

*cultivators in the swamps*

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# *cultivators in the swamps*

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND HORTICULTURE

IN A NEW GUINEA SOCIETY

(*Frederik-Hendrik Island West New Guinea*)

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VAN GORCUM & COMP. N.V. - DR. H.J.PRAKKE & H.M.G.PRAKKE

*dedicated to my wife*

PROMOTOR: PROF. DR. A.J.F.KÖBBEN



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## *preface*

The materials for this study were collected during a stay of almost two years, from October 1960 until August 1962, in the former territory of Dutch New Guinea. The practical part of our research was carried out in two stages, the first from October 1960 till October 1961 and the second from January 1962 till the middle of July 1962. During the intervening period, from October 1961 till January 1962 we stayed in Hollandia, where I had the opportunity to consult the literature available in the library of The Bureau for Native Affairs. There, too, I received valuable advice with regard to further plans of research from a number of persons including dr. V. de Bruyn and dr. J. Pouwer, both of whom were attached to the above-mentioned Bureau. In July 1962 we were forced to cut short our stay on Frederik-Hendrik Island on account of military developments in that part of New Guinea. As a result of this it was not possible to pay a working visit to the villages situated on the southern sandy beach of Frederik-Hendrik Island. I had intended to conclude my research with a study of the background of the cargo-cults which occur repeatedly especially in these villages. Unforseen political developments, however, made it impossible to realise these plans. Any information concerning these villages which we have used in this work was obtained from informants who were staying for a shorter or longer period of time in the local government station, Kimaan, or else passed through the village of Kalilam at the time of our stay there, on their way to their own villages.

Even before our arrival on Frederik-Hendrik Island the difficulty arose of

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having to choose a more or less permanent spot to stay. The village of Bamol was finally selected for a number of mainly practical reasons. In the first place Bamol is located in a central position in relation to a large number of other villages which may all be reached in a day's rowing. In the second place this village, which is situated in the centre of the marsh, displays the specific problems of the physical environment and may therefore be regarded to some extent as being typical of the whole region.

In the third place its relatively large number of inhabitants offered important practical advantages, including a smaller measure of dependence on only one or a few informants and interpreters. In the fourth place the village was far enough distant (two days' travel) from the government and mission-station to avoid any conscious or unconscious association with these authorities, which was of some importance in connection with our research into magic and religion. On the other hand the connection with Kimaam is usually sufficiently good to be assured of a regular supply of food and forwarding of mail.

Although most of our material was, therefore, collected in Bamol, we did in the course of our stay, pay brief and sometimes longer visits to the other villages, excepting those on the southern sandy beach and the small settlements Jeraha and Kaba. It is true that there are unmistakable cultural differences between the villages, particularly between the western group and the other marsh-villages, but with the exception of the differences in language they are rarely of a fundamental nature. They may, in my opinion, be regarded as local variations on a common pattern.

In a cultural respect Frederik-Hendrik Island is clearly a separate unit within southern New Guinea. There are, of course, outside influences, especially from the Marind-Anim who live on the neighbouring mainland. Such influences are easily demonstrated but they were always limited to a large extent by the inaccessibility of the marsh and the barrier imposed by the Princess Marianne Straits to any intensive contacts with neighbouring peoples. Before Dutch government was established on the island, traffic with the mainland was restricted to incidental trading contacts between the villages of Komolom and Wamal and to head-hunting expeditions of members of the Marind tribe to Frederik-Hendrik Island. After pacification, traffic with the mainland increased considerably. Many 'Kimam', which is the name given in Merauke to all



inhabitants of Frederik-Hendrik Island, worked for a year or two in Merauke or Okaba. The increased influence of the Marind-Anim is evident from the increasing use of Marind clan-names.

Unfortunately I did not succeed in acquiring a sufficient command of any one of the five languages spoken on the island. In the long run I did get some knowledge of Kimaghama, which is spoken in a number of villages including Bamol, but it always remained imperfect and exclusively passive. All informants below thirty years of age, however, had a tolerable command of Indonesian, which is spoken in the villages of southern New Guinea. They learned this language at mission-school or else during a stay outside the island. For older informants I always made use of interpreters.

Since providing for the elementary wants of the family on Frederik-Hendrik Island requires much time and energy it was impossible to employ interpreters or informants for any considerable length of time. For this reason a large number of men and women acted as informants in the course of our research. Some of them gave information on only one occasion, for instance at some feast, while others did so, in an informal way, repeatedly, as a part of friendly intercourse. It is impossible, therefore, to mention the names of all those who assisted me in this way in my research. I would, however, make one exception, namely for Kumbiema (Januarius) and his wife Juanija, a couple with whom we became very friendly and who did much to take away the initial distrust which the other villagers harboured against us, foreigners.

1 *Frederik-Hendrik Island: \* Land or water?*

On account of its position at circa 7° S. latitude in the south-east of West Irian, formerly Dutch New Guinea, the region in question is linked, as regards its climate, with the coastal region as far as Merauke. This climate is determined by the alternation of the relatively dry south-easterly monsoon and the wet north-westerly monsoon. The south-east monsoon, blowing from the Australian continent, is fairly cool. As the skies are less cloudy at this time of the year, and the degree of humidity of the air considerably lower, radiation during the night may sometimes cause temperatures to drop to sixteen or seventeen degrees centigrade early in the morning. During the driest months of the year, from August till October, a strong, constant south-easterly wind blows over the island, finding no obstacles in its way across the practically treeless plain. Because of the lower temperatures at this season, cases of pneumonia are frequent. The fierce blaze of the sun makes it necessary to undertake trips by dug-out canoe at this time mostly during the night.

The winds of the north-west monsoon are generally not so strong, except during showers when sudden gusts lash the water in the lakes and make the houses sag to one side. During the months of November and December in particular, the onset of the rainy season, temperatures are felt to be very high on account of the relative absence of wind. Especially between the tall reeds,

\* After the present manuscript went to press, I was informed that the island was renamed Kolepom. For reasons of convenience, however, the name Frederik-Hendrik Island has been retained throughout.

often reaching more than a man's height, the atmosphere is close and oppressive at such times.

The figures given in table I show the rainfall throughout the year for three places on the south coast.

*Table I. Rainfall in mms.*

MONTH	KIMAAM (period of observation five years)	OKABA (26 years)	MERAUKE (40 years)
January	408	288	269
February	272	219	229
March	330	274	254
April	284	180	184
May	250	125	125
June	119	43	44
July	153	40	33
August	37	13	19
September	63	18	27
October	30	54	41
November	101	120	78
December	243	210	187
Annual total	2290	1585	1490

Braak, from whom these figures are derived, explains the considerably higher rainfall of Kimaam as the effect of the driving winds of the north-westerly monsoon,<sup>1</sup> while Sperling also considers it to be accounted for by the position of the island at right angles to the direction of the north-westerly monsoon.<sup>2</sup> The rainfall is higher, however, during both the wet and the dry season. Possibly the observation period for Kimaam has been too short, for the total amount varies considerably from year to year. For 1951, for example,

the amount registered for Kimaam is only 1666 mms., while my own observations at Bamol show a total of 1496 mms. for 1961.

These considerable variations in rainfall are a factor of uncertainty in food-production, as they make it difficult to determine the right times for planting and harvesting. Far too often part of the harvest is spoiled when the rains start unusually early. The rainy season begins with heavy showers sometimes lasting for several days, which cause the water level in the marsh to rise rapidly. Another maximum occurs about March at the onset of the dry season. In this case the rise in the water level is only temporary.

As regards its landscape, this region is closely linked up with the great plains south of the first chain of hills. The Princess Marianne Straits are regarded, geologically speaking, as a former lower course of the Digul river and the island itself as consisting of Digul sediments.<sup>3</sup> The island is very low and flat and it is surrounded by particularly shallow waters. At low tide a kilometres-wide stretch of mud flats shows above the water. These make it practically impossible to reach the island from the sea at low tide unless one is willing to wade the whole distance through the mud. Even at high tide it is very difficult in most places to get a boat safely ashore. Apart from a small stretch of sand on the south-west coast, the whole island is surrounded by a broad mangrove belt which forms the transition to the inner marsh. It is often rather difficult to tell where the water stops and the land begins.

To this description of the physical environment, professor Bakker adds the following comments. Generally speaking, large stretches of mud flat, clayey mud-formations, can continue to exist only if protected on the sea-side by higher islands or coastal ridges or else as the effect of a concentration of sediments by the strong landward action of sea-currents and the direction of prevailing winds. This might be an indication that Fr. H. I. need not consist solely of Digul-sediments. The south and south-west consist more likely of clay from the shelf-zone, deposited on or near the coast through the combined action of ocean and tidal currents and the landward monsoon.

Slight differences in level on the island are of importance for the hydrographic situation. The island slopes slightly downward from north-east to south-west but everywhere the edges are higher than the central part so that the whole island is shaped somewhat like a saucer. In these circumstances practically the whole island is transformed, at the beginning of the rainy monsoon, into a

huge lake of rain-water which drains away very slowly. The further the rainy season progresses, the fewer dry spots remain. Large parts of the island therefore have a vegetation consisting solely of all sorts of reeds and rushes. The vegetation is influenced by even very slight differences in level. The lowest spots are covered by small lakes which are never completely dry even during the dry season. Slightly higher parts are covered by short grass that rises with the rising water and remains floating on the surface in large island-like slabs. Reeds grow at a somewhat higher level, mostly of a thick stocky sort growing so close together as to be completely impenetrable. This is what the people of the village of Woner found, for instance. They are said to have had an old village some distance into the interior of the southern swamps. Because of the precarious food situation in their village, the authorities encouraged them to cut a track to this spot. For days on end they attacked the tough reeds with hatchets, but progress was so slow, amounting to only a few metres a day, that finally the attempt had to be abandoned.

The monotony of the grass and reed wilderness is interrupted only by scattered eucalyptus trees. In some places they grow together in rows that from a distance appear to be forests. On closer view, however, these "forests" usually prove to be no more than masses of brushwood. Such brushwood clumps always indicate a higher level and the same is true of the pandanus which occur sometimes in fairly large numbers.

The large inland swamp is drained by innumerable very small creeks. Only a few of these may be called rivers, such as the Kwantua river in the west and the Ndambu river, which forms the approach to the village of Kimaam. Those creeks especially which flow into the Princess Marianne Straits are strongly affected by the movement of the tide, which has a great amplitude in these straits. At high tide, the seawater is forced upstream so that the mangroves grow a considerable distance along the creeks and rivers. Not until the upper course do they give way to various types of nipah palms and an occasional cluster of bamboo, which are replaced, in their turn, by eucalypt and pandanus. The creeks are easily recognised from a distance across the swamp because of the gallery forests lining their banks.

Even in the dry season the central parts of the island are never sufficiently drained, with the result that a large part of the land becomes at this time a vast

mud plain. Many villages are virtually inaccessible during this season because there is too much water to allow for travel on foot and too little for canoes. Only along the outer edge and especially in the north-east there are parts that become completely dry. In the latter region there are even some scattered permanently dry plains. Here the landscape has all the characteristics of a savannah: big grassy plains broken by eucalyptus forests. The undergrowth in these forests is very scanty, probably partly as a result of periodic fires. The scorched lower trunks of the trees are an indication of this. Perhaps it is also because of these fires that there are practically no other trees found here, the eucalyptus having the best chance of survival on account of its peculiar bark. In those places where there are fires every year the forest degenerates into brushwood and grass-plains.<sup>4</sup>

During the rainy season, most of these eucalyptus forests are inundated to a height of more than half a metre. It is a strange experience to travel by dug-out through these drowned forests where the white trees are reflected in the still dark water, while the call of cockatoos and parrots echoes among the bare trunks.

In the west of the island, higher spots are on the whole found only on the raised banks of the bigger rivers. As the rivers here are bigger and less influenced by the tide than those flowing into the Princess Marianne Straits, this part of the island is a little better drained than the rest and becomes dry more quickly.

A remarkable contrast to the monotonous reedy plain is formed by the southern sandy reef near Cape Valsch. This reef is no more than about fifty metres wide in most places, but at low tide the beach is very wide indeed as the water recedes to a distance of some miles from the shore. Only in a few places is the sand to be seen at the surface, for it is mostly covered by a layer of mud. Through narrow channels, seawater is forced by the rising tide into the marsh behind the reef, making the water there brackish, so that mangroves can again grow there. Practically the whole of this reef has been planted with coconut-palms.

Sandy ridges are also found elsewhere, scattered over the island. The village of Sabon, for instance, is situated on such a strip of sand. South of the village of Jeobi, another such sandy ridge is found, some kilometres long and about

fifty metres wide, which may be recognised from a distance across the marsh. Possibly these are former coastal reefs. Large parts of the swamp are covered with a thin layer of black mud, which is important for agricultural purposes on account of its high content of organic material. Below this layer we find at most places a whitish-grey type of clay, very tough and sticky. In many places peat-formation takes place, especially in the north-west, where the water is coloured a rusty brown.

It is not surprising in such swampy regions to find truly incredible numbers of mosquitoes. At twilight especially, these rise in great swarms from the water, so that even fires producing a dense smoke are often insufficient protection. The plague varies in intensity from one district to another and according to the season. The western villages are the most notorious in this respect, when the water begins to fall at the beginning of the dry season one has to take one's meal under a mosquito-net even in the middle of the day. The mosquitoes form one of the most unpleasant aspects of a stay on the island, and they are the principal cause of its bad reputation with Europeans and surrounding Papuan tribes. The native population has had to adapt itself to the circumstances by special provisions such as mosquito-proof huts. Fortunately, however, malaria occurs relatively little, although the numerous species of mosquitoes on the island do include the *anopheles bancrofti*.

The swamp is a very paradise for all sorts of birds, especially the *boha* (anseranas). These birds, which have repeatedly caused severe damage to the harvest on the Kumbe river rice-project, nest on Frederik-Hendrik Island, which offers them practically ideal living conditions. Part of the year they feed on wild rice, but their hooked beaks enable them also to pull the root-crops of the natives out of the ground. A plan for the introduction of rice-cultivation on the island was a failure, partly on account of the severe damage caused by the *boha*. The only profit the natives derive from these birds consists of the eggs which are found in large numbers during the breeding season in March and April.

## 2 *The opening-up of the island*

Because of the unfriendly aspect of the land and the hostile attitude of its population, the island was not penetrated until relatively late. The first attempt

to explore it, as far as we know, was made by Jan Carstensz who set sail in 1623 with the 'Pera' and the 'Arnhem' for his well-known voyage of discovery along the south coast of New Guinea. In his logbook he recorded that on the 7th of March he reached the northern entrance to the Princess Marianne Straits which he named "Keerweer" (= Turnagain) because the land here curves away to the west. He did not know there was a thoroughfare. During the following days the crew made contact with natives of these regions. This did not, however, give rise to favourable expectations. On the twelfth Carstensz himself went ashore at the north-west coast of the island: "In the morning of the twelfth the wind blew from the N.W.; in the forenoon I rowed to the land myself with the two pinnaces well-manned and armed, in order to see if there was anything worth note there; but when we had got within a musketshot of the land, the water became so shallow that we could not get any farther; whereupon we all of us went through the mud up to our waists, and with extreme difficulty reached the beach, where we saw a number of fresh human footprints."

Carstensz' description of the huts he found there is interesting as they show a great resemblance to the mosquito-huts that are still widely used at the present day: "On going a short distance into the wood, we also saw twenty or more small huts made of dry grass, the said huts being so small and cramped that a man could hardly get into them on all fours, from which we could sufficiently conclude that the natives here must be of small stature, poor and wretched." The encounter with these people resulted in two men of Carstensz' party being wounded and in the death of a native. On the same day, Carstensz reached the south-west corner of the island which he named 'Valsch Caep.' Along the south coast, huts and men were seen once more and Carstensz describes them as follows: "The natives quite black and naked without any covering to hide their private parts; their hair curly in the manner of the Papues: they wear certain fishbones through the nose, and through their ears pieces of tree-bark, a span in length, so that they look more like monsters than like human beings: their weapons are arrows and bows which they use with great skill."<sup>5</sup>

No more attempts were made to explore the island until two centuries later and



then with even less success. In 1825-26, Kolff sailed along the south coast and discovered the southern and northern entrances to the Princess Marianne Straits, which he took to be river-mouths. Off the west coast a boat was lowered which, however, could not reach the shore on account of the shallow water. "All we could discover there was a number of people who climbed into the trees and at the approach of the boats fled into the forest."<sup>6</sup>

In 1828 the 'Triton' and the 'Iris' sailed some way into the Durga river. Then the suspicion arose that it was not a river but a strait when it was found that the water remained salt all the way.<sup>7</sup> Langenberg Kool went out to investigate the truth of this in 1835. While he was passing through the straits, repeated contacts with natives took place. According to Langenberg Kool, the ships were, at one time, followed by not less than five hundred people. No landing was made, however. On the 9th of March the southern entrance was reached and the straits were now named after Princess Marianne. The island on the west side of these straits was named after a grandson of King William I, Prince Frederick Henry, who was particularly interested in seafaring matters.<sup>8</sup> No further attempt was made until 1910, when members of the military exploration detachment visited the island as part of the exploration of New Guinea between 1907 and 1915. Under the command of lieutenant Van der Bie, two small steamboats and two dug-out canoes ascended the Ndambu-river as far as possible, after which the party continued by dug-out as far as the village of Uwebu (Jeobi-Webu). On the way they passed the village of Kimaam, which was at that time still situated at Koddar. It was called 'bob' village after the name the Marind-Anim give to the whole swamp. In the report of the expedition, a short description occurs of the technique of making islands and mosquito-huts. From Jeobi-Webu two attempts were made to reach the west coast, but this proved to be impossible 'because of the impassability of the swamp.' From the south coast another fruitless attempt was made to penetrate further into the land. Finally all attempts were abandoned and the island was accorded a very meagre place in the official report. "The Muli (Princess Marianne Straits) separates Frederik-Hendrik Island, which is totally impassable, from the mainland. Even along the many creeks that flow into the Muli it was not possible to penetrate far into this island as, the creeks soon end in the reed-marsh. An attempt to land at the north coast of the island was abandoned

because of the long stretch of mud that would have to be struggled through. The south-west corner of this island is formed by Cape Valsch [i.e. treacherous] which rightly bears this name as the weather is practically always bad there. Among seafarers, this cape has a bad reputation. Towards the west, moreover, the sea bottom slopes so little that coming from that side at low tide, one would run aground before sighting the shore.”<sup>9</sup>

The real penetration dates from the thirties. In the late twenties, however, more or less incidental contacts with Kimaam and the villages along the south coast were established by Father Klowatsky from Wamal and by the government official at Okaba. Then, during the thirties, all the villages were visited by Father Thieman, who later settled at Kimaam. Shortly afterwards a government officer was stationed at Kimaam, and a separate governmental district was formed.

