

ADD THIS TO AFTER REOG PONOROGO

SULAWESI While the bisu tradition has declined, another homosexual role continues to be recognized in Makassar society. This is the "kawe" role, which is homosexual but does not have a sacred connotation. Nevertheless, there does continue to be an appreciation for androgyny in Makassar society, as represented by the "masri" dance. This dance, which first became popular in Sulawesi in the 1920s, involves boy dancers between the ages of 8 and 12. To the music of a violin and a drum, they dance a simple rhythmic beat while chanting "kelong" verses used by young people who are courting. These boy dancers are dressed somewhat like a seductive woman, with a long white shawl as a veil. The main emphasis of the dance is the arousal of sexual excitement among the men who watch this dance. The men, most of whom are married, show their approval by slipping large amounts of money into the neck of the boy's shirt. As with the bisu, it seems to the androgynous mixture of masculine and feminine that accounts for the intense popularity of this dance.

Such a style reflects past traditions. Rather than trying to deny the femininity of such males, or to suppress their homosexual feelings, cultures like the Makassar and the Dayak are examples of Indonesian traditions of respect and appreciation for those who are different. They allowed people who might otherwise become self-hating and disruptive elements in society, to fit into a useful role instead. They saw androgyny as a benefit for society, as a symbol of the unity of humanity, a link to the higher sacred levels of existence, and an important aspect of our wonderful human diversity. As we appreciate the wisdom of the Pancasila philosophy of "unity in diversity," perhaps it would be advisable for modern Indonesians to appreciate anew the wisdom of these traditions from the past, as they help us to accept the diversity of men and women in society today.

[J. M. van der Kroef, "Transvestism and the Religious Hermaphrodite in Indonesia," *University of Manila Journal of East Asiatic Studies* 3 (April 1954): 257-265. ]