Dealing with gable finials, we considered that they could have been valued primarily as aesthetic features representing or symbolizing ‘projecting ends’, elements of a built form that ‘go beyond’ and thereby qualify the form’s finiteness. Such ornaments ‘complete’ the roof in a paradoxical way: they belong to it as ‘external parts’ protruding out of it.

The same relation can also be seen in the form of two-sided roofs with projecting gables, even though the paradox is less obvious in this case. Looking at a Toraja or Toba Batak house from the side, we notice that the conspicuously protruding gables have the aesthetic effect that the roof as a whole seems to project upward and outward from the lower body of the house. In Toraja architecture, we have even found this impression confirmed in some technical details of roof constructions. It is, however, the temporary altar that among the Sa’dan Toraja expressed this peculiar relation in a quite literal way. The lower half with the platform represented the stand on which the offerings were placed, while the upper half was formed by the upward prolongation of the posts which used to carry bouquets of Dracaena leaves, for example.

Elsewhere, I have discussed this kind of architectural relation as the expression of an archaic principle of tectonic order – ‘tectonic’ in the sense used by historians of art and architecture to refer to the harmonious structure of a whole. To give the principle a name I called it ‘the principle of parastatic complementing’, meaning the complementing of a structure by its own projecting (‘protruding’, ‘parastatic’) parts.

Basically, parastatic complementing is a simple method of creating a dually structured form in building, but if we study its wider meaning we notice that it played a considerable role by influencing the interpretation of relations that did not correspond to it literally. In this wider sense, the concept also applies, for example, to gable finals that are not literally projecting ends of bargeboards but are added as separate elements that only look like projecting ends. I have explained such instances as being symbolically equivalent to truly projecting ends. In Sa’dan Toraja architecture, the principle of parastatic complementing is also symbolised in the double figurehead consisting of a buffalo head (kabongo’) on which a long-necked bird head (katik) is superimposed as if it had grown out of the buffalo’s neck. Attached to houses of the highest-ranked nobility this pair symbolised the completion of the ritual cycle, while in its relation to architecture the kabongo’ was related to the lower timber construction, the katik to the roof above it. Together they could convey the message that the roof should be viewed
as completing the house as a counterpart ‘protruding’ out of it, although it was actually a structure built separately on top of it.

Another important application of the principle of parastatic complementing in architecture concerns horizontal oppositions in space, for instance the relation between a temple and its porch. Vitruvius describes the design of a simple Greek temple of the type aedes in antis (Greek: naos en parastasin) by saying that the porch (pronaos) is formed by the projecting ends of the side walls of the cella or inner chamber (De arch. 3.2.1; 4.4.1). The porch is thus characterised as an external part of the cella (Greek naos in the narrow sense). So, although in this case both parts are equally standing on their own foundations, we can say that the pronaos is ‘sticking out’ as a ‘parastatic’ complement of the naos in the narrow sense, forming together with it the naos in the wider sense, the temple with a porch (Domenig 1977b).

Metaphorically the same relation can also be expressed in cases where the temple and the porch were separate structures with different shapes. In Hindu tradition, the main temple (vimāna) could be a high spire and rather roundish in plan, the porch or worshippers’ hall (mukhāśalā) being added in front as a rectangular building and linked to it by a short passage. According to the Śilpa Prakāśa, a medieval Orissan text on temple architecture, ‘[t]he vimāna is the best bridegroom and the mukhāśalikā is the bride’ (S.P. II: 595-96; Boner and Rath Śarmā 1966: xxvi, 111). Although the relation between the two very different buildings was thus compared to that between a bridegroom and his bride, in a wider sense vimāna also meant the temple as whole, including the mukhāśalā, so that the relation was also conceived as existing between a whole and a part. It is in line with this that in explaining the ground plan of the mukhāśalā the same text begins with the statement that ‘the main ground is extended towards the front in the East’ and that ‘[t]he lines in length and width are taken according to the same units of measurement (māna)’ (S.P. I:71-72). Being thus built on the extended ground of the vimāna, and with units of measurement taken from the vimāna, the mukhāśalā is symbolically characterised as an extended part of the main shrine, as a ‘parastatic complement’, although physically and formally it is not treated as such.

The concept of parastatic complementing can, furthermore, also be involved when two related parts are placed separately without a material link, as when a dwelling-house is related to a granary that belongs to it. Although in such instances house and granary were not physically connected, the granary often used to be regarded and architecturally treated as a parastatic complement of the house. As I have pointed out, this can be illustrated with the relation that pertains between granary and house among the Toba Batak (Chapter 6) and the Sa’dan Toraja (Chapter 12). In both cases the concept of the house traditionally, and ideally,