In course of time, Frederik Hendrik Island became a kind of myth. Europeans, especially, still regard it as one of the least attractive and accessible districts of New Guinea. This view has had an important effect on the attitude towards possible development schemes. It was always thought that the natives chose this district for habitation only under great pressure. We shall discuss this question further in our next chapter.

### 3 *The population*

The population of the island, which measures about 11000 square kilometres, numbers at present round about 7000. These people live in thirty villages of varying sizes, scattered all over the island from Cape Valsch to Cape Kolff and from the extreme west to the Princess Marianne Straits. The distances between the villages may be quite considerable. A visit to the western group of villages will take at least three days by dug-out. In the dry season a week's journey is normally needed to reach the southern villages by way of the marsh. Until quite recently the western and southern villages were scarcely visited at all by government officials during the dry season. For six months of the year they were not under effective government-control. This state of affairs changed after a cargo-cult started on the south-coast.

Following the linguist Drabbe, we may distinguish a number of language-groups on the island.

- Kimaghama*, which includes the villages of Kimaam-Mambum, Kalwa, Teri, Sigat, Sabudom, Bamol, Jeobi-Webu, Woner, Kiworo, Wangambi, Kawé, Bundua, Buedde, Sabon, Kladar and Tor.
- Riantana*, in the villages of Kondjobando, Kaba, Jeraha, Iramoro, Suam and Jaumuka.
- Ndom*, in Sibenda, Kalilam-Murba, Pembörö and Wetau-Kamburada.<sup>10</sup>

A separate language is spoken, moreover, by the people of Wan and Kōnerau and also on the separate island of Komolom. The differences in language do not run parallel with any cultural differences, nor is there any distinct tribal organisation for each language-group.

The most noticeable trait in the physical appearance of the Kimam is the difference in colour compared with the neighbouring Marind-Anim. The Kimam are darker and also smaller, though with considerable local variations. The colour of their skins is often hard to distinguish because their bodies are covered with a thick layer of dirt and because of the frequent occurrence of the so-called 'Dajak itch' or 'cascado.' Body hygiene is a concept that is practically unknown on Frederik-Hendrik Island. When the dirt becomes a nuisance it is scraped off with a piece of rope or with a knife. As a sign of mourning the whole body is covered from head to toe with mud which may not be removed before the period of mourning is finished. Practically nobody is free of lice, which they carry in their beards as well as on their heads. To delouse one another is a sign of intimacy. Parents or grandparents are seen delousing little children and vice versa. If the vermin grow too troublesome, the older women shave their heads and the men cover theirs with a thick layer of mud which they allow to dry and subsequently remove together with the lice. Originally, they wore very little clothing; adult men wear a small piece of coconut to cover the penis, very old men only a piece of string tied round their middle to support that organ. When there was still a bachelors' house, the older boys wore a large sea-shell as a covering for the penis. The women wear

a small apron made of rushes that passes between their legs and is held in place by a string around their waist. European clothing is nowadays the common wear for the younger people, at least in the villages, where the local school-teacher keeps an eye on things. But in the forest bivouacs and in the gardens, they normally wear only the original clothing. The wearing of European dress is propagated by the missionaries, through the schoolteachers, from typical western motives of decency. The natives themselves regard these clothes rather as a sign of wealth and also as a welcome protection against both the chilly south-easterly winds and the mosquitoes. For this reason, the older people prefer shirts to pants as the former protect their backs, which their hands can only reach with great difficulty. Because of the lack of hygiene and the impossibility of repairing these clothes, however, they usually have no more than a few dirty rags draped anyhow around their bodies, giving an impression of extreme poverty and shabbiness. Ornaments worn at the present day are limited to plaited rattan armlets and anklets. Only for their dances do these people still wear ornaments through the septum of the nose, through their nostrils and in their ears. When the bachelors' houses were abolished, a very characteristic type of ornament, namely the appendages to the hair-do, also disappeared. These used to be worn by the young men much in the same way as in the Marind-region.

#### 4 *The villages*

A greater contrast than that between the monotonous reed-marsh and the extremely picturesque villages is hardly conceivable. Each village consists of a collection of dozens or sometimes hundreds of small man-made islands. On these islands coconut-palms have been planted as well as sago, bananas and other fruit-trees and all these are mirrored in the reddish-brown water. All traffic inside the village goes by dug-out and at the busiest times dozens of these very narrow canoes (so narrow that one's feet have to be placed one in front of the other) are to be seen darting about between the islands. Add to this picture the sunlight penetrating through the foliage of the high-growing trees and it would be no exaggeration to call this a 'tropical Venice.' The beauty of

the villages affords a considerable compensation for the discomfort of a stay on the island.

The natives have reached a truly remarkable degree of adaptation to their surroundings as far as their houses are concerned. In most of the villages they originally had separate day and night huts, built side by side on an artificial island. For the daytime, simple shelters were used, consisting merely of an atap roof of sago- or nipah-leaves without walls. Night-shelters were built with much more care, for these had to be both water- and mosquito-proof. The possibilities are greatly limited by the available material, for wooden huts or pile-dwellings can scarcely be built where there are no trees. The villages are all situated a long way from the small eucalyptus forests, the timber of which moreover is not very suitable for house building.

A circular framework with a diameter, at the base, of five to six metres is built out of the ribs of sago-leaves. The natural curve of these ribs, when they are placed so as to incline towards each other, produces a beehive shape. Horizontal concentric rings of rattan are placed on these structures at intervals of 50 centimetres to 1 metre. This framework is then covered on the inside with sago-leaves, thus making a smooth wall while diminishing the fire-danger as these leaves are not easily inflammable. Over the rattan rings layers of dried grasses are draped, of which there is a plentiful supply in the neighbourhood. Beginning from the top, each layer is made so as to overlap the next. Towards the base, the wall becomes thicker and thicker, finally reaching a thickness of as much as 75 centimetres. This structure is completely waterproof and impenetrable for mosquitoes. To prevent the latter entering by way of the door, the entrance is kept as low as possible, usually no more than about 50 centimetres high. The larger *paia* (sleeping hut) has a kind of attic which big families use for sleeping and others for storing tubers and other foods. Every hut has a fireplace over which in the evenings a quick snack may be prepared before going to bed, while it also serves to smoke out the last mosquitoes. When everyone is inside, the entrance is closed with grass or leaves. When there are many people sleeping in such a hut, the atmosphere inside may become so stuffy that it is necessary to go outside from time to time for a breath of fresh air.

In the west of the island, the houses are rectangular and are made mosquito-

proof with walls of nipah-leaves, plaited around large numbers of short stakes placed close to one another in the ground.\*

Lately the situation described above has drastically changed in most places. Coconut-palms and sago still grow on the old dwelling-islands as well as on the other islands. The *paia*, however, has disappeared from most villages and has been replaced by houses built according to a government pattern. These have all been placed together on a large dwelling-island in or on the outskirts of the old village. The purpose of this innovation was, on the one hand, to obtain healthier living conditions and on the other, to facilitate control by greater concentration. The first of these aims has certainly not, in general, been realised, for the new houses are usually not very solidly constructed and far from being water-and mosquito-proof. Mosquito-netting is therefore being used more and more. Those, however, who have no money to buy such nets have to make do with plaited mats of reeds and rushes, sewn together on three sides. The fourth, open, side is held down by the sleeper's body. This way of sleeping is not a bit less cramped than in the former *paia*. Some people have sleeping-mats that are set up on a framework and big enough for a man or woman with one or two children. Such sleeping-mats were, originally, used only in the southern villages, where the natives had no mosquito-huts and where there was not sufficient material available to make plaited mosquito-proof walls.\*\*

In some villages the technique of plaiting has attained a high degree of development. Several variations on the check and twill method are used, the pattern being decorated with reddish-brown root-fibres.<sup>11</sup> With the help of the missionaries, large numbers of mats from Frederik-Hendrik Island are nowadays sold in Merauke, but even before the foreigners arrived mats were a popular object for barter in these regions.<sup>12</sup>

Another characteristic element of the villages is the countless numbers of dug-out canoes. A dug-out is a precious possession, for to be without this means of transport is a severe handicap in this watery landscape, as I know

\* The forest bivouacs again are of quite different construction, while in the south still another type of house was used. The *paia* was, however, the most characteristic and most frequent type. It is not possible here to examine in detail all the various types that occur.

\*\* Sleeping-mats on frames are also used in the Sepik district, Held, p. 26.

from personal experience. The excuse of not having a dug-out at one's disposal is the one most frequently used to back out of an agreement or to avoid being requisitioned by missionary or government authorities for rowing services. Unauthorised use of someone else's dug-out is a frequent cause of quarrels. For traffic within the village a very short and slender type of craft is used which can only be managed standing upright. The Kimam are past masters in the art of keeping their balance while manoeuvring these canoes. The narrow and twisting thoroughfares between the numerous small islands make it impossible to use larger craft. These canoes need to be regularly replaced. As every adult person must have one at his disposal and as they seldom last for more than two years on account of the inferior quality of the wood and their intensive use, a considerable stretch of forest is needed to supply the necessary timber. Not every village is so fortunate as to have this, though. Centrally situated villages such as Woner and Kiworo have of old obtained their dug-outs from Bamol in exchange for sago and European goods or tools. The large canoes used for traffic between the villages are even more precious because of the scarcity of suitable trees. Such canoes usually have more than one owner and they are used for a much longer time.

#### 5 *Some demographic data*

From time to time, the government has held a census on Frederik-Hendrik Island, beginning with the year 1937. The figures from before the last war are largely based on estimates, however, and during the war government activities stagnated here as elsewhere.

The figures recorded since the war vary greatly in reliability, the degree to which they may be trusted depending largely on the personal interest and integrity of the local government officials, who never stayed very long in one place before being transferred to another.

From 1949 onwards, the resident missionary priests have also been systematically collecting data of this nature. Father Verhage, especially, took great pains to set up as reliable a system of registration as possible and this work has been carried on, since his departure, by his successors. The systematic nature of their registration and the missionaries' interest in population trends have led

me to prefer their figures, even regardless of the fact that government figures are not available for every year. It should be remembered, however, that the collecting of demographic data in primitive regions by anyone who is not an expert is attended with so many difficulties that it is not possible, in judging the results, to use the same criteria of reliability as would be used for similar material in a European society. The registration of births, with the exception of stillborn infants, is probably quite accurate, as ever since 1949, the first year for which figures are available, all children have been baptized. With regard to the registration of deaths, there is a good deal more doubt, especially concerning the number of unbaptized persons. In recent years, however, these have constituted only a relatively small section of the total population. It is not always quite clear whether the figures for the separate villages do or do not include people who are absent, for instance staying in Merauke, Sorong or Hollandia. Usually they are included, as their absence never lasts longer than one or two years. As a matter of fact, the number of people absent at any one time is never very high. The reliability of the figures grows with the increasingly better organization of the registration of births and deaths by the missionary

Table II. Population of the villages of Fred. Hendrik Island from 1949-1959

Year	Kimaam/ Mambum	Teri	Kalwa		Suam	Iramoro	Kondjo- bando,		Jeobi/ Webu	Kiworo	Woner
			Sigat	Sabudom			Kaba,	Jeraha			
1949	234	332	547	625	622	207	241?	211	159	127	
1950	231	350	-	654	616	214	345	228	162	122	
1951	252	345	507	670	628	210	334	233	158	127	
1952	263	356	505	673	662	222	351	243	163	128	
1953	262	363	505	683	663	222	353	237	165	131	
1954	267	365	495	687	677	224	369	244	164	134	
-----	-	363	505	675	669	224	364	241	168	133	
		375	507	685	683	228	393	235	170	137	
		380	501	698	677	235	402	244	176	145	
		394	504	718	687	238	407	250	182	152	
		-	516	731	-	250	-	263	186	151	



Year	Wan-	Kalilam, Wetau/ Sibenda, Kambu-				Pem- börö	Sabon	Kladar	Tor	Kone-	Komo- lom	Total
	gambi, Bundua, Buedde	Kawé	Murba	rada	rau, Wan, Selemit							
1949	90	186	247	192	-	280	-	-	-	-	-	
1950	160	189	235	196	107	289	239	231	287	205	-	
1951	165	188	249	191	112	295	232	224	278	206	5604	
1952	169	206	252	199	111	286	251	220	304	208	5772	
1953	169	216	266	199	113	295	222	211	308	200	5783	
1954	154	208	269	201	115	298	216	207	300	195	5789	
1955	150	224	274	209	116	307	239	231	328	192	5879	
1956	140	210	283	209	121	317	247	235	336	193	5970	
1957	127	216	289	221	119	330	258	246	351	194	6087	
1958	130	224	300	137	119	338	268	251	363	200	6248	
1959	132	226	302	239	112	341	275	268	374	206	-	

authorities. The figures for the first two years, 1949 and 1950, especially, are neither complete nor quite accurate.

At the time when we concluded our inquiry, the missionpost at Kimaam had not yet received the figures for 1959 for a few villages. This is why in table II we have not included a total figure for this year.

In these data, the figures for a few villages have sometimes been combined when in reality these villages should be regarded as separate settlements. This is true, for instance, of Kaba and Jeraha, situated a few hours south of Kondjobando. On account of their small size, these villages do not have a missionary-teacher of their own to register births. The people of these villages, moreover, have very close connections with Kondjobando. For these two reasons their figures were combined with those for Kondjobando. The same holds good for the tiny hamlets of Bundua and Buedde. Wan and Kone-*rau*, on the other hand, are clearly separate villages, each with their own teacher, so that I cannot see why these two have been combined. Selemit, again, is a very small hamlet with no more than a few dozen inhabitants. All other instances of figures having

The rainy season in the village of Bamol





Above: In the innundated eucalyptus forest

Below: Paia (mosquito-hut)



been combined represent large population concentrations such as, for instance, Kalwa-Sigat and Sabudom.

Apart from the five small hamlets named above, the villages are relatively large. In New Guinea, villages of 400 inhabitants or more are an exception even for those tribes who are mainly cultivators. The variations in population numbers among different groups of villages in the eastern Vogelkop are due, according to Pouwer, to the respective possibility or impossibility of prolonged intensive cultivation of the soil. Wherever this possibility exists, conditions are favourable for a greater concentration of population with its many advantages.<sup>13</sup>

These conditions certainly exist on Frederik-Hendrik Island, for the natives there have succeeded, by an ingenious fertilisation system, in developing a method for permanent cultivation of the soil. In this connection it is worth noting that the smallest hamlets, Bundua and Buedde, are migratory to a certain degree.

Nevertheless the size of the villages varies considerably, even when the smallest ones are left out of consideration: from Pembörö with 112 to Bamol with 731. There can be no doubt that these variations are partly due to ecological factors. The area within reasonable reach suitable for the making of garden-islands, as well as the presence or absence of dry land for hunting and as a reserve for extra gardens, may constitute stimulating or limiting factors for the growth of a settlement. This is very obvious, for instance, in villages such as Woner, Kiworo and Wanggambi (populations 186, 151 and 132, respectively) which are situated in the middle of the marsh and consequently suffer the longest period of inundation, so that the making of garden-islands is attended with great difficulties. In addition, these regions do not contain enough dry land. Over and above these limiting factors, there are others that affect the size of the groups, namely disease and war. The influence of disease, in particular, must not be underestimated, as is shown by the fluctuations in the figures for the separate villages from one year to another. The government medical officer, Doctor Vogel, also points out these fluctuations in his report, and attributes them, in general, to epidemics.<sup>14</sup> Although a regular and considerable population increase may be noted for the island as a whole since 1952, this is by no means as regular for each village separately. An increase is followed, in several cases, by a decrease for one or more years. Epidemics have by no



means always the same intensity over the whole of the island. Now it is one group of villages, now another that suffer especially from a certain epidemic. During the early thirties, for example, Bamol was so stricken with dysentery that the population decreased considerably. Estimates based on inquiries and on the number of dwelling-islands indicate a total population of at least one thousand before the decrease set in. In 1937-38, influenza claimed 535 victims, 60 of which were from Bamol. In 1962, 18 deaths from pneumonia were reported in the village of Tor (population about 275). In 1961, whooping cough imported from Kepi (Mappi district) took a toll of 63 victims from an estimated total of 1,000 children.<sup>15</sup> At the time of my departure from Frederik-Hendrik Island in 1962 an enteritis epidemic was taking on serious proportions. Both missionary and government authorities assert that the population decreased from the time when government was first established on the island until 1952. The period of recovery did not begin, it is said, till that date. Vogel even mentions the calculations of his predecessor Veeger, which show an average annual decrease of 66 persons between 1938 and 1952.<sup>16</sup> As the reliability of the figures for these years is not very great, however, we cannot be certain of the value of these assertions.

