite ambitious and can of course not be come up with by each contributor and definitely not for all the variants within one area. Also, since building a house is not on the same level as digging up manioc tubers the actual building process and the eminent role of the builders is a topic rarely analysed in detail.

An addition to the features mentioned as characteristic for the Southeast Asian-type house and suggested by G. Forth in his article on Flores island Nage houses is the notion of “spatial bifurcation,” the lateral or longitudinal dual divisions that are so frequently encountered throughout Indonesia and are commonly articulated in gender terms.

These are the areas covered and the authors of the respective articles: Aceh, Gayo, and Alas (Nas, Iwabuchi), Karo (Domenig), Minangkabau (Asri), Minangkabau (Vellinga), Siberut (Schefold), Nias (Viaro), Rejang (Wuisman), Jambi (Kerlogue), Palembang (Taal), Kerinci (Domenig), Besemah (Barendregt), Enggano (ter Keurs), Sunda (Wessing), Kanekes (Barendregt, Wessing), Jakarta (Nas, Shahab, Wuisman), Jakarta (Habsjah). While no details will be given about each house and each of the house types, several of the most remarkable elements will be mentioned. One prevailing impression from the majority of the reports is the enormous speed of change in construction forms with a simultaneous recession or loss of vernacular meaning attached to houses. As a contrast to “vernacular” we see assimilation to Islamic forms or to more individualist “Western” ways of living. We learn from the examples from the province of Aceh (NAD) that only a few traditional houses exist among the Gayo and none in the Alas area, whereas in the coastal areas, inhabited by Aceh people, quite a number of the

generous Aceh houses can be seen. Most photographs of houses and house plans are taken from older publications. Bowen is quoted as writing that “Gayo abandoned the use of their longhouses far more quickly than most other Sumatran peoples did, because they tend to follow fashion and do not make continuity a central part of their socio-cultural identity” (39). One might go one step further: the longhouse is not a suitable dwelling of coffee farmers, let alone businessmen.

Variation in Karo architecture follows lines of relationship between different Karo buildings and their parts and neighbouring areas, including Mentawai, but above all Pakpak, Simalungun, and Toba houses, the latter treated with equally great precision by the author in volume 1. Of particular interest in Vellinga’s article is the diversity of buildings, on one hand, the changing reasons for this diversity, and the pressure exerted to follow the stereotyped Minangkabau house when new houses are built. Syamsul Asri shows in his essay on Minangkabau houses in a settlement on the slope of Mount Marapi, how formerly houses were directed towards the Marapi, the mountain of origin for many Minangkabau. He also presents an ideal sequence of settling a new piece of land and the dwellings typical for each of the phases of settlement. Phases in the construction of a house are shown as well as the role of the *tukang tuo*, the chief carpenter.

Siberut and Nias are covered by Schefold and Viaro, respectively. Schefold manages to build something like a small but very dense monograph of social and wider cultural life around the *uma*, the North Mentawai house. Viaro, to whom we owe several detailed reports on Nias architecture and also the construction of the Gunungsitoli museum, describes houses of commoners in the three areas of the island. One of the statements never stressed to this degree is that the layout of the villages and the design of the houses reflect the importance of defence.

Instead of picking up one or more features from the remaining articles, thus distorting more than underlining their quality, I want to stress that all of them contain information received during more recent fieldwork done in the respective areas. Some of them are extensions of articles published in volume 1. One – the article on Kerinci – leans heavily on information collected by Depati Alimin who sent his (unpublished) report to the Leiden team. The smallest island present in the presentations, Enggano, is dealt with twice. While ter Keurs gives general information on the life on Enggano and on the so called beehive houses and their close connection with headhunting, Domenig in his comparative article takes round houses in Indonesia to a burial. In most cases, including Enggano, these round or beehive houses were either not round but oval, which means, they were prolonged rectangular houses; or they had developed from granaries and were occasional granary-dwelling places.

Of equal importance for a reconstruction of the history of dwelling types is the article on nomadic forest dwellers. Porath and Persoon lean toward the interpretation of these forest dwellers as highly specialised in hunting and collecting in the forest, but they do not regard these people as remnants showing features of early

life-styles. These hunters and collectors use lean-toe and huts that fit their purposes best.

The houses of Jambi, Palembang, and southern Sumatra are covered by detailed essays strengthening the impression of much more variation in the architectural repertoire than was usually assumed. The five articles on Java comprise two on rural areas, including one on the Kanekes (Baduy) people. The other three have to do with houses of the Betawi, this very specific group in Jakarta, with dwellings of three Betawi families in very poor state. The final chapter starts with the notion of *kampung* and its many meanings, including the idea of the spacious rural community as well as the crowded and noisy slum area.

This book with its predecessor, volume 1 of "Indonesian Houses," is a compendium of good descriptions and analyzes. That there is – nevertheless – more to be done, is exemplified by three further publications that appeared in the meantime in the Leiden Series on Indonesian Architecture. As of now, the most comprehensive volume of studies on western Indonesian houses and house life is placed at our disposal. Editors and authors and the related institutions are to be congratulated on this achievement.