On the other hand it is clear that a succession of such catastrophes may have serious consequences for the existence of a village, as is proved, for example, by the fate of Kandir. At the time of Father Thieman's first visit to the western part of the island, this village still contained 10 inhabitants. A few years later the village was deserted. The remaining inhabitants had moved to neighbouring villages. In the other villages the story goes that Kandir was practically wiped out during a large-scale head-hunt carried out by the people of Woner. The information indicates that this head-hunting expedition must have taken place at a fairly recent date, for the *pu-anim* (the foreigners) had already appeared on the island. Probably the village was first struck by a catastrophic series of deaths, after which it became an attractive object of attack for eager head-hunters. Other instances are known where events took a similar course. The head-hunting expeditions brought about the final downfall. The map of Frederik-Hendrik Island that was composed, on a scale of 1 : 100,000, with the help of aerial photographs shows large areas of agricultural land much of which is no longer in use, as Van Heurn and myself found in the course of a

tour of the island.<sup>17</sup> In many cases, the natives cannot even remember that these areas were ever cultivated. Migration of existing villages took place in only a few cases. Habitation in these parts must therefore have ceased long ago. In one or two cases the name of such a former village may still be remembered, for example the village of Jegima between Woner and Wanggambi. For small isolated villages a high death-rate over a number of consecutive years can be a serious threat. When the group becomes too small, the remainder are forced to seek refuge with larger groups (cf. Kandir). For larger villages this danger is not so great; in such cases a high death-rate even for many consecutive years does not necessarily bring about the disintegration of the group. The advantages of a larger village, in this respect, may be observed in the various sub-groups that constitute every population concentration. The above-mentioned epidemic in Bamol did not, for instance, strike the whole village equally seriously. Some parts of the village remained practically untouched by it, whereas in another part the population decreased from an estimated 180 to no more than 40 persons. Several wards in this part of the village disappeared altogether or were annexed by others. Orphaned children were adopted by people living in other wards or village-parts. The structure of the village, as a conglomeration of a number of local groups, is a decided advantage from the point of view of these smaller groups.

The fact that only one instance is definitely known of a division taking place, is eloquent in this respect. Even in this case, moreover, the separation was not a definite one. The western Ndom group used to consist of six village-parts, scattered along the banks of the Kwantua river, where there was enough suitable soil to support such a large population. Because the village was too easily accessible, by way of the river, for head-hunters coming from the sea, the villagers decided to move further into the swamp. Here the suitable soil was spread over a larger area, so that the six parts split up into three groups which still stayed fairly close together. The greatest distance between them is about half an hour by canoe. In other respects as well, these villages continue to behave like a group bound together by strong ties.

The various factors enabling a larger population concentration to develop must not be viewed in too deterministic a light, for there are several smaller settlements on Frederik-Hendrik Island the inhabitants of which are not in the

least inclined to join larger ones, in spite of attempts on the part of missionary and government authorities to persuade them to do so. The smallest groups, Bundua and Buedde, are clearly migratory agriculturalists. Somewhat larger groups, such as Kaba and Jeraha, are sedentary and although their connections with the larger village of Kondjobando are many, they do not wish on any account to be combined with the latter to form one village. The pacification of the island has also to a large extent removed the necessity for small groups to join larger ones, but there is no reason to suppose that small groups did not occur in former times. Several alternatives are possible, although there is a decided preference for larger groups.

### 1 *Introduction*

In this chapter the agriculture of the Kimam is described in more detail than is customary in monographs of this type. This seemed desirable for two main reasons. In the first place in order to bring out clearly the great empirical knowledge the Kimam possess on this subject. New Guinea agriculture is usually, though not always correctly, associated with very extensive shifting cultivation. The agriculture of Frederik-Hendrik Island is of an intensive kind that is comparable to the highly developed forms of agriculture found in other parts of South East Asia. In the second place, it is important to realize that agriculture plays such a dominant rôle in the personal and social lives of the inhabitants of Frederik-Hendrik Island that a too summary treatment of it would give a distorted picture of social reality. In the final chapter, especially, we shall give a detailed account of the importance of agriculture in other spheres of life besides the mere satisfaction of primary needs. The close connection between the magic and ritual associated with agriculture and the big prestige feast has led us to include these subjects in the last chapter, which means that in the present one only the technical aspects of agriculture will be discussed.

#### a *Why this district was chosen for settlement*

It has never been satisfactorily explained why the natives keep away from the permanently dry lands and why they have chosen to settle in the marsh instead.



The explanation usually given for this strange fact is the one that was put forward by the first missionaries and which has since their time come to be generally accepted. They argued that this district, apparently the most unfavourable part of the island, was chosen for reasons of safety.<sup>1</sup> This argument is based on a rather ethnocentric appraisal of an environment that appears to meet so few of the usual requirements of good agricultural land. At the back of this explanation lies the persistent, though unspoken, assumption that the island was only recently settled by tribes from the mainland who were driven to this unfavourable part of the country by the head-hunting Marind-Anim.<sup>2</sup> This seems rather unlikely, in view of the fact that the island was already inhabited in Carstensz' time. We know that the Marind-Anim and the Digul-tribes did make raids on the island, but we know nothing at all of the extent or the frequency of occurrence of such raids. It is doubtful, however, whether they were of such a destructive nature as to drive the inhabitants to the swamps. Stories about those times certainly do not give that impression. Moreover, the swamp guaranteed safety only against raiders from the mainland. They did not deter head-hunters from other villages on the island itself and from all accounts the latter would appear to have presented by far the greatest threat. We might also ask why the inhabitants of the south coast have remained in their exposed position instead of seeking a safe settlement in the swamp. For these villages especially, as will appear clearly from what follows, the reasons for choosing the present sites were in the first place rational economic ones.

As a result of the 'Pax Neerlandica', head-hunting raids have been a thing of the past on this island for the last 25 years. Raids from outside the island have not taken place for more than 50 years. And yet there has been no spontaneous migration to higher lands during this time. We might perhaps think that such a change would be ruled out because of the specialised agricultural methods used in the swamps. But the people of the swamps are by no means ignorant of the methods required on higher ground. In the past, as today, the Kimam had gardens on higher ground, but these have always been of minor importance. One would expect higher ground to be preferred for other reasons as well: because there are fewer mosquitoes, for instance, and because the hunting is better. In fact, during the rainy season, when the agricultural work is finished,

the inhabitants of the swamps often stay for long periods in their forest bivouacs. Ever since the missionaries and the government authorities first came to the island, many attempts have been made to persuade the people to move to higher land.<sup>3</sup> They have been quite obstinate in their resistance, however, which is all the more remarkable in view of the exceptional docility (*ikut-printah*) which has already allowed so many other changes to be made in their original cultural pattern. The people themselves are not very optimistic about the possibilities of permanent settlement on the higher lands. To begin with, there is less really dry land than has been generally assumed. This was confirmed by the report of an agricultural official, who made a survey of the high lands in the north-eastern part of the island with regard to their size and quality. The dry plains are widely scattered and are separated by swamps and swampy forests. The high estimates made by the missionaries were based on the deceptive appearance of the country during the dry season when large areas are left dry, only to become swamp again when the rains start. The total area of the gardens on higher ground has always remained relatively small. This is due to the quality of the soil which, according to the natives, is so bad that cultivation for more than two years at a stretch would not be profitable. Obviously, the limited area available would never allow shifting cultivation on dry ground. It is true that the people have sufficient knowledge of agricultural methods to be able to make a certain area suitable for permanent cultivation, by using compost for instance. The question is, however, whether the time and work put into this would not exceed by far the profits that might reasonably be expected. This difficulty is illustrated by the following example. In 1962 an attempt was made to promote the cultivation of dry land belonging to the village of Bamol. The missionary who took the initiative for this project hoped eventually to bring about a move of the whole village. An area of about one hectare was staked out to be made ready for planting. The soil was turned up with spades and cleared of weeds. Next, a system of channels was cut, because the drainage proved to be very poor. The whole site had to be securely fenced off to protect the future crops against kangaroos. But the greatest problem was the absence of compost in the form of drift-grass, which plays such an important part in the fertilising of the garden-islands. F., a man who always assiduously supported all the plans of the missionaries and the

authorities, told us that the people were getting tired of having to carry heavy pieces of drift-grass from the swamps to the higher land every day. He predicted, moreover, that the whole project was doomed to fail eventually because the mud that is so essential for manuring the growing crop would not be available. "Our fathers' fathers have tried it already, why must we do it again and meanwhile neglect our gardens in the village?"

They complained also that a move to higher ground would take the people too far from their sago stock, and sago forms the most important supplementary food in these villages. This the organizers did not appear to have taken into account.\* A number of villages at the moment possess more garden-islands than can be cultivated by the available labour. For this reason and for the reasons given above, it would be economic folly to leave the hard-won capital of good soil for an uncertain future on higher grounds. The primary choice of agricultural ground on Frederik-Hendrik Island cannot be accounted for solely by motives of greater safety. This motive has indeed counted in some places, but the choice between dry land and swamp was decided principally by agronomic factors.

#### b *How garden-islands are made*

At first glance the villages appear to be scattered at random over the whole area. Yet their sites were not arbitrarily selected. In the coastal districts they are usually situated on or near a river, and in the central swamp mostly around or near the many small lakes. Again the reason for this is not the greater safety of these sites but merely the necessity of having good fishing grounds in the vicinity. Many places that would be suitable in this respect, however, have the drawback that they are relatively low lying, which would make the construction of artificial islands impracticable or at least extremely difficult. It is natural therefore that especially those spots are selected which, by combining a relatively higher level with a proximity to good fishing grounds, make possible a varied food supply. Sometimes, however, there is not enough of

\* The importance of a thorough knowledge of traditional agricultural methods when introducing new methods and new crops is demonstrated, for instance, in P. de Schlippe, *Shifting Cultivation*.

such higher-level swamp in the immediate vicinity for a sufficient number of islands. Apart from the residential islands, dozens and sometimes hundreds of sago and coconut islands are needed. The sago and coconut area is surrounded by a circle of islands especially devoted to the cultivation of root-crops. In larger settlements a shortage of the latter type of islands may arise. Root-crops are therefore also grown on higher ridges in the swamp, which may be situated many hours by boat from the village. The inhabitants of Bamol, for instance, use for this purpose the sites named Pedde and Wai, about two hours east of the village. Those of Jeobi-Webu have the narrow sand-ridge called Tjigi, an hour and a half to the south, and in the villages of the west and north-west the high banks of the small streams are used. Another factor that counts in selecting a spot for a garden-island is the suitability of the soil. Although less suitable soils may to some extent be improved through the use of compost, such places will usually be avoided. This is especially true of peaty soils and those parts where the layer of mud, which is rich in humus and bacteria, is too thin or completely absent, so that the sticky grey clay comes to the surface. An attempt, started by an official of the Agricultural Advisory Service together with the local priest, to increase the number of garden-islands in Bamol was a total failure partly because of a wrong choice of site. In the southern coastal villages the situation is slightly different. Here the natural elevation of the sand beach is utilised. In the villages of Kladar and Tor, the garden-islands consist mainly of sand, which the natives mix with soil containing a large proportion of humus. In Sabon, on the other hand, where the garden-islands are situated in the swamp, the heavy clay has been improved by mixing it with sand brought in by dug-out from a nearby beach.

The time to start making a new island is when, in the dry season, the water has reached the lowest possible level. Usually a spot is chosen where the broad-leaved woody reeds grow most densely. With a chopping-axe, or in former times with a sharp piece of sago-bark, the reeds are cut just above the surface of the water over an area from two to three metres wide, the length varying according to the need of the moment and the time and labour available. The cut reeds form the foundation on which a thick layer of clay is spread out. This clay is dug up from the water around the island. The clay is loosened with the feet and thrown on top of the reeds in large lumps. In this way a deep

ditch, 2-3 metres wide, is made on both sides of the island. From now on this ditch is carefully kept clean, for the natives are fully aware that well-kept ditches are important for the moisture condition of the soil. At this stage, the level of the island is as yet very low. It must still be raised considerably if it is not to disappear under water as soon as the rains start. It is also necessary to improve the structure of the heavy clay and increase its nutrient content. For this purpose a thick layer of drift-grass is added. This must be available in the immediate vicinity, therefore the site of the island should not be too far distant from a deeper part of the swamp. The collecting and spreading of drift-grass is a laborious task. Men and women pull large pieces through the water or try to punt them along. When these floating islets reach the newly made island, men cut them into small pieces. To do this, they have to stand in water sometimes up to the waist and to make sure they do not sink into the mud, they submerge an upturned dug-out to stand on. The slabs of drift-grass are pushed to the edge of the island where another man stands ready to lift them out of the water and spread them over the clay.

The whole island is thus covered with a thick layer. On top of this drift-grass another layer of clay is added and if the island has not reached the required level by then, the whole process is repeated. This is usually not done the first year, however, because in that case the making of the island would take so long that by the time it was finished, the planting season would be past. Therefore only a strip of about 75 cm wide in the middle of the island is raised to a sufficient level to be planted that same year. During the next few years the whole island can gradually be raised to this level. Obviously, the soil of an island of this type will be subject to settling during the dry season, on account of the high percentage of water and organic material contained in it. During the rainy season, moreover, sometimes the soft clay at the sides of the island subsides into the water. For this reason older islands, too, will now and again need to be raised by the method described above. As a matter of fact this is also necessary in order to restore the fertility of the soil, as the natives know from experience. The level to which the garden-islands must be raised depends largely on the crop to be grown. For yams and sweet potatoes, for instance, the beds need to be considerably higher than for, say, taro and *wati*. Experience has taught the people exactly what the ground-water level should be at every

stage of growth of every crop. The time of planting is so chosen that the changes in the ground-water level combine most favourably with the level of the beds. The variations in the rainfall form an uncertain factor, however, as does also the settling of the soil. Some allowance may be made for the first of these two factors by altering the time of planting, within limits, but the importance of the second factor cannot, for a new island, be estimated in advance. That is why such an island cannot be fully used until some years have passed. Garden-islands are seldom more than two to three metres wide. This modest width is an advantage when drift-grass and mud have to be spread out over the beds. The garden-islands on high ridges in the swamp are usually considerably wider and their content of organic material is much smaller. Prof. Bakker informs me that this difference in width between the beds in the marsh and those on higher ground may very likely be due to the fact that the narrow beds in the marsh grow dry more quickly, which, with higher temperatures and sufficient moisture, has a stimulating effect on the crop, while narrow beds on higher ground would dry out too much.

A traveller on Frederik-Hendrik Island will now and again encounter large groups of abandoned garden-islands, recognisable by their ditches and by the type of vegetation growing there. In some cases these are known to have belonged to villages that disappeared fairly recently because of disease or migration. These gardens, however, are so overgrown with reed and other weeds that nobody feels any inclination to use them again. Such abandoned gardens are also found in villages where the population has dwindled as a result of, for instance, an epidemic. In such villages new garden-islands are hardly ever made.

A man who wishes to make a new island never undertakes this work alone. His strength would not be equal to the task and, moreover, the time of planting would be past before he was ready to plant either the old or the new beds. He must make sure beforehand, therefore, of extra assistance. This his wife and children can only partly provide, for making a garden-island is men's work. The necessary help will come in the first place from the men of his own village-ward. Sometimes men from different wards may help each other, for the rules are not very strict on this point. To be able to persuade these men to help him,

he must either have a quantity of ripe *wati* or borrow it from a relative, for no one is prepared to help without the promise of this intoxicating drink as a reward. This payment in *wati*, however, does not relieve him of all further obligations towards his helpers. In time, they in their turn may ask for the same service, or for a similar one such as help in building a house or cutting down a tree for a dug-out, etc. Of course the first man will then also insist on receiving a reward in the form of *wati* and if it is not too long ago, he will remember exactly how much he gave his own helpers.

The numbers of helpers vary considerably, but usually they are no more than five. During the different stages of the work it is not always the same men who help. Usually there is a permanent nucleus of two, joined now and again by various persons who work for only one or two days. Mostly they work for the promised *wati*. These people realise quite well that work goes more easily and more quickly when a number of men are working together. "A man who works alone is thinking of his work all the time. He sits down often for a chew of betel and therefore the work takes a long time. Many men together are cheerful, they don't think of the work but only of the *wati* that will be distributed. No one is lazy and the work goes quickly". They try to lighten the work by chewing betel, or *wati*-stalks, both of these being mild stimulants. In Bamol a clear division of labour is observable during the making of an island. The drift-grass, for instance, is cut into pieces by two men. A third drags these pieces to the edge of the island where one or two others are waiting to pull them up and spread them out. The same method is used for clay. An official of the agricultural advisory service, who attempted to calculate the number of man-hours needed for making a new island, claims that this division of labour results in a considerable saving of time in comparison with other villages where there is a less distinct division of labour.

### 1 *The cultivation of root-crops*

#### a *Kumi* (*Dioscorea Alata*)

In Malay-speaking regions, this plant is known by the names of ubi-key or ubi-tanah. The usual name in English-speaking countries is yam. This plant

consists of a number of upward winding, four-sided stalks and usually large tuberous roots, variously shaped and with a high starch content. The Kimam distinguish sixteen different types of yam, by distinctive features falling mostly into one of the following categories:

- a. the shape of the tuber
- b. the colour of the skin
- c. the hairiness of the skin
- d. the colour of the inside
- e. the fibrosity of the inside
- f. the size of the tuber

Yams are very particular in the amount of water they need. The ground-water level must not be too high and too much rain also has an adverse affect on the growing process of this crop.

In the initial stages, however, the water-level should not be too low either, which means that the planting of yams is bound to narrow limits both of space and of time. Only those beds which have in course of time reached a relatively high level are suitable for this purpose. There are a countless number of taboos with respect to yams and their cultivation, which is a matter of extreme importance. Higher places at a great distance from the village can therefore, in general, not be used for growing yams as it is difficult to supervise the strict observance of the rules and, furthermore, counter-magic might be practised by others. The constant attention required by this crop, moreover, makes its cultivation at a great distance from the village impracticable.

When, at the beginning of the dry monsoon, the wind shifts to the south-east, the time for planting yams draws near. A feverish activity then reigns in the village. The material to be planted is inspected, older cultivators offer advice to younger ones, a number of men go to Kimaam to buy spades, and so on. The soil is now made ready for planting. If no other crop was grown since the last yam harvest, the gardens have now been fallow for about six months, during which time grass and reeds may have grown quite tall. These are now turned under with spades or digging-sticks and the roots are pulled loose. If, on the other hand, another crop was grown on the garden-island after the last yam harvest, the bed must first be covered with a new layer of drift-grass. Grass growing on the edges is pulled out and thrown on the island together



with decayed leaves, etc. This is followed by a layer of clay, after which the soil has to be well loosened and mixed. For planting, the soil must be as finely divided as possible.

When the wild rice begins to bloom, the time for planting has arrived. In the beds, shallow holes are made to see how far the water has subsided. As long as there is still some water visible the planting is postponed.

For planting, only the largest tubers of the previous harvest are used. At the time of the harvest, the leaf-bud at the bottom tip is cut off and the remainder of the tuber is eaten. The pieces are dried over the fire-place. The older cultivators decide when these are dry enough to be planted in a banana-leaf filled with soil. For this purpose, soil with a high humus content is used, which is rubbed between the hands to divide it into the smallest possible particles. When the time for planting them out draws near, it is again the older cultivators who examine the newly-formed roots to see whether they are strong enough to be transplanted. If this is so and if the water has reached a sufficiently low level, narrow holes are dug with the hands and filled with similar fine, rich soil. A small mound of this soil is heaped on top of the hole and in this mound the cutting is planted. All this is then covered with a layer of drift-grass.

From then on the growing plants are closely watched, for when the new shoots have grown big enough the holes have to be carefully opened and the pieces of parent tuber removed, after which the holes are again covered in the same manner.

When the plants are still very small a stake is placed beside each mound, around which the stalks may twine themselves. The ribs of sago-leaves are placed slantwise against these stakes to support the further growth of the plants.

The tubers are formed in the previously made holes. They grow downwards, therefore, with the subsiding waterlevel as the dry season advances. In the swamp-villages, especially, great care has to be taken to ensure that the roots do not also grow downwards, as it seems to be particularly harmful for the roots to come into contact with the water. Nor may they touch the drift-grass, large pieces of which are mixed all through the soil. At quite an early stage therefore, the roots are trained along the surface, bedded in finely crumbled

humus soil and covered with dried grass. After a while the spaces between the plant-mounds are completely covered with this grass. If the plants do not seem to thrive, older men are again called in to examine the soil. The first thing they do is to feel under the grass in the humus soil to see whether it is perhaps too warm or too cold. In either case their advice is to adjust the thickness of the layer of grass. This is clearly an attempt to regulate the temperature of the soil in accordance with the requirements of the crop at different stages of growth.

In the initial stages, shade is needed. This is supplied by sago-leaves stuck into the ground on the side that receives the fiercest blaze of the sun, making sure, however, that the plants still get enough light. These sago-leaves are removed when the plants have grown sufficiently tall, when they appear to need more sun. From planting until harvest-time, the plant-mounds are regularly supplied with fresh layers of drift-grass and clay. It is usually left to the more experienced cultivators to decide exactly when this should be done. They examine the soil of the plant-mound and decide on the requirements of the plants at each particular stage. Thus the mounds, which are at first quite modest in size, grow larger and larger, reaching a height of about 40 centimetres and a diameter of more than 80 centimetres. Ultimately the spaces between the mounds are filled up so that they form one large bed.

As a consequence of the method of training the roots lengthwise along the surface of the garden-island, the distance between the plants needs to be greater in this direction than breadthwise. The distances are, respectively, about 125 and 80 centimetres. The number of rows depends on the width of the island. Usually there are no more than three. Regular fertilising with mud is essential if the crop is to thrive. For this purpose the natives use a net with a diameter of about 50 centimetres, made of coconut fibre and tightly stretched in a rattan ring. Standing in the water beside the island the men haul up the black mud which they throw on and between the plant-mounds. Both sides of the island are systematically treated until the whole island is covered with a thin layer of mud. This mud is a substance containing a large amount of water and air, purposely so, for during the dry season the soil dries up very quickly under the blazing sun. The meshes of these nets are always the same size, to strain the mud so that it always contains the right amount of water. This

method of manuring is particularly effective also because in this way the dirt from the ditches surrounding the islands is also thrown on the beds. It is easy to see now that this method is only practicable if the islands are fairly narrow.

Although yams are grown everywhere, the area planted annually varies greatly. In Kimaam and the surrounding villages, where there is an ample supply of sago, yams are no longer so important in the regular diet of the people. The natives still recall that much larger quantities of root-crops used to be planted when the sago supply was not yet so plentiful. Other villages take a malicious pleasure in pointing out that the people of Kimaam are not able to produce a yam crop of any consequence. But such remarks may be no more, in reality, than expressions of spite at not having an equally plentiful supply of sago. It is a fact, however, that these villages hardly ever accept a challenge to a *ndambu*-feast (food-competition), for the most important food to be brought to such a feast is yams. The change in the direction of a greater consumption of sago in these villages is at least in part due to the fact that a large section of the population is regularly or periodically employed by either mission or government. It is quite understandable that they should prefer the cultivation of sago, which requires much less time and labour, to the growing of yams.

In the other villages the amount planted is greater, but there too it is limited by the available area of suitable soil and by the system of crop-rotation. After the harvest the gardens may be left fallow from about November to June, but if there are not enough garden-islands, the same beds are used for cassava. According to our informants, yams cannot be followed by sweet potatoes because a parasite (a type of borer) then makes its appearance. The usual scheme, therefore, is yams-cassava-yams or sweet potatoes-cassava-yams, or else yams-fallow-yams.

In the villages along the southern beach, sweet potatoes occupy the first place among the root-crops instead of yams and here too sweet potatoes are the main food for the *ndambu* feast. The high sandy soil is, in fact, most suitable for the cultivation of sweet potatoes. Yams are often used as border plants because they grow fairly tall and thus provide shade for the main crop.

The cultivation of yams has reached the highest degree of development in the western villages. Here they have two planting-seasons, one in April-May and the other in October-November. In the latter period, the yams are planted on

Yams-garden



Making a plant-mound



the high beds along the Kwantua river. The first period, however, is the most important here, as elsewhere.

Because yams play a very important part in the *ndambu* ritual, it is everyone's ambition to grow at least a few specimens as large as possible. In the northern and central villages, this is done by taking the tubers out of the earth from time to time and cutting off any side-shoots. Tubers treated in this way are usually lobed, or saccate in shape, or sometimes twisted like a snake. In the western villages the tuber is trained into an old canoe or a narrow trench lined with leaves to keep the tuber from becoming globular or forming side-shoots. In this way, pole-shaped yams are grown with a length of more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  metres and as thick as a man's arm. The lobed specimens from the other villages may grow to a circumference of more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres. Apart from the use of such special methods, however, a careful selection of plants is necessary to produce these results. It is not customary to leave yams in the ground for longer than the normal time, for in that case they would grow woody and less edible. Yams planted at the beginning of the north-east monsoon (*tararemma*) are harvested from October to December (*Mörendu*). The extra-large sweet potatoes that are cultivated especially for *ndambu* feasts in the southern villages are left longer in the ground, and if, as a result, a certain amount of woodiness occurs in the largest specimens, this is accepted without criticism.

Yams are harvested as they are needed, unless the whole harvest is required for a feast, or if heavy rains start to fall too early. In 1960 a large part of the harvest was spoiled in the northern villages because the rains started as early as the end of November instead of at the normal time, the beginning of January. When the whole crop is harvested at once, the yams are stored on a raised floor in the house. As a rule yams do not keep long, but according to informants the smoke rising up through the heaped tubers has a preserving effect.

b *Kantji* (*Dioscorea aculeata*?)

The Malay name for this type of yam is ubi-gembili or kumbili. Unlike *kumi*, *kantji* usually has more than one tuber, any number from 6 to 10, hanging in a cluster from the stalk. They are oblong in shape and generally no more



than about 20 centimetres long. Giant specimens do not occur in this type, which has no great ceremonial significance and plays scarcely any part at feasts. *Kantji* is particularly appreciated, however, for its flavour. The cultivation of this plant is rather difficult, so it is never grown on a large scale and is of little importance as a staple-food. In Bamol, six varieties are distinguished, according to the colour and fibrosity of the flesh.

This plant needs a very loose soil, rich in humus, so that it cannot be planted in the ordinary beds. A new layer of drift-grass is spread on the garden-islands in the usual manner at the beginning of the dry season, and a special bed about 50 centimetres high and as wide, made only of drift-grass and mud, is raised in the centre of each island. With the scoop-net mud is thrown on each new layer of drift-grass and the latter is applied each time after the mud has dried. This process is repeated until the necessary level has been reached.

For planting, small tubers are used that have been stored in the house, packed in drift-grass and wrapped in sago or coconut-leaves. Sometimes they are left on the bed, carefully covered with drift-grass. When the roots begin to grow they must be planted without delay. Holes are made in the raised bed and hollowed out sideways with digging-sticks. It is essential that the tubers should grow horizontally in the specially raised bed, for their growth would be checked if they were to penetrate into the ordinary soil underneath. The holes are filled up with alternate layers of rubbed earth and drift-grass. When the holes are nearly filled, the small tubers are inserted in a horizontal or at least slanting position to prevent them growing downwards.

Over all this, another layer of drift-grass is spread, which is again covered with a layer of mud. The new plants that begin to grow after a few days have no trouble in breaking through this covering. As soon as they have grown a few centimetres high, stakes and ribs of sago-leaves are placed in the ground for the plants to climb over.

No shade is necessary, for the soil is "cool" on account of the high content of organic material. For this reason, constant attention is needed in case the level of the bed gets too low. Whenever this happens new layers of drift-grass and mud have to be applied. This must be done in any case when the plants have grown to about 1 to 1½ metres.

Although *kantji* is sometimes planted in June, November is the more usual

time. The water-level is still relatively low, but begins to rise after one or two months, so that the ordinary beds underneath soon become too wet for *kantji*. When the water is at its highest, the raised beds must be at least 75 centimetres above the water-level.

A profile-section of a *kantji*-bed looks like diagram 1.

Diagram 1. Profile-section of a *Kantji*-bed



Obviously only a small part of a normal garden-island can be used for the cultivation of *kantji*. Therefore the plants have to be placed so as to make the most economical use of the available area, zig-zag at distances of 75 centimetres both ways (diagram 2).



Diagram 2. Planting-distance on a *Kantji*-bed

The remainder of the lower bed is usually not left unused; on both sides of the raised bed, a row of cassava is planted.

From the above account it will be clear that the adequate cultivation of this crop requires much time and labour. For this reason, people continually try to grow *kantji* on the ordinary beds, but generally the results are not very good. The harvest takes place when the wild rice begins to bloom, that is about April-May. The tubers are pulled out by the stalks. Again, the whole crop is not harvested at once but only as it is needed.



c *Tjaè* (*Colocasia esculenta*)

This root-crop is known to us by the name of taro. Although taro is less important in ceremonies than yam, it is more important as a food in most villages. The people of Bamol distinguish twenty-three varieties, mostly by the colour of the skins and of the flesh and by the shape of the tubers.

The characteristics of this crop are such as to make it particularly suitable for the swampy ground of this island. The varieties of taro cultivated here can stand a high water-level, unlike yams. At certain stages of the growing process a high water-level is in fact necessary. This saves much time and labour, because the beds do not need to be raised so high. Taro-beds are usually further from the village than the other, relatively high, garden-islands. As this crop is much less demanding, it is grown on more and larger beds than other plants. A taro-bed may be more than 6 metres wide and hundreds of metres long. On the semi-dry plains in the west of the island, taro is even grown without any raised beds at all. The produce of such places is only intended as a supplement, however, for the tubers are never large. For bigger tubers a slightly higher level is necessary.

The time for planting taro is the same for the whole island, i.e. November, shortly before the first rains set in. This is because taro needs a lot of moisture especially during the early stages. If it is planted during the dry season the tubers remain small and are, moreover, attacked by a type of borer. The latter circumstance makes it impossible, in Bamol, to plant taro on the same beds twice running. Often a few seedlings are left on the bed after the harvest to see whether borer occurs. If it does, the beds have to lie fallow for 1 to 2 years. Sometimes taro is grown alternately with cassava, but it is better to allow the beds to regenerate by fallowing for a while. Bamol has two groups of taro-beds, *Bomapuda* and *Pedde*, which are used in turn. As the level of the land at *Bomapuda* is slightly lower than at *Pedde*, the planting-time for taro at the former site is a little earlier, in connection with the rising of the water.

Before planting, the beds are thoroughly cleaned. Any grass is pulled out and thrown to the side of the beds. This grass is left to dry for a few days, after which it is burnt and the ashes are spread over the beds. For planting, the side-shoots of the parent-tuber are used, cut off at 1 to 2 centimetres from the

latter. These are left on the beds after the harvest to germinate and take root. In the planting-holes small mounds are made of light-grey clay which the natives dig out of the ditches with their feet, first removing the layer of black mud. The germinated shoots are placed at the top of the mounds and covered with almost decayed drift-grass (the drift-grass must be "cold"). According to a different method, the mounds are made of soil from the beds, and covered first with a layer of brown clay and then another layer of soil. When the plants begin to sprout, the last layer is removed and replaced by a layer of drift-grass. When the leaves have grown quite tall, a thick layer of drift-grass is spread over the mounds and this is again covered with soil from the beds. In this way, the mounds become about 50 centimetres high. The beds themselves are practically under water during the wet season, so that sometimes the plant-mounds become separate islets. This is not harmful as long as the mounds themselves remain above the water-level. During this time the plants need very little attention, but as soon as the water begins to subside the space between the mounds is filled with black clay and drift-grass alternately, so that the level of the whole bed is raised considerably.

After some time the mounds have to be loosened, the grey clay is renewed and again the whole bed is covered with black clay and drift-grass. Especially when the plants begin to grow tall the soil must not be allowed to become too hard. It is loosened with a stick and broken up into small clods. Sometimes the mounds are loosened and the plants surrounded with rubbed earth.

The planting distance for taro varies from place to place. At *Bomapuda* it is 75 centimetres in each direction, but at *Pedde*, where the beds are larger and wider, it is as much as 150 centimetres both ways.

The former site, however, is situated in the middle of the treeless reed marsh, and the crop therefore suffers severely from *bobas*. Especially at the beginning of the wet season, these birds come in great numbers to Bamol. For protection against them, stakes are placed on the beds with oddly shaped bunches of grass tied to them, as a sort of scarecrows. But this is still not adequate, for in 1961 dozens of beds were completely laid waste by these birds.

As taro is a ceremonial crop, it is important to grow the tubers as large as possible as well as in the greatest possible quantities to take to the *ndambu* feast. Of these extra large tubers only the seedlings are used for ordinary consump-

tion, the remainder being reserved for the feast. When the tubers begin to develop, all the roots are removed from the top and sides of the parent-tuber. Only the downward growing roots are left intact. These are tied together to prevent them growing sideways. In this way, the longest possible tubers are obtained. The largest specimens are found in the west, these may grow to almost one metre in length. In the swamp villages they are usually smaller, with a maximum weight of about 4 kilogrammes. Taro takes about nine months to grow to maturity. The harvest therefore takes place around June-July. The falling of the leaves shows when it is time to dig up the tubers; the right time is when only the three middle leaves remain. After the harvest the tubers are scraped clean and all the roots are removed. For storage the stalks are left on, I have not been able to discover why.

#### d *Vee-kuni* (*Ipomoea Batatas* poir)

In Bamol, 15 varieties of *vee-kuni* or sweet potatoes are known, of which at least 6 were introduced at a fairly recent date.

The cultivation of sweet potatoes has reached the highest degree of development in the southern coastal villages. Very likely even more varieties are known there. In the swamp villages, sweet potatoes take the fourth place in cultivated area after taro, yam and cassava, always excepting individual variations, of course. Sweet potatoes are a much prized food everywhere and if the area planted with cassava is larger, that must be regarded as due to recent developments on account of the easy cultivation of this imported crop. It is not regarded as a 'true' food.

The cultivation of sweet potatoes is very difficult in the swamp villages. A fairly dry soil is necessary and for that reason sweet potatoes are mainly planted at the beginning of the dry season, although they may also be planted at other times. They require, therefore, the same sort of beds and the same planting-time as yams. This means that yams have to be replaced by sweet potatoes, for in the scheme of crop-rotation, yams cannot be followed by sweet potatoes (see p. 32). Once sweet potatoes have been planted, only cassava can follow. The choice between yams and sweet potatoes is partly decided by the previous harvest. If the yield of yams is small one year, sweet potatoes will be tried

next time. If a *ndambu* or other important feast is to be held, however, yams are preferred. Because the cultivation of yams is attended with many ceremonies and taboos, they can, in principle, be grown only by men who have attained full social status.

Younger men have not the knowledge of planting methods and of magic that is necessary to grow yams with any success. They are thus restricted to cultivating non-ceremonial crops such as sweet potatoes, cassava and kumbili. The fact that these crops are grown mainly by young people therefore does not mean, as one might think, that they have been only recently imported. Sometimes older people too tend to prefer these crops if they wish to break away from the religious backgrounds of yam and taro.

Usually, sweet potatoes are included in a system of crop-rotation with taro. After the taro harvest, sweet potatoes are planted mainly by the young people while the older ones plant yams. From our remarks in paragraph c. about taro-beds it will be clear that the cultivation of sweet potatoes on these same beds cannot on the whole be very successful. The beds are too low and it is not advisable in any case to plant the taro-beds twice in one year. On the whole, in fact, the tubers proved to be few, small and infested by parasites.

Several planting methods are used. One is to cut off shoots from the ends of the tubers. These pieces are wrapped in drift-grass and stored in the huts. At the beginning of the dry season roots have begun to develop and the first leaves are appearing.

The beds are carefully turned over, the grass is pulled out and mixed with the soil. Holes are then made at distances of about 1 metre both ways. In these holes, which have a diameter of about 50 centimetres, mounds are made with a mixture of rubbed earth with a high humus content, drift-grass and ashes of sago-leaves. The whole mound is well-soaked with water. The ashes are a very remarkable addition, being used perhaps to improve the structure of the heavy clay. Sweet potatoes grow best in rather loose, sandy soil as is seen in the villages of the south coast. For *wati* and kumbili ashes are also used.

The rolls of drift-grass containing the young plants are planted at the top of the mounds and everything is covered with a thin layer of decayed drift-grass. After a few days a layer of mud is applied with a scoop-net.