Wolfgang Marschall

Sibeth, Achim (Hrsg.): *Bali im Fokus der Kamera. Drei balinesische Fotografen 1930–2009*. Frankfurt: Museum der Weltkulturen, 2009. 183 pp., Fotos. ISBN 3-88270-416-0. (Galerie 37 des Museums der Weltkulturen, 15) Preis: € 27,80

The island of Bali is worldwide known for its rituals, dances, and beautiful landscapes. A limited number of stereotypical visual representations have reproduced these images time and again. This even happened to such an extent that images outside the categories ritual, dance, and landscape are very rare. Because the main producers of the stereotypical images of Bali were Western photographers, the Museum der Weltkulturen in Frankfurt am Main decided to invite three Balinese photographers to show their representations of Bali. However, the book under review, which was published as a catalogue of a photo exhibition in Galerie 37 of the Museum der Weltkulturen, confirms the same set of clichés. I failed to discover significant differences between the work by mainstream Western photographers and the three photographers from Bali.

Auw Kok Heng (1913–1976) was born in China but moved to Bali where he opened a photo shop during the colonial period. His work is very similar to the well-known photos made by Gregor Krause in the 1920s. From the 43 black-and-white photos by him, which are reproduced in this book, 23 depict Balinese women with naked breasts, thirteen are about rituals or performances, and only four show scenes from everyday life.

The second photographer from Bali is the son of Auw Kok Heng, Karyadinata Sudjana (b. 1942). From the 28 photos by him, twelve are about rituals and dances, and eight present landscapes. From Ida Bagus Putra Adnyana, a son of a tourist guide, no less than 60 pho-

tos are presented. Again the majority (34) cover rituals and dances, eleven photos present landscapes, and only four contain scenes from ordinary life. What we see are photos selected for their marketability, selling "Bali, the dream" and neglecting other aspects of life in Bali. What is left out are important themes from contemporary life in Bali like tourism, urbanization, environmental problems, youth culture, the emergence of an affluent middle class, and the growing gap between rich and poor.

Therefore, this book is a missed opportunity. How different would the exhibition – and the book – have looked if, for instance, a photographer like Rama Surya had been invited. Born in West Sumatra, but living in Bali, Rama Surya made a brilliant series of photos for a critical self-portrait by Balinese intellectuals about the anxieties of "modern" life in "traditional" Bali (U. Ramseyer and I. G. Raka Panji Tisna [eds.], Bali. *Living in Two Worlds. A Critical Self-Portrait*. Basel 2001). Unfortunately, unlike the photos by Rama Surya, the representations of Bali in the book under review do not offer new perspectives or (un)pleasant surprises.

Henk Schulte Nordholt

Sibeth, Achim (Hrsg.): *Being Object. Being Art. Meisterwerke aus den Sammlungen des Museums der Weltkulturen Frankfurt am Main*. Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 2009. 323 pp., Fotos. ISBN 978-5-8030-3336-9. Preis: \$ 75,00

Ausstellungskataloge getrennt von den Ausstellungen zu betrachten, die sie begleiten, kommentieren und erklären sollen, ist nicht unproblematisch. Ausstellung und Katalog entspringen einer gemeinsamen konzeptionellen Idee, gehören zusammen und existieren folglich nicht unabhängig voneinander. Der von Achim Sibeth herausgegebene Katalog "Being Object. Being Art. Meisterwerke aus den Sammlungen des Museums der Weltkulturen Frankfurt am Main" ist allerdings nicht nur der Katalog zur gleichnamigen Ausstellung, sondern darüber hinaus der aktuelle Kommentar des Frankfurter Museums der Weltkulturen zur Frage nach dem diffizilen Verhältnis von Kunst und Kontext in ethnologischen Museen. Er steht, darauf weisen die Autoren ausdrücklich hin, in einer Reihe von Ausstellungen und zugehörigen Publikationen, die sich seit etwa 10 Jahren mit der Diskussion um Kontext und Kunstcharakter von ethnografischen Objekten sowie der Weiterentwicklung musealer Präsentationsformen ethnographischer Objekte als Kunst bemühen.

Das Anliegen der vorliegenden Publikation wird dabei von Achim Sibeth (151) folgendermaßen zusammengefasst: "Die zentrale Aufgabe dieser Publikation sollte sein, den Lesern einen Einblick in die künstlerische Qualität der im Museum lagernden Sammlungen zu vermitteln. ... Vor dem Hintergrund der Sammlung sollte die Bandbreite des künstlerischen Schaffens sowohl regional als auch thematisch durch die Wahl möglichst repräsentativer, hochwertiger, seltener, ausgefallener und ästhetisch ansprechender Kunstgegenstände thematisiert werden." Für diese Auswahl herausragender Objekte wurde der