For the second method stalks are used instead of the shoots of tubers. Im-

mediately after the harvest, 2 to 3 stalks each with a number of segments, folded together a few times, are placed on top of each planting mound.

They are then covered with rubbed humus-containing earth, mud and drift-grass in such a way that the leaves show a little on both sides of the mound. Sometimes the stalks are planted in a vertical position.

When the leaves begin to creep they must be gathered and put straight. The mound is then covered with dried grass and another layer of mud. When leaves and stalks have grown about 75 centimetres tall, drift-grass and mud are again applied. By this time the mounds have reached a height of 40 centimetres above the soil surface. The tubers are formed in these mounds. The maturing period for sweet potatoes is 3 to 4 months, after which 4 to 12 tubers the size of a man's fist may be collected from each mound. Sweet potatoes, again, are harvested as they are needed. In the south a few specimens intended for a *ndambu* feast are left in the ground until the end of the dry season, that is a total period of 5 to 6 months.

Although I was not able to make a personal study of the agricultural methods used in the villages on the south coast, a fairly precise picture of these may be obtained from the detailed report of a tour of inspection made by the agricultural officer, van Heurn.<sup>4</sup> Additional information was obtained from interviews with natives of these villages as well as with travellers who visited these regions several times.

In these villages, unlike those in the swamps, sweet potatoes are by far the most important food, both for daily consumption and for ceremonial purposes. Two harvests a year are usual in these regions. Planting times are February and June. According to an estimate of van Heurn's, the ratio between the areas planted with sweet potatoes, cassava and taro is 4:2:1. Yams are of minor importance. Here too, a separate mound is made for each plant. Van Heurn explains this practice as a more economic use of the limited supply of humus, which is more effective when concentrated in a number of mounds than if it were spread over the whole bed. Less labour is required, moreover, while the mounds form a protection against the sea-water that regularly infiltrates into these regions. It seems to me that the latter explanation holds good also for the other villages, for there too the garden-islands are regularly threatened by water, though there it is only rain-water.

In the village of Sabon, the beds are made of heavy clay. As this type of soil is not suitable for sweet potatoes, the natives fetch sand mixed with humus from *Kabunimbu*, which lies closer to the sea. This sand is fetched twice a year by dug-out and it is used for making plant-mounds. Eventually the structure of the soil will be improved as the sand mixes with the original clay.

In *Kabunimbu* there is only one harvest a year, for which according to Van Heurn, the natives supplied the following reasons:

- A second harvest would merely produce a surplus that could be neither consumed nor preserved.
- Sweet potatoes grown between December and June at this spot, far from the village, suffer severely from the *bobas* which move away about June. In the vicinity of the village these birds do less damage because of the busy human traffic and the absence of grass-seed.
- Caring for the distant gardens twice a year would take too much time.
- In november the soil in the ditches from which the humus is obtained contains too much salt as a result of the infiltration of sea-water. This, they say, makes the leaves of the sweet potatoes go red and causes them to die. In June this salt has been sufficiently washed away by the rains.

Van Heurn thinks, moreover, that two harvests would exhaust the humus in the soil so that the crop planted in June would result in a bad harvest.<sup>5</sup>

In all the villages on the south coast, special attention is devoted to the cultivation of *ndambu*-specimens. Persons who have visited these villages assure me that truly monstrous specimens are grown there, sometimes reaching a circumference of more than one metre.

e *Ndakone* (*Manihot utilissima* pohl)

Cassava, better known in southern New Guinea as *ubi-kaju* or *kasbih*, was only fairly recently introduced on Frederik-Hendrik Island. This is apparent not only from the small number of varieties (4) but also from the names of the latter:

*pu-animo*, *pu-anim* is the usual expression for foreigner;

*wendu*, named after the Marind-Anim village of Wendu from which this variety is said to derive;

*pu-ndakoné*, a combination of *pu-(anim)* and *ndakoné*;

*ubi-telor*, *telor* being Malay for 'egg' (the inside of the root after cooking is the colour of egg-yolk).

There is a remarkable discrepancy between the native evaluation of cassava as a food and a ceremonial element and its true importance in the diet. This difference is much greater than for any other crop. Conversations with the natives give one the impression that cassava is of quite minor importance. It is not really a 'true' food, no more than the result of work of children (it is mainly planted by younger people), so it cannot be taken seriously. They would be ashamed to bring cassava to a feast, for that would make them appear incompetent cultivators, which is the worst disgrace that could befall a Kimam man.

In practice, however, this crop occupies an important position in the total cultivable area and the reasons for this are not difficult to discover. In contrast to the other root-crops, cassava requires relatively little attention. The cuttings do not need to be planted in specially made mounds. Usually it is enough to surround each cutting with a firm layer of humus. Nor is it necessary to loosen and replace the earth. A little mud from time to time, applied with the scoop-net, is all that is required.

Along the south coast, cassava is much used as a border-crop, as its tall foliage offers a certain amount of protection against *bobas*.

Although the best time for planting cassava is again at the beginning of the dry season, it may also be planted at other times as long as the beds are sufficiently dry. Cassava is therefore particularly suitable for rotation with other crops.

Cassava is prepared in various ways. Sometimes the roots are peeled and sliced. Some varieties, however, appear to have such a high content of prussic acid that they have to soak in water for some time before they are fit for use. Then they are squeezed dry in a net between the hands. In Kalilam the water thus squeezed out is caught in a coconut shell and any flour in it is allowed to settle at the bottom so that it may not be lost. The roots are cooked or grilled directly on the fire.

### f *Cultivable area and production*

It is very difficult to get an idea of the total cultivated area, as the islands are usually small and very numerous while, moreover, they are scattered over a wide area of reed-marsh. For that reason it is practically impossible to count and measure them all. In order that we might not need to depend solely on estimates, all the garden-islands belonging to the part of Bamol called Wendu were counted and measured. This village-sector houses about a quarter of the total population of Bamol.

The total number of high garden-islands in the immediate neighbourhood, mainly used for the cultivation of yams, was 91. The number of lower garden-islands in the reed-marsh, used mainly for growing taro, was 39. As we have already noted, the width of the islands is practically always 2 to 2½ metres. The length varies considerably, however, from 10 to 137 metres.

The total surface area of the first group of beds was 4050 m<sup>2</sup> as against 4800 m<sup>2</sup> for the second group, thus showing clearly that the taro-beds are, on the average, much larger (see paragraph c.).

To this total area of nearly 0.9 hectare, a few taro-beds should still be added that are situated at the high site named *Pedde*. We were unfortunately not able to measure these, but as they are relatively few, they can hardly influence the total figure.

We should beware of seeing a direct correlation between the total cultivated area and the number of inhabitants. In Wendu, for instance, there are not enough yam-beds available because this part of the village is situated by a rather deep lake so that extensions are not always possible. Some persons living in this village-sector possess rights in other parts, acquired by inheritance. The smallest sector of the village, on the other hand, Borandjidam, possesses a much larger area than one would expect for the number of inhabitants. Some decades ago the population of this part was decimated by an epidemic and at present it numbers only about 60 inhabitants. In some cases the ways of access to the plots had become completely blocked so that they could not be measured. The total number of beds was 164, of which at least 59 had not been in use for a long time. Of the remainder, 20 beds were used by persons from other parts of the village and only 80-90 by the people of



Borandjidam. In general, the beds were smaller than those in Wendu, which is in keeping with the tendency to extend existing beds rather than make new ones when the cultivated area needs to be enlarged. Since the cultivable area in this part of the village is larger, it is possible to leave more beds fallow between consecutive plantings.

The average production of the various root-crops is even more difficult to calculate than the cultivated area. The yield varies from one year to another, from one village to another and even from one garden-island to another.

In the inspection report cited above, Van Heurn gives some estimated figures. For Kalilam he estimates an average taro-production of c. 150 kilogrammes per are.

In 1961 I personally made an estimate of the taro-yield of three beds in Bamol. Altogether 252 tubers were gathered, with an average weight of 0.85 kilogramme. The area of the beds was 3.6 ares, so that the average yield amounts to 59 kilogrammes per are.

This figure is considerably lower than the estimate given by van Heurn. Various factors may account for this difference. In the first place, considerable damage was done by *bobas* in Bamol in this particular year, so that it was necessary to harvest the tubers, to prevent further damage, before they had reached their maximum weight.

Of course some sort of damage occurs everywhere every year, though its extent may vary. In my opinion, van Heurn's estimates are in general rather high. A yield of 150 kilogrammes per are is very high indeed and must be an exception even in Kalilam. In spite of these considerations a difference in yield favouring the western villages would be in agreement with the impression that these villages have a considerably more highly developed agriculture, in general, than the swamp villages which rely partly on sago.

Van Heurn put the production of sweet potatoes at 2 kilogrammes for each mound, i.e. about 200 kilogrammes per are (for the two villages Wan and Konerau). For Kladar and Tor his estimate was 150 to 200 kilogrammes, but two harvests a year are possible here. The total cultivable area in the latter two villages was estimated at an average of 4 ares for a family of 6. In swamp villages such as Bamol, the area planted with sweet potatoes is in any case considerably smaller while fewer tubers are produced per mound, on the whole

no more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  kilogrammes. The number of mounds per are was 65 in Bamol, which means that the average production per are is about 100 kilogrammes. The cassava harvest in Kladar and Tor was estimated by Van Heurn at about 4 kilogrammes per plant-mound, i.e. about 200 kilogrammes per are. According to him, 2 ares are available for each family of 6, while two harvests a year are possible. These last figures do not mean much, however, as long as we do not know the exact area that is annually planted.

In Bamol cassava is mainly planted in rotation with other crops, so that there is only one cassava harvest a year. At the time when we measured the garden-islands of the village-sector Wendu, 60 high beds and 8 taro-beds had been planted with cassava, giving a total area of 28 ares to a population of c. 180. At least  $2\frac{1}{2}$  of these 28 ares had already at that moment been spoiled by an unexpectedly high water-level, so that the final results would very probably be far below the figure given by Van Heurn for the south coast.<sup>6</sup>

For yams no calculations were attempted, for the weight of the tuber and the yield per bed vary so much that no reliable figures could be collected. The same is true of any calculation of the total food-output per head of population. Such a calculation would have to take into account the numerous additional sources of food and it is quite impossible to assess the significance of these.

The above figures show clearly that especially in the western and southern villages, a high degree of proficiency in agriculture has been attained. The central and northern villages rely to some extent on sago, of which, however, the supply is limited, except in Kimaam and Kalwa. It is therefore not surprising to find that typical symptoms of malnutrition such as extreme meagerness and a reddish discoloration of the hair occur far less frequently in the western and southern villages.

I am not competent to give an explanation for the conspicuous differences between the villages in the south and west of the island and those in the central and northern parts. In this respect I would only point to the hydrographic advantages of the former through the proximity of many sometimes quite big rivers meaning speedier drainage. The south, moreover, has the added advantages of a relatively high level and a more favourable composition of the soil, advantages which are only partly cancelled out by the periodical inundations with sea-water.

Prof. Bakker points out that the difference between South and South-West on the one hand and East and North-East on the other may indicate that the heavy soils of the south and south-west contain some illite in addition to kaolinite. Illite supplies the potassium so much needed for a good yield especially for starch-producing crops such as yams etc.

It should also be noted in this connection that both kaolinite and illite proved, during a test carried out at the physical geography laboratory of the University of Amsterdam, to have a very low degree of hygroscopicity. For the agricultural methods used on F. H. Island this property has both favourable and unfavourable consequences. An advantage is that neither kaolinite nor illite run easily. This undoubtedly partly accounts for the fact that the beds are fairly resistant to both erosion and corrosion. Both these types of clay, however, have the drawback of drying out severely, especially during the dry season, which makes frequent application of new layers of wet mud necessary.

Yet another physical geographical factor may be important in this connection, namely the penetration far into the land of salt to brackish water from the south coast, combined with the washing away of sodium chloride by the monsoon rains.

Experience with the desalinization of flooded polders in Holland has shown that phenomena of this type bring about an increased absorption of potassium. We should also consider the possibility that the starch-producing crops are stimulated by some sodium as well as potassium. (cf. for instance sugar-beets).

### 3 *Trees*

#### a *Sago*

Sago-palms are probably not native to Frederik-Hendrik Island, for even at the present day they are not found in any of the southern or western villages. The number of sago-trees is conspicuously largest in Kimaam and the surrounding villages. Towards the west and north the number of sago-plots decreases gradually. In Jeobi-Webu already, pigs have to be traded in exchange for sago from Kimaam. Woner and Kiworo have even less sago, while Wanggambi has no more than a few plots. On the part of the authorities, attempts have been made to introduce sago in the western villages as a reserve for years of bad root-harvests. These attempts have had very little success, however. The people themselves gave two reasons for their disinclination to plant sago. In the first place they did not wish to increase the burden of the women by giving them the additional task of beating sago, in the second place, they said, the soil was not suitable. Probably these are not the real arguments, for the most likely reason is merely the fact that the root-crops normally furnish sufficient food for the whole population.

In the villages that do have sago, most of the trees are young ones. They are rarely allowed to grow taller than 4 or 5 metres, which means a flour-yield of 12 to 15 kilogrammes. This rather low production is due to the fact that the trees are cut down before they have reached maturity, because the area for growing sago is limited. Sago is planted on very low beds and very close together, the usual distance between newly planted trees being no more than 1 metre by 2 metres. After some time they have to be thinned out. The beds are cleaned and old leaves are cut off. In several villages a large part of the sago-plantation has grown wild and completely impenetrable because the inhabitants have moved to a central village outside the plantation, so that the way of access is no longer regularly cleaned.

In those villages which do not have an abundance of sago, trees are more often cut down because they are needed than because they are mature, especially when the rains, by starting too early, cause a total or partial failure of the root-harvest. After it is felled, the trunk is cut into pieces of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres long, which are then split lengthwise. The pith is removed from the trunk with a stick hollowed out at one end. This part of the preparation is men's work on Frederik-Hendrik Island, in contrast to most other sago-districts of New Guinea. Only as much pith as is needed for immediate use is taken out at a time. The remainder is stored under water to preserve it. The top of the tree, which contains little flour and much water, is usually not pounded but mixed with lime, which makes it go red and gives it a sweet flavour. It is sucked and the 'ampas' (the hard fibres) are spat out. Sometimes, however, this part of the tree is left at the spot where it was cut down, to breed sago-larvae, which here too are considered a delicacy. After the pith has been removed, the women take over the preparation of sago-flour. The lower part of the leaf-sheath of the sago-palm is used as a gutter. It is placed at an angle against another leaf-sheath placed in a vertical position, and at the bottom it ends in a canoe-shaped receptacle of about 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres long. Water is thrown over the pith, which is in turn kneaded and beaten with a flat stick. By this operation the flour is loosened from the fibre and runs down the gutter with the water. At the end of the gutter it passes through a sieve made of coconut-fibre which holds back any 'ampas', so that only the flour runs into the canoe. This flour is allowed to settle, after which the water is thrown away.

Sago is consumed in various ways. It may be fried in an empty can or other vessel (sago-lempeng), or else stewed in a stewing-oven on heated stones. It is made into porridge with grated coconut or coconut-oil, etc. When there is not much time, a piece of sago-pith is merely grilled on the fire.

The sago-palm furnishes material for many different uses. The ribs of the leaves are used in the walls of the huts and as punting-poles. In some villages, the bark is used for canoes and elsewhere it serves as fire-wood or to strengthen the often rather muddy dwelling-islands. The leaves are plaited into atap roofs.

#### b *Coconut and other fruit-trees*

Coconut-trees are found in every village, grown as all other crops on artificial islands. With their sturdy roots they make these particularly suitable for dwelling-islands. In the old system of habitation there were always a few coconut-trees to be found in front, behind and on both sides of each hut.

The number of trees varies considerably from one village to another. They are probably most numerous along the south coast, where the whole strip of sand has been planted with palms, just as along the Marind-Anim coast. The total number of trees in the villages of Wan and Konerau was estimated by Van Heurn at c. 4,000, in Sabon at c. 3,000, but in Kladar and Tor at no more than about 400. In general the yield of the trees is rather low and the average annual production is probably considerably less than in the coastal district of Merauke. The first foreigners to settle on the island were Indonesian and Chinese copra-traders. But unlike those who settled in the Merauke district, they were soon obliged to leave because of a lack of supply.

Natives of the island who spent some time working elsewhere, for instance in Sorong, Hollandia or Merauke, have, after their return, introduced a number of other trees such as papaw, mango, oranges and lemons. These, however, have remained limited to a few scattered specimens, so that they only play a very minor rôle in the regular menu.

Bananas are more important in this respect. In Bamol, eight varieties of this fruit are known. They form an important supplementary food and no feast is held without bananas. Usually they are picked before they are ripe and eaten either stewed or fried. On the whole, bananas do well on the island. They are

found growing between other crops on practically every bed, as well as sugarcane, the latter being chiefly a delicacy, though it is sometimes eaten as a vegetable together with cooked tubers.

#### 4 *Narcotics and stimulants*

##### a *Tigwa* (Piper Methysticum)

In southern New Guinea *tigwa* is better known by the Marind name of *wati*. It is an intoxicant that plays an important rôle among the Kiwai, the Keraki, the Marind-Anim and on Frederik-Hendrik Island. A detailed treatment of this liquor is justified by its social significance. We have every reason to assume that *wati* has a similar function in the other districts where it occurs.<sup>7</sup> The Keraki informants interviewed by Williams were remarkably secretive on the subject of *wati* while otherwise their attitude was frank and open.<sup>8</sup> This is quite in accordance with my experiences on Frederik-Hendrik Island and it is very likely due to the former ban on both the cultivation and the consumption of *wati*. Government and mission authorities have since then continued to look on it with disapproval and the people are afraid the ban may be once more enforced.

This is why they are rather reluctant to show their *wati*-gardens.

In Bamol 5 different varieties are distinguished:

*Kuraka*, black stalk, needs a considerable distance between plants.

*Dikoié*, also with black stalks, may be planted close together.

*Namuru*, long green stalk

*Kwadarre*, short green stalk

*Ikawati*, very long stalk

As the name shows, this last variety is a recent introduction from the Marind-Anim region. The natives of Bamol get their cuttings for this variety from those of Kiworo, who in turn fetch it from the Marind-region. The maturing period is shortest for the first and third varieties and the third has the hardest stalks.

It is not easy on Frederik-Hendrik Island to grow *wati*. Only the older and abler cultivators can boast of having *wati*-gardens of any significance. The others are totally dependent on these few for their supply of the liquor.

The first condition for obtaining a good harvest lies in the selection of planting material. A month or two before the planting-season, cuttings are taken from the side-stalks directly above and below the joints. For this purpose only the largest plants are used, those which are brought to the feasts. The top part of the stalk, being softer and less woody, is not suitable for cuttings.

The planting-season is in the months of January and February. Those who have not collected enough cuttings by November have to obtain them by barter, in exchange for a canoe, for instance. The village of Kondjobando, especially, which has acquired particular fame by its *wati*-cultivation, regularly supplies planting-material for other villages.

The cuttings are placed in a row in a banana-leaf that has first been filled with a layer of decayed drift-grass. This leaf is carefully folded up and after a month or so small roots will begin to appear. At that stage the cuttings are planted out on a nursery-bed with a roof to shelter them from the burning sun. Each cutting is separately placed in an oblong lump of black clay with a high humus content, about 7 centimetres long and 3 fingers thick. No special plant-holes or mounds are made at this stage. If the clay gets too dry a new layer of drift-grass and clay has to be wrapped around the lump. On this nursery-bed the cuttings stay for about 2 weeks, after which they are planted out on the final bed. This period forms the most critical stage, during which often a great part of the planting-material dies. One of my informants, for example, had placed 110 cuttings in the nursery-bed, 42 of which died before the planting-time.

The cuttings may be planted out when they have grown leaves. The plant-beds are first cleared, the soil is turned over and crumbled. The grass is burned and the ashes are spread evenly over the beds or mixed with the top layer of soil. The young plants, with the lumps, are then placed in plant-mounds of grey clay, which are covered with a layer of drift-grass and clay. This last operation is repeated two to three times during the first stage of growth.

In order to keep the soil in the mounds from drying out too much, they are finally covered with a layer of dry grass, which is not removed until the stalks have grown to a height of about 25 centimetres. Shade is absolutely necessary

during the early stages. A bundle of dried grass tied to a stick is placed over each plant as a sunshade. It is left open on one side, however, so that the young plant can receive sufficient light from the late afternoon sun. As the stalk grows taller this shade is also raised higher until the plant has reached a height of about 50 centimetres, after which such protection is no longer necessary. A different method of shading was derived from the village of Kalwa. A roof is built over the whole bed, covered with palm-leaves and sago-leaves in such a way as to allow some sunlight to filter through.

*Wati* does not need to grow to full maturity before being fit for consumption. The stalks may be used as soon as they have grown woody. The plants reach their maximum height, c.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres, after about 12 months, but usually some part has been used long before that time.

*Wati* is an indispensable ingredient at all feasts of any significance and it is also an important means of payment for all sorts of services.

In principle only the stalks are of value for consumption. The leaves are chewed only if no stalks can be obtained, but their effect is not nearly so strong. The stalks are cut into equal pieces of c. 10 centimetres and these are tied together in bundles of 6 or 8, depending on the size. Such a bundle constitutes the traditional dose which suffices for a few hours of intoxication. In the preparation of these bundles particular care has to be taken that the very fine roots do not get lost, as they increase the effect.

For older people the stalks, which are very hard, are chewed by a younger relative (son, daughter or grandchild) and the juice, mixed with saliva, is spat into a mug or coconut-shell. After chewing the stalk is thrown away. The highly intoxicating effect of the liquor is probably caused by the emulsifying actions of this chewing process, for the *Kava* of the Polynesians, though extracted from the same plant (by pressing, not by chewing), is much less strong. After the light-green liquor has been sucked up through a straw in one draught, the muscles of the mouth and tongue contract. In an attempt to alleviate this condition sweet dishes and drinks are consumed, such as the juice and flesh of green coconuts, sugar-cane or bananas. For an effective intoxication it is also necessary to eat some meat or fish. This is finished off with the inevitable chewing of betel (or, more correctly, areca nuts) and the smoking of a few native cigarettes or a bamboo pipe.



Gradually the intoxication begins to take effect; movement becomes slower, at last it is almost impossible to get up and walk, and speaking also appears to become more and more difficult. The eyes get a vacant, staring expression. After about an hour one is obliged to crawl outside and vomit out all the food consumed. This is necessary, for should one not succeed in doing so, the intoxication will last appreciably longer and one is sure to feel unwell the next day.

*Wati* is practically always taken towards evening. The effect of a normal dose has completely disappeared by the next morning. If not too frequently taken it does not seem to affect one's energy the next day. It has been supposed that the practice of vomiting would cause a considerable amount of food to be lost instead of being absorbed by the body. But the consequences of this must not be overrated, for *wati* is by no means taken every day.

#### b *Tobacco and areca nuts*

##### *Taumuku* (tobacco)

Tobacco was already grown everywhere on the island before the first foreigners arrived. The seedlings are, as usual, kept in banana-leaves and then placed in shaded nursery-beds for a few weeks. Tobacco is also very sensitive at this stage and many seedlings die. The young plants are protected from the fierce sunlight of the late morning and early afternoon by two sago-leaves leaning crosswise over them.

After the harvest, the tobacco-leaves are dried in the sun and twisted into long thin rolls. Formerly bamboo-pipes were smoked everywhere but nowadays they are customary only in the western villages and are disappearing even there. In the other villages bamboo pipes are smoked only when *wati* is taken. This home-grown tobacco is used far more as part of the betel-chew.

##### *Areca-nuts*

Areca nuts are the chief component of the chewing-mixture. Betel-chewing is particularly common in the eastern and northern villages. A conversation is

not possible without betel-chewing and work is continually interrupted for it. It was probably introduced long ago, as is evidenced by the important part played by betel-chewing for instance in peace-ceremonies. In the western villages, however, both betel-chewing and *wati*-drinking are innovations introduced after government was established on the island. Neither areca nor *wati* are grown in these villages, although both are much prized. In contrast to *wati*, betel is taken by persons of all ages. Even very young children love it. The ingredients used for a chew are numerous: tobacco, gambir-leaves, a special type of bark and lime obtained from the burning of sea-shells.

### 5 *The exploitation of natural food resources*

#### a *Mapiè* (*nephrolepis biserrata* Schott)

*Mapiè* is a fern growing in the swamp, in Malay called *akar paku*, the roots of which are edible after treatment. In some spots in the swamp, this plant grows in large numbers and it takes an important place in the native diet, especially during the period between two harvests. Analysis has, however, proved it to be an inferior food with regard to its protein content.<sup>9</sup>

These roots are collected by the women during the dry months. The high water level makes it difficult to gather them during the wet season, although they are chiefly intended for consumption at that time, together with sago.

The roots, which are black and hairy, are put in water to soak for a period varying from three weeks to three months, according to the custom in the particular village. They are then put out on the roof or in the front-yard to dry, after which the hairy fibres are scraped off with a stick. With a heavy wooden pestle the roots are pounded to flour in a canoe-shaped trough. This flour is sifted through a finely plaited mat in which the pieces of skin remain behind. The yellow granular flour is put into plaited bags and stored in the day-shelter or, nowadays, in the house until the period of scarcity. It has the advantage of keeping very well.

It seems quite remarkable that the natives should thus purposefully lay in a stock of flour while the same is never done with tubers. This is due, however,

to the limited area on which tubers may be grown and to their generally bad keeping qualities.

For consumption, *mapiè* flour is made into balls with a little water and then, wrapped in leaves, cooked on hot stones or grilled directly on the fire.

At the beginning of the dry season there is also a shortage of food. As there is then no time for soaking and pounding the *mapiè* roots, they are immediately put out in the sun to dry. The dried roots are peeled and grilled over the fire. According to my informants, however, *mapiè* prepared in this way is less tasty and may cause stomach complaints. The degree in which a particular village has to rely on *mapiè* is a fair indication of its agricultural situation and its food situation in general. Although the natives are quite aware of the great importance of *mapiè* in the season of scarcity, they do not regard it as a first-rate food. The fact that the people of the other swamp villages have to eat so much *mapiè* for such a long time is regarded by those of the western villages as proof of their lack of agricultural skill. But in the western villages *mapiè* is also used, though not to the same extent.

Apart from its economic value, *mapiè* has a particular social significance. In every village the story is told of how the first people who came to the island had no tubers, sago or other food. Men, women and children gathered *mapiè* on which they relied exclusively for nourishment. Nowadays the gathering and preparation of *mapiè* is a typical woman's job and no man will ever interfere with it in any way. In many ways this food is particularly associated with women, for instance in marriage-gifts and at *ndambu*-feasts.

#### b *Hunting*

Wild boars, kangaroos and, in a smaller way, cassowaries are the most important game. The extent of the spoils and the hunting methods may differ considerably for each season as a result of the peculiar geography of the country.

The most favourable time for hunting is the wet season, when the game, mostly kangaroos, are forced to collect in the few small plains that are left dry. On these plains big drives are held in which people from different village-sectors participate, for the more participants, the greater the spoils. Men and

boys advance in a long line across the plain, making a lot of noise to drive the game before them. A few men meanwhile make a flanking movement and when the game is sufficiently closed in, every man runs after a kangaroo, trying to catch as many possible. At this stage there is no trace of any organisation left. Each man hunts for himself and tries to keep the game from escaping.

The catch depends to a large extent on the number of participants. If a village-sector has agreed to participate in a drive and then does not turn up, a quarrel may arise between the village-sectors concerned. A very large drive held in Bamol in 1961 resulted in a catch of more than 100 kangaroos.

The weapons used in this method of hunting are bamboo-spears and, especially, clubs. The latter are made of heavy wood, four-sided, with the centre of gravity lying to one side. They are very well balanced and are thrown overhead. The animal is stunned, falls down and is killed off. Nowadays clubs are also made of sticks with round stones or heavy screws attached.

Hunting does not take place exclusively in an organised way, even during the wet season. For hunting alone or in small groups, bow and arrow are preferred. The natives take advantage of the natural curiosity of kangaroos by stamping on the ground from time to time while approaching their game, in imitation of a jumping kangaroo. This method, which is said to be very successful, is supposed to have been introduced by a young man from the Marind-Anim region. At first he kept the secret to himself, but nowadays everyone knows it.

In the dry season the animals scatter over the big plains and the catch is usually small. At this time, moreover, the dry lands cannot be reached by canoe and all hands are needed in the village for agricultural work. This results in a shortage of meat which is expressed in many conversations in which the eating of meat plays a prominent part.

Another method which is much used in this season is to start up the animals by burning the reeds. At such times the village may be enveloped in dense clouds of smoke.

The boar-hunt is not without certain risks. It happens quite often that hunters return with gaping wounds in their arms or legs. The natives therefore rarely go out boar-hunting alone. Usually they hunt at night in small groups of two

or three persons. For boar a rather heavier type of club is used and the arrows are furnished with points of very hard *areca*-palm wood or iron.

Hunting is not regarded merely as a way of obtaining a much-coveted food. It is also a sport which provides an opportunity for boys and men to distinguish themselves by dexterity or strength. Hunting successes are a means of acquiring prestige. In some villages skulls of boars and kangaroos decorate the fronts of the houses as a proof of the owners' successes. No magical significance is attached to this custom. Collective hunting, especially, is also a social occasion at which a large number of people are gathered with a joint aim. Divisions between village-sectors and wards cease to exist and the whole operation takes place in an atmosphere of harmony and cheerfulness. When the horns sound early in the morning to call the dogs, no man or boy can resist the temptation to join in the hunt. There is much running about, making last-minute preparations and jokes pass to and fro. Everyone is in the best of moods and full of expectation.

When they return in the evening, the spoils of the hunt are distributed equally among all participants. Even those who were obliged for some reason or other to stay behind in the bivouac receive their share, as do also the less fortunate among the hunters. Some other time they may have more luck and part with some of their catch. Tall stories abound on those evenings.

It is said by some missionaries that on such hunting expeditions women are treated as a sort of beasts of burden, because they often carry the catch home on their shoulders. Those who have never taken part in one of these drives, however, cannot know how exhausting it is to run after the game for hours on end across a plain that is often covered with water to a depth of as much as 30 centimetres. Running there is a matter of falling and getting up again and of jumping from one clump of grass to another. If the women do carry the catch in the evening, that is a matter of reasonable division of labour. Not so very long ago, moreover, it was often all but safe at a distance from the bivouacs, owing to the possibility of surprise attacks on the part of neighbouring villages. It is natural the men would rather keep their hands free on such occasions.

Although there are birds in plenty, they are not often hunted, not because of any taboo but merely because the possibility of a good catch is very small.

Special arrows are used for birds, with a blunt point in order to spare the feathers, which are used for ornament. But this is exclusively an amusement for children. Birds are sometimes caught on the way from one village to another, for large swarms of them may be found resting on the narrow waterways. The rowers are careful to approach as silently as possible and when close enough they begin to shout with all their might. The birds flee in panic but in the attempt they fly against the reeds beside the route, where they are an easy prey for the men who have in the meantime jumped into the water. Other wild animals such as rats, bush-hens, coucous, lizards, etc. are not hunted systematically but only killed when they are met by chance.

### c *Fishing*

Fishing-methods also vary according to the season, while the situation of the village is another factor. In the western, southern and northern villages that are situated by tidal rivers, poison may be used without too much of a risk. This poison is obtained from the roots of a particular plant which is often grown on the borders of the ordinary garden-islands. The roots are crushed in a dug-out and when the tidal current is at its peak the canoe is turned over so that the poison spreads through the water.

The cultivation and preparation of the poison is men's work, but the women have to be ready with nets to scoop the doped fish out of the water. The outgoing tide soon takes the poison out to sea.

This method is most lucrative and such villages have a supply of fish the whole year round. The villages in the centre of the island, however, cannot use the same method because the water there does not circulate enough, while moreover the lakes would be too drastically fished in this way.

In these villages the size of the catch depends mainly on the water-level. During the rainy season, when the whole island is flooded, the fish scatter over an enormous area so that the catch is extremely small. This is the time, however, when the largest number of water-snakes are caught. Small snakes are used as bait. These are kept in a basket under water. The bait is tied to a reed-stalk so that the snake cannot get away once it has bitten.

A large number of such baited stalks are set out at the lake-side and the catch is,

collected in the evening. The women kill the snakes by biting the back of their necks. They can only go out snake-catching a few times a week because their hands are badly cut by the sharp reed-stalks.

When the water begins to subside, the water-courses are dammed off on two sides and the space between the dams is fished by groups of two or three women. The same method is sometimes used for lake-inlets.

Fish-traps are much used at this time along the water-routes. Usually the women keep watch by them all day under an improvised wind and rain-shelter.

Boys sometimes dam off the water-courses, leaving a narrow and shallow thoroughfare in the middle. They shoot the passing fish with bow and arrows. Men may also fish with bow and arrow, but they preferably go out to bigger stretches of water where they stand up in their canoes with their many-pronged fishing-spears. This method of fishing is much used at sea.

The most lucrative method in the central villages can be used in the dry season when the lakes are at their smallest. All the fish congregate in the small pools that are left, and the catch is sometimes very good. Women from a number of wards or village-sectors fish these small lakes collectively. They use large nets for the purpose, with a diameter of 3 to 4 metres, each manipulated by two women. Walking side by side in long lines towards the centre of the lake, starting from two sides, the women drive the fish to the middle where it is caught in the nets.

Unlike organised hunting, organised fishing takes place during the dry season. This might seem to indicate that the supply of animal proteins is equally distributed over the whole year. It must be remembered, however, that the available prey is all caught at the one occasion, or at the most at two. The supply is plentiful for only a short time, followed again by a long period of forced abstention.

Because meat and fish cannot be kept long, it is customary to eat one's fill of them. This does, however, seem to cause dullness, fatigue and gastric complaints. Our observations in connection with organised hunting hold good also for organised fishing. It forms an occasion in which different village-sectors, whose attitude towards each other is usually antagonistic, co-operate. There is much laughter and friendliness, as there also is in the evenings when the catch is divided.

## 6 The nutritional situation

It is extremely difficult to assess the nutritional situation, in the first place because it was not possible to establish exact figures for the amount of food produced and in the second place because a representative diet analysis could not be carried out. Such an analysis would have to extend over a period of at least one year on account of the seasonal variations in food-production. The demands of our ethnological research, however, made it impossible to fulfil this condition. We did analyse a number of meals in Bamol over a period of 30 days. This was done in the months of February and March, which means that the results are representative only for the rainy season.

In general, two to three meals a day were taken, although older people often had no more than one. There were no fixed times for meals and the only regularity consisted in the fact that every family had a meal in the evening. For this meal a big stewing-oven was usually prepared and enough food placed in it to leave something for next morning. The hot bricks on which the food is cooked are made simply by forming balls of clay and placing them on the fire. Bricks and food together are carefully covered with leaves and old mats. The 700 meals that were analysed were composed as shown in table III:

Table III. Composition of meals in Bamol (30 days)

Mainly or exclusively cassava	250	36%
Mainly or exclusively sago	250	36%
Mainly or exclusively <i>mapiè</i>	75	11%
Mixed meal of sago and cassava	20	3%
Mixed meal of sago and/or cassava with <i>mapiè</i>	25	3%

The remaining 80 meals consisted of various combinations of the above-named ingredients with bananas, ripe or green coconuts, reed-roots and other supplementary foodstuffs. Taro or sweet potatoes appeared on the menu only very rarely.



Since this was also the hunting season, it was interesting to see in how many cases meat or fish formed a part of the menu. (Table IV)

Table IV. Number of analysed meals containing meat or fish.

meat	23	3%
fish	7	1%
water-snakes	48	7%

The above figures show the important part played by cassava, sago and *mapiè* in the composition of the menu, contrary to the native ideas of what foodstuffs are important or not important. Another striking aspect of these figures is formed by the fact that no more than 11% of the meals contained animal proteins. Even during the hunting season meat occurs on the menu only very rarely. Actually hunting does not provide nearly as important a contribution to the menu as the less sporting but more lucrative pursuit of catching water-snakes.

The food-situation in the northern and central villages is described in Vogel's report as follows:

"Here too we find the well-known picture of scraggy newly-borns, fat babies, skinny toddlers, thin school-children, sturdy to stout adolescents, vigorous adult men, withered adult women and emaciated old people." This is not a cheerful picture and Vogel agrees with one of his predecessors, Veeger, whom he quotes as believing the nourishment to be marginal with a strong tendency for the balance to be upset by wide-spread worm-infestation and frequent enteritis.<sup>10</sup>

There is no medical report for the western and southern villages, but from the agricultural officer's report mentioned earlier it appears that there is no question of any serious shortage of food at normal times. The observation is rightly added, however, that such normal times are interrupted once every five to seven years by high spring-tides which destroy a great part of the harvest.<sup>11</sup>

During such periods beetles and other insects are eaten to still the craving for food. On a number of occasions since government was established on the island, rice and other foodstuffs have been sent over from Merauke to relieve the greatest distress.

It is not surprising that foreigners who visited the villages during such periods were convinced that the population must be moved to better regions or else would surely perish. Since no spontaneous migration took place, attempts were made to persuade the natives to move.<sup>12</sup> Without success, however. When seen in the light of our knowledge after more than 20 years, the reasons for this failure are easier to understand. Famines occur only periodically and, although there is no significant surplus in normal years, the food-supply cannot be called insufficient. Attempts made by government authorities to introduce sago in these districts were meant as a step to create a reserve for flood-years.

If physical appearance may be regarded as an indication of the food-situation, a remarkable difference must be noted between the southern and western parts and the remainder of the swamp. Vogel's description does not fit the people of the southern and western villages. On the whole they have a well-fed appearance, older people as well as children. Cascado and reddish discoloration of the hair are scarcely found here or not at all.

In the central, eastern and northern villages, the amount of food produced is more constant but less plentiful. But even here periods of famine may occur, though less frequently. In 1961, for instance, the government had to come to the rescue by supplying food when the rains started with full intensity in December. The village of Jaumuka especially, suffered severely from the subsequent famine, as a few months earlier the whole sago-stock was destroyed by fire while the root-crops had been neglected because the government had ordered a new village to be built. The death-rate was very high and the population was in danger of becoming completely apathetic as a result of this succession of disasters. In general, the reluctance, noted also in other villages, to carry out village services imposed by missionary or government authorities, must be regarded in the light of the very heavy labour and the vast amount of time required for food-production.

There are no great individual differences in consumption as a consequence of various factors such as kinship, membership of the local group, feasts such as

the *ndambu*-feast and others, all of which promote an equal distribution of food-supplies over the population within the village. The area that may be cultivated by one man is more or less fixed by the absence of complicated tools. Any variations are therefore directly connected with the industry and agricultural skill of the individual. The possession of more than one wife has no great influence on agricultural production, as women play only a very minor part in agriculture. Polygynous families therefore have a higher production mainly of supplementary foodstuffs.

The above observations warrant the conclusion that the means of subsistence on Frederik-Hendrik Island are decidedly marginal. On the limited area of cultivable land, literally wrested by hand from the swamp, just enough food can be produced only by the use of exceedingly rational and intensive agricultural methods. Even then, supplementary sources of food are essential (see Appendix I).

It will be obvious that in an environment like this the balance is easily upset. It does not take much to reduce the population to less than the minimum required for the preservation of health. This is regularly occurring for longer or shorter periods of time now in one group of villages than in another.

A study of the agriculture of Frederik-Hendrik Island forces one to conclude that a different solution is hardly conceivable, given the available resources. The growing of sago, which might be regarded as a possible substitute for agriculture in the narrower sense of the word must not be overrated in this respect. It is true that some change in favour of sago-growing has taken place in several villages, but native agriculture has nowhere been ousted. Wild sago does not occur on Frederik-Hendrik Island, unlike those regions where sago is the staple food. For sago, as for other crops, special islands have to be constructed. It is true that the sago-plots require less maintenance but, on the other hand, they may only be used once, while they yield a product no more than once every five or six years, which means that a relatively large number of such islands is needed. The failure of attempts to introduce sago in villages with the highest root-crop production and the highest degree of development of agricultural techniques must be regarded as quite significant in this respect.

*1 Kinship structure*

One of the most remarkable aspects of Kimam kinship structure is its pronounced concentration on three generations only. This is evident from the collected genealogies, for kinship relations are generally not known past the generation of the grandparents. These genealogies rarely consist of more than four generations and one cannot expect to get reliable answers to questions about collateral relatives of grandparents.

This lack of depth in the genealogical knowledge of the Kimam must be regarded as an element of structural importance. The situation outlined above is reflected in their terminology by the fact that grandparents and grandchildren constitute everywhere the two extremes of terminological differentiation. No special terms exist for great-grandparents and great-grandchildren. If ever these terms are needed, the respective terms for grandparents and grandchildren are used. There are therefore three relationships of functional importance: those between grandparents and grandchildren, between parents and children, and between siblings. Of these three, the first is the least important. A certain community of interests, on account of their dependence on the same persons, is expressed by the use of reciprocal terms in the Ndom and Riantana groups.

The much greater significance of the parent-child relationship is expressed in the Kimaghama group by the fact that a relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is often interpreted as a parent-child relationship. When there is an adoptive relationship between children and grandparents, the latter and the children may, respectively, use for each other the terms for children and

parents. Even without special adoptive relationships, the ordinary terms for parents and children are often used.

*a The relations between parents and children*

In these relations two factors are dominant, the factors namely of support and of authority. The former of these is in a sense reciprocal while the latter implies obedience and respect as its complements on the other side.

Apart from any small services done by children for their parents when the latter are still active, the reciprocity of the support relationship is clearly expressed in the following remark, which is frequently heard: "We feed our children in order that they may later feed us." This markedly self-interested attitude is more than mere rationalisation, for through the system of adoption it exerts a strong influence on the relations between parents and children.

The great importance of the support factor means that the relations between parents and children are subject to alteration with the passing of years. Ideally, children are expected to support and care for their parents when the latter have grown old and unproductive. Theory and practice do not always correspond, however. It is by no means unusual for children to have little or no concern for their parents. Even in theory the ideal of support and sustenance holds good only up to a point. When age is accompanied by sickness so that the parents become too much of a burden for the community or, in this case, for their children, the sons are expected to promote a rapid death by the use of magic.

It is a duty for women as well as for men to look after their parents, but the heaviest responsibility rests on the men, as is only to be expected in view of their important rôle in the production of food while residence is generally patrilocal. By the time they might be able to start looking after their parents, the daughters have often already been married off to another ward or part of the village. From time to time they do, however, come to beat sago or pound *mapiè* or else they help their parents with gifts of food.

Theoretically, the factor of authority remains constant, but it is obvious that the reversal of the support-relationship will often entail a change in the authoritative position of the parents. As long as the parents look after their children,

Woman pushing floating-grass



Manuring a cassava-garden with mud



they are conspicuously in a position of authority based on the economic dependence of the children. At a later time this weapon has usually lost its force and the only possible substitute, for the father, is to be found in magic. Although this method is not used against children except in the most extreme cases, the mere possibility of its use constitutes a kind of guarantee against too much neglect. This fear of magic practised by parents, even when they are already dead, is very real.

An illustration of this is afforded by a newly married young man in the village of Wetau, who had been conspicuously deficient in care and respect towards his father. When the father died rather unexpectedly, it was generally assumed that he had 'sold' himself and his son, for that reason, to an *umdani* (magician), i.e. that he had made the *umdani* kill both him and his son. In such a case, the son's death is regarded as practically inevitable. Since that time the young man was constantly harassed by a sense of guilt. Headaches that lasted for days on end and which were accompanied by visions of his father thirsting for revenge finally resulted in a fit of frenzy.

Authority rests mainly with the father and manifests itself chiefly in economic matters where sons are concerned, while the relations with daughters are largely determined by marriage arrangements (see chapter IV, paragraphs 1, 2, 3.) Although the factor of authority is not totally lacking in the relations between mother and child, these are usually of a more intimate character and more exclusively founded on affection. Affection is also found in a father's attitude to his children, but the lack of respect that especially young children often show towards their mother occurs far more rarely with regard to a father. The father-son relationship stands out particularly because it constitutes the basis of such territorial groups as *patha* and *kwanda* (see paragraph 2). For this reason, this is also the relationship that shows the most continuity.

#### b *The relations between siblings*

Second, but not less important, is the relationship between siblings. Ideally, all siblings are bound by duty to assist one another on all occasions, regardless of whether or not they belong to the same local group. Two or more brothers often live together on one dwelling-island. This may be regarded as a consequence of the great importance attached to the sibling-relationship while, on



the other hand, this relationship is greatly influenced, in practice, by this living near one another. The fulfilling of sibling-duties depends in fact to a large extent on the state of good feeling between the partners.

In a sense, the sibling-relationship presupposes equality of the partners, being offspring of the same parents. A big difference in age, however, may cause the relations between siblings to be more like those between parents and children. As soon as the economic powers and the moral authority of the parents begin to wane, the attitude of respect and obedience is transferred to the older sibling. This process, which usually takes place gradually, does not come about without tension, especially because an elder and a younger brother are, economically, rivals (see chapter IV paragraph 2). Their relationship can therefore never become quite the same as that between father and son; on the contrary, a latent animosity is unmistakably present.

The pattern of conduct of one brother towards the other is best characterised as one of avoidance. They never sit close together, for the touch of their bodies would make them both feel ashamed, nor do they ever take a meal together. A younger brother, moreover, is not allowed to utter the elder brother's name in the latter's presence. They do not as a rule address each other directly but prefer to make use of an intermediary. A man who wished to give a feast for his child talked about his plans in the evening in a company of men including his elder brother. "I have a *wati*-garden, but the plants are still young. I wonder how big the *wati* has grown in the garden of my elder brother." In saying this he addressed himself to the circle in general while carefully avoiding looking at his elder brother. The latter answered the question in a similar manner.

Quite remarkable is the absence of avoidance or animosity in the relations between brother and sister or between sisters. With regard to a younger sister an elder brother occupies a position of authority, based on the rules of direct marriage-exchange in which he has an important say. There is in this relationship, moreover, no factor of economic rivalry as between brothers. My impression is further that the absence of a pronounced factor of authority, as well as the more intimate relations between mother and child are important in facilitating the transfer of this pattern of conduct to the elder sister. Thus the elder sister is frequently addressed as *namamu* (mother), especially when the real

mother is no longer living or when there is a great difference in age. The use of similar terms could not be noted in the relations between brothers.

It is not surprising to find that the great significance of the sibling-relationship is reflected in the terminology. The use of special terms for older and younger siblings indicates the importance of differences in age. The superior position of older siblings is stressed by the distinction between sexes which is made for them but not for younger siblings.

According to Murdock differences in age are of minor importance as criteria for the terminological classification of relatives.<sup>1</sup> This is in contradiction to the situation on Frederik-Hendrik Island, for there the 'major criteria' named by Murdock are subordinate to this principle. The generation criterion, for instance, is broken by the use of the term for grandparents to designate older siblings of the parents, especially when there is a big difference in age with these latter. On the other hand, younger siblings of the parents are often designated by the terms for older siblings. For cousins the terms for older or younger sibling are used in accordance with the actual difference in age, regardless whether the cousin in question is a child of an older or of a younger sibling of the parents. The difference in status that accompanies the difference in age appears also from the fact that *aghave* (child) or *namundje* (younger sibling) are used for younger relatives of the marriage-partner, instead of the special affinal term.

Murdock has demonstrated a statistical correlation between the use of the criterion of relative age and bilateral kinship-structures. This is quite in accordance with the situation on Frederik-Hendrik Island where descent is also bilateral. I do not agree, however, with Murdock's explanation for this correlation. According to him the number of patterns of conduct that need to be distinguished in such societies is fairly small, thus leaving terms available for the designation of rather insignificant differences in kin-types.<sup>2</sup> There is no reason at all to suppose that the principle of relative age is of minor significance in those societies where it is applied. On Frederik-Hendrik Island it is the guiding principle defining the pattern of conduct, not only within the circle of relatives but also in practically every situation outside it. In bilateral societies there is more concentration on ego's generation, that is, horizontal kinship is more important in such societies than in unilineal ones. Relative differences in

age within this generation then become naturally more important because a larger number of relatives need to be differentiated.

c *The grouping of relatives*

In this and the following paragraphs I shall attempt to show that the above-named kinship-relations are expressed in or form the basis of all other kinship-categories and of territorial groups.

The community of interests of the siblings manifests itself in the *jaentjewe*, a term which designates, in the Kimaghama-speaking group, the entire group of real and classificatory siblings. *Jaentjewe nöwedde*, i.e. belonging to one sibling-group, is the most usual reason for giving assistance in the making of garden-islands or dug-out canoes, for giving presents of food on all sorts of festive occasions and in times of shortage, or support in conflicts or against threats of magic by third parties, as well as for the prohibition of sexual or marriage relations, for the adoption of children and for living together on a common dwelling-island.

The structural significance of sibling-relationship is not easily overrated. In daily life, too, its significance manifests itself in mutual assistance of many kinds, while by their distribution over the various sectors of the village, the siblings form links in a connecting chain which facilitates intercourse between these sectors (see chapter VI paragraph 3).

We may ask which relatives do and which do not belong to the *jaentjewe*. In the first place, of course, all real and half-siblings of ego belong to it, as well as any adoptive children of his parents. For classificatory relationships, however, it is often hard to tell where the limit is drawn, for it may depend on factors that have no direct connection with the degree of kinship. Some tendencies may perhaps be noted, but it is not really feasible to discuss these without simultaneously treating the wider kinship-group called *tjipente*.

*Tjipente* (*tji* 'man', *pente* 'tree') is a kinship-category, the membership of which may be acquired both in a patrilineal and in a matrilineal way. Unlike the *jaentjewe*, the *tjipente* consists of several generation-levels. Still, for each individual the *jaentjewe* forms the nucleus of his *tjipente*. The *tjipente* consists, in fact, of the *jaentjewe*-groups of ego's parents, sometimes also his grand-

parents, and those of his own generation and of his children. The composition of the *tjipente* is therefore different for each individual except for real siblings, and there is much overlapping. The *tjipente* is a personal kindred, i.e. a bilateral kinship-group of rather vague definition. It is very elastic and its compass depends to a large extent on the occasion for which it is moved to activity. Two methods may be used to examine compass and structure of the *tjipente*. The first is to note down all the members of the *tjipente* of one or more informants, i.e. all those persons regarded by the latter as such, after which the genealogical relationships are traced as far as possible. This method of approach has the drawback of asking the informant to think in abstract terms about something that exists only in a concrete way. For the *tjipente* is a group only in an operational sense. It is quite possible, therefore, that a number of potential members are forgotten or even purposely not mentioned on account of non-relevant rationalisation. An example of this is for instance the influence of the Marind totemic names that were only fairly recently introduced and the use of which has been unintentionally increased by government officers and Indonesian village-teachers. It is quite possible that only persons with the one totemic name will be mentioned in an effort to meet the supposed expectations of the European interrogator. Mistakes of this type may be to some extent corrected by suggesting possibilities, but in that case there is a risk that all traceable and often traditional relatives are counted as members of the *tjipente*, which would thus acquire a compass and composition no longer in accordance with the operational character of the group.

This method has the advantage, on the other hand, of bringing to the fore certain rationalisations about kinship as well as other factors that exert an influence in actual practice.

The second method is to take down the names of all persons participating in a feast and to trace their relationships to the feast-giver. By this way of approach, necessarily, only a momentary state of affairs is recorded, influenced by all kinds of more or less chance factors such as personal affection, friendship, ambition and others. It does, however, give a good picture of the elasticity of this group on different occasions.

Both methods were applied in our investigation and led to the following conclusions.

1 The starting-point for the *tjipente* is without exception found in the generation of the parents or grandparents, depending on genealogical knowledge and on whether or not these relatives are still living. The question one asks oneself, therefore, is with whom one has either a parent or a grandparent in common. This means that the *tjipente* goes no further than second cousins. In practice, however, this is not always quite true, for there is a tendency to count classificatory siblings in the parent's, but especially in the grandparent's generation as real siblings. This prevalent tendency is due on the one hand to a lack of genealogical knowledge and on the other hand to the strong unity of the *jaeentjewe*-group. Such identification is particularly to be expected for *jaeentjewe*-members of previous generations living together on or deriving from the same dwelling-island. In such cases, even distant relatives may be regarded as siblings.

2 The influence of local groups is also evident from the selection that is often applied to previous generations. There is a tendency to take as a starting-point only that particular sibling-group of the grandparents' generation which belongs or used to belong to ego's own dwelling-island or ward. In practice that is usually father's father's group. Matrilineal lines are taken into account sooner if the descendants, especially those belonging to ego's generation, happen to belong to the same ward or sector of the village.

The genealogies collected by the second method also prove to be influenced by this consideration, though less clearly so. Certain differences that occur appear to be due to the types of occasions for which the *tjipente* is collected. Thus the omission of matrilineal relatives appears most clearly on those occasions in which the local group plays an important part, as, for instance, in the *ndambu*-feast. All the same, those relatives who do not, and whose ancestors did not, belong to the same dwelling-island do constitute a latent group of helpers. Whether they are mobilised is a question of the occasion, again, as well as of personal relations, amount of contact, sympathy or antipathy and other more or less chance factors.

3 Many informants tended to identify the *tjipente* with the *jaeentjewe*. The reason for this is fairly obvious. Adults with full status and responsibility can

expect real help only from persons of their own generation. Members of the previous generation are generally too old to take an active part in the process of production and even if they are not yet totally incapacitated their duties are often taken over by their children. The next generation, on the other hand, is usually too young as yet to have been fully admitted into public life. Passively, of course, these generations do take part in many occasions, as for instance at children's and at mortuary-feasts.

In view of what has been said above, it is not surprising to find that the bilateral character of this society manifests itself also in the terminology. The terms for the parents are extended to their siblings with their wives and husbands, sibling-terms are used also for parallel and cross cousins and those for one's own children are made to include children of siblings (generation terminology). The Iroquois terminology used for cross cousins in the Ndom-group should not be interpreted as an expression of a unilineal tendency but rather as a consequence of the special position occupied by the mother's brother (see chapter IV paragraphs 3, 6).

The slight differentiation in patterns of conduct towards lineal and collateral relatives and their vague definition are reflected in this type of bilateral terminology.

In his introduction to *Social Structure in South East Asia*, p. 6, 7 and in *Social Structure*, 1949, p. 187, Murdock offers the suggestion that degree of technical development and means of subsistence among other things do not exert any important influence on the development of bilateral societies, because such structures occur also in societies that have reached a high degree of technical development.<sup>3</sup> He makes the mistake, however, of assuming that all bilateral structures are essentially the same. In my opinion, on the contrary, marginal livelihood and technical primitiveness may in certain circumstances be among the factors which constitute a strong impulse for the development of such types of structure. When regarded in the light of such factors, at least, a bilateral structure seems to be the most suitable type for Frederik-Hendrik Island.

2 *Territorial structure*a *Patha* (dwelling-island)

In the preceding paragraphs it has already been stated that relations between kinsmen are partly determined by where they live. We shall now take a closer look at local organisation.

Originally, the natives lived on scattered man-made islands. This situation has drastically changed in many ways since the land was opened up by the government and the missionaries. The authorities did not sufficiently realise that interference in such matters might affect social organisation, which is determined to a large extent by the fact that the village as a whole is built up of local groups. I shall first discuss the situation as it was before this intervention. There is, however, one difficulty: When the *paias* were replaced by houses built according to a government model, concentrated on one large dwelling-island, the importance of the *patha* decreased considerably. This is clear particularly in those villages where the change took place long ago. The necessity to rely on reconstruction in most cases forms an obstacle to a right appreciation of the *patha* as a part of social organisation. This is particularly true of villages such as Kimaam and Bamol, which were moved more than ten years ago.

In the western group of villages this is easier. On account of their isolation, these did not move to a common dwelling-island until 1959. Fortunately, also, all the dwelling-islands have names. Usually the meaning of these names is no longer known, but in a few cases they were found to be based on some peculiarity of the place where the island was built.

How closely these people identify themselves with the dwelling-islands to which they belong is shown, in the western villages, by the fact that for purposes of registration by government officers or missionaries *patha*-names are used. Totemic names are not (yet) used in these villages. Even in the other villages, though, many people know exactly to which dwelling-island they used to belong. The uncertainty starts with the generation that was born in the new village. Table V shows the number and the occupation of the dwelling-islands in the village of Sibenda.

Table V. Number and occupation of dwelling-islands in the village of Sibenda

dwelling-island	number of inhabitants	number of nuclear families
Sinodar	8	2
Damburendar	16	4
Koretjedar	13	4
Awedar	9	2
Merambu	22	5
Inurantar	8	3
Trarementar	15	4
Moriokar	10	2
Total	101	26

A decided preference is shown for two or more nuclear families to live together. This indicates that a *patba* is by no means an undifferentiated group, as appears also from the territorial separation of the constituent families. Where *paia*s were used, often these nuclear families each had their own, while they all shared the day-shelter built in the centre of the island. In those places where *paia*s were not known, long low buildings were used, consisting of two or more huts, one for each nuclear family, built one against the other. Even where common day and night quarters were used, these were divided into two or more corners. Sleeping-places and storage-space were kept strictly apart and no person would venture uninvited into the territory of another nuclear family.

The privacy of the nuclear families is clearly seen at mealtimes and around the fire-place. Meals are commonly symbols of intimacy and of the close ties binding the participants. Each nuclear family eats and prepares its own meals. It also has its own fire-place. Even the bricks on which the food is cooked may not be used without permission. All these rules apply only for adults and older children. Young children often spend much time with other families and may even have meals with them.



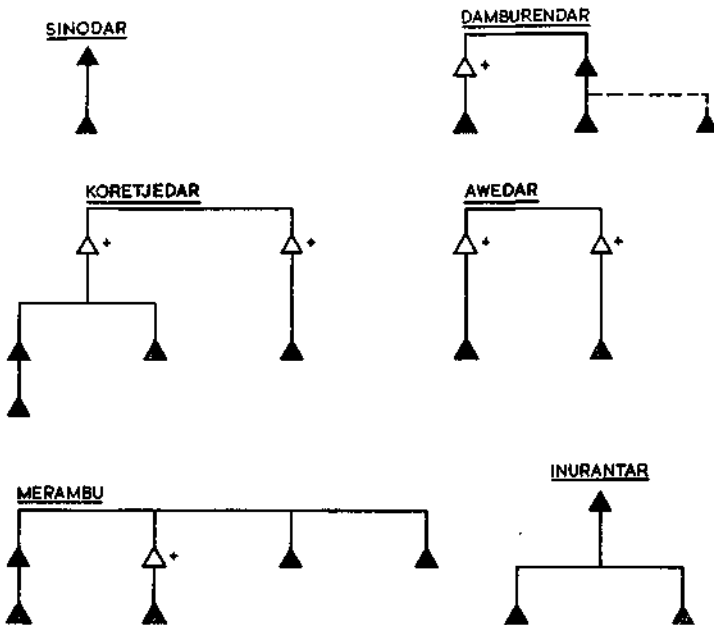
There is thus no question of a joint household for a *patha*-group. Tools and implements may be freely used by everyone after permission has been asked, but they remain the personal property of one man or woman. The produce of gardens and sago-islands is usually equally shared, but the gift-element is preserved.

All the same the *patha*-group forms the most important co-operative unit next to the nuclear family. The men preferably go out hunting together. They assist one another in the making of islands, in planting and harvesting, in cutting down trees for canoes and in finishing these. The same may be said of the women. They help each other in beating sago and in making mats. They preferably go out together fishing or collecting fire-wood. Sometimes, however, they take turns so that one can stay behind to look after the small children who are not yet allowed to leave the dwelling-island and who are always in danger of drowning, as there is water everywhere.

Between the families constituting a *patha*-group there is a constant flow of services and services returned, usually taking place in an easy atmosphere free from constraint, with no precise weighing of services rendered. This changes, however, when the relations between the families deteriorate. The services cannot, moreover, come from one side only for too long, as this would be too heavy a burden for a nuclear family to bear. But this does not easily occur, for the possibility always remains for one or more nuclear families to leave the dwelling-island and join another family-group, which would place the family that is left behind in grave difficulties.

The relationships of the nuclear families living on each of six *patha* in Sibenda are shown in diagram 3. From the other two dwelling-islands of the total of eight that constitute this village, I was not able to gain sufficient information. For clarity's sake, wives and unmarried children are not shown in the diagram. Joint-dwelling is thus largely determined by father-son and elder brother-younger brother relationships. The *patha*-group may therefore be classified as a patrilocal or fraternal joint-family. The patrilocal tendency is closely connected with the economic power of the father. He forms the uniting factor, possessing as he does enough authority and sanctions to make the group work with a minimum of conflicts.

When the father is no longer alive or old and infirm, the situation becomes less

Diagram 3. Relationship of nuclear families of six *patha* in the village of Sibenda.

stable, especially if the group consists solely of real brothers. In view of the latent animosity between brothers, as already pointed out above, it is not surprising that a group of this type often breaks up. In this connection it is interesting to note that the presence of more than one *paia* on a *patha* is usually an indication of fraternal joint dwelling. A father and son usually are content with one *paia*.

If the separation of night-quarters is not sufficient to avoid a too frequent occurrence of conflicts between brothers, a further territorial separation may be brought about without completely discarding the joint-dwelling idea. In such a case a new island may be made next to the old one. Finally, a radical separation is also possible and a new joint-dwelling may be started with a sister or a classificatory sibling. Conflicts are an important reason for the formation of new joint-dwelling groups, but not the only one.

The foregoing shows conclusively that there is a decided preference for siblings to live together. If these are usually brothers and less often brothers and sisters, that does not mean there is a common norm to this effect. The reasons are rather to be found, on the one hand, in the fact that the elder brother inherits to a certain extent the economic power of the father (after the latter's death he is the one who for a while manages the inherited gardens) and on the other hand in the fact that residence in marriage is usually virilocal (see paragraph 2b). I shall now explain briefly in what ways the *patha*-group has changed after the move to the modern villages. The data supplied by table VI may serve as an illustration:

Table VI. *Family-composition of houses after resettlement*

	Sibenda	Bamol
number of houses registered	13	13
number of one-family houses	2	—
maximum number of occupants of a house	10	14
minimum number of occupants of a house	6	7
maximum number of nuclear families in one house	3	3
total population	107	123
total number of nuclear families	26	27

In the first place we may note that the preference for more than one family to live together continues to assert itself in the changed circumstances. Only 2 of the 26 houses are occupied by a single nuclear family. This is all the more striking when we take into account the pressure that has been and still is exerted on the population by the missionaries to persuade them to build one-family houses. In Kondjobando, for instance, the local teacher had the houses built so small that they could not shelter more than one family. In this manner he attempted to force nuclear families to live separately, but the people evaded

this by making extensions at the backs of the houses. Our registration of the occupants for the purposes of this research was at first regarded with a great deal of distrust, as it was thought to fore-shadow a new forced move. We may conclude that a continuation of joint-family dwelling apparently offers great practical advantages.

It is interesting to note, on the other hand, that the privacy of the different families has been retained by a division of the common dwelling similar to that existing formerly. In addition each family now has its own door, which may not be used by members of the other family. The front and back verandahs, where nowadays the fire-places are found, are the domains of the separate families.

In the relations between the occupant families, the government order brought about, in a sense, a completely new situation. The persons who now decided to build a new house together were not always former co-residents. Sometimes they were relatives who had been on good terms for a long time but who were not yet living together. The houses were built, moreover, by the younger heads of families who now called themselves in Malay 'tuan rumah' (master of the house), for which notion the native language does not possess an equivalent. Older people had to find accommodation with one of their children.

This is illustrated by the case of Wiwarra, an elderly man, who lived on his own *patba* with his wife. When the new village was built he had to find somewhere to live. He had no sons and was on bad terms with his younger brother Thomas, for which reason he had built his own dwelling-island. He therefore went to live with his foster-daughter Appolina.

The most obvious difference between the old situation and the new is the fact that there is now considerably less variation both in the size of the co-resident groups and in the number of nuclear families in each group. 19 of the total of 26 houses are occupied by two nuclear families. This is no doubt due to the fact that the government order required the houses to be all the same size. This meant that the groups coming from the larger islands had to split up. Wherever possible, such former groups built two or more new houses adjoining one another, that is, if the available space and the number of houses permitted them to do so. This happened for instance in Sibenda. In most cases, however,

the size of the new dwelling-islands was limited because much time and labour are required to make a reasonably high and firm island and also because often there were simply not enough grounds that were high enough. In these cases the joint-dwelling pattern became very complicated.

1 When the new village was built, Wagé was temporarily living with Barka, his mother's sister's son, because the latter had adopted one of his children. When the normal time had come for the real parents to leave the house of the foster-parents, there was no room for him anywhere else so that he had to stay where he was. Another mother's sister's son of Wagé's had to leave the house he shared with his brother on account of a quarrel and joined Wagé and Barka, the only persons who offered to take him.

2 At the time when the new village was built, Waboja was in mourning, which meant that for a certain time he was not allowed to appear in public, so for the time being he stayed in the old village. At the end of the period of mourning his wife's sister's husband was the only one who offered him a place.

The same thing happened in the case of Mémpona, who was mourning the death of his child and who was subsequently offered a place only by Bikèn, his mother's brother's son.

The influence that may be exerted by local circumstances appears clearly in Bamol, where separate islands were made for the different parts of the village. The populous sector called Wendu is situated on an island surrounded by a small lake which prevents it from being extended. The number of non-patrilocal and non-fraternal joint-dwelling groups is much larger here than in Kantjimbe, which has more space. The steady increase of the population, moreover, will cause the lack of space to become a more and more important factor. There has been no increase worth mentioning in the number of houses in any of the villages since the move took place.

We must finally mention the complaint which, though unverifiable, is heard in practically every village, namely that quarrels arise more easily in the new houses since they offer less privacy. During my stay in different villages I did indeed notice that the number of conflicts was considerable. Quarrels often ran so high that one of the parties started pulling down the house. The persons who come into conflict with each other in the houses are by no means always brothers.

Tjubuja, in Bamol, went to live with his wife's brother Wilhelmus because he was on bad terms with his own elder brother. In the new house, however, the wives quarrelled and Tjubuja's wife was knocked unconscious. The only thing he could do after that was move into the house of Jawè, his wife's sister.

In conclusion it may be said that the present joint-dwelling groups are not simply a continuation of the *patha*-groups. There is a stronger tendency to form groups other than fraternal ones, while there is also a greater mobility. Older people continue to identify themselves in the first place with their original *patha*. The young people, however, have no memories of a common dwelling-island, while on the other hand there is no special attachment to the new house. The latter factor also greatly increases the general mobility.

#### b *Kwanda* (village-ward)

The number of inhabitants varies considerably for the different *patha*, from eight to twenty-two in Sibenda. The number of inhabitants of the islands cannot continue to grow indefinitely, however, in the first place because the available space would not permit continued extension and in the second place because the group, however variable the number of its members, has to be confined within certain limits to ensure its proper functioning. A considerable increase in the number of inhabitants therefore makes it necessary at some stage for one or more nuclear families to leave the *patha*. We have seen in the previous paragraph that the immediate cause of such action is often some conflict, but this is not necessarily always so. With a steady increase in population such separations are continually taking place, both from the original parent *patha* and from other *patha* that were separated from it at an earlier stage. This parent *patha* and the *patha* that have sprung from it together form a larger group called *kwanda*, which is perhaps best rendered, in view of its territorial character, as 'ward'.

*Kwanda* as well as *patha* have their own names, but usually it is not possible to trace the original meaning. In some cases these names are derived from the parent *patha*.

Diagram 4 gives an outline of these developments in Sibenda:

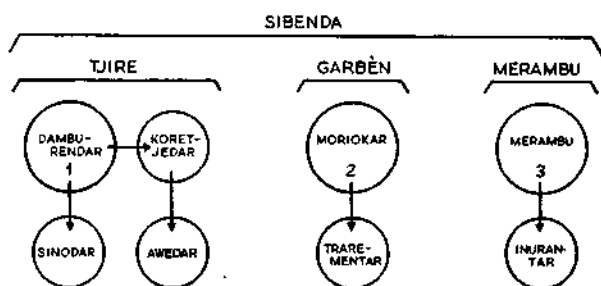


Diagram 4. *Kwanda-formation in the village of Sibenda.*

The parent *patha* 1, 2 and 3 with the islands that split off from them in course of time, constitute the *kwanda* respectively called Tjire, Garbèn and Merambu (genealogy in appendix).

The number of *kwanda* is not the same for all the villages, as it varies with the number of inhabitants of the particular village or sector of the village (table VII).

Table VII. *Number of inhabitants and number of working kwanda in 6 villages*

Village	Number of inhabitants in 1958	Number of working <i>kwanda</i>
Sibenda	101	3
Kalilam	110	3
Jeobi/Webu	263	7
Iramoro	238	8
Kondjobando	407	11
Bamol	718	19

There is no absolute correlation, however, as the number of inhabitants per *kwanda* may vary considerably, as is shown by table VIII.

Maternity-but





Blood-letting



Table VIII. Number of inhabitants of *kwanda* in 3 villages

Sibenda		Bamol		Iramoro	
kwanda Tjire	46	Karambudire	55	Mandumuia	45
kwanda Merambu	30	Wawandua	44	Wiwoia	30
kwanda Garbèn	25	Munèma	19	Wawandua	22

These numbers include women married into the groups, because for all practical purposes they are included in the *kwanda* of their husband's residence.

The limited time I spent on Frederik-Hendrik Island meant that I was not able to study the process of *kwanda* formation by direct observation. This process had been interrupted, moreover, by the move to the new villages. In view of the defective historical and genealogical knowledge of the persons concerned, I am inclined to believe that in many cases derived *patha* were regarded as parent *patha*. This is again a consequence of the concentration on only a few generations. In cases of tertiary and further separation the exact relationship with the original parent *patha* is hardly ever known if during this time new groups have continued to be formed from this parent *patha*.

Like the number of inhabitants, the number of *patha* per *kwanda* may also vary considerably. In Sibenda it is 4,2 and 2, respectively. The minimum number, naturally, is two, which means two houses in the new village – at least insofar as the *kwanda* structure has been retained in the new situation. When the number of *patha* or houses drops below this minimum, a fusion with other *kwanda* takes place. Such fusing is stimulated by the traditional association of two or more *kwanda*, by close kinship relations through marriage and adoption and by the proximity of the other *kwanda*. An example of such a fusion in Bamol is the *kwanda* Wiji in the part called Borandjidam, which, as it consists of only one house, considers itself nowadays as belonging to the *kwanda* Pweburariga.

Again the village-sector called Sabudom originally consisted of five *kwanda*,

three of which at present consist of only one house, for which reason they have all associated themselves with one of the two larger *kwanda*. In the sector called Karaudu also each of the three constituent *kwanda* proved to have incorporated another *kwanda* consisting of one house only. In all these cases the people concerned were conscious of having formed an independent *kwanda* before, but considered themselves for all purposes as now belonging to the incorporating *kwanda*. In many cases even the names of such former *kwanda* were no longer mentioned.

The relative numbers of inhabited and deserted *patha* give some impression of the fortunes of the various groups in course of time. At the time of moving to the new village, only a small number of dwelling-islands were in most cases actually inhabited. Sibenda was an exception to this rule. Its small number of dwelling-islands as well as the fact that only one secondary fission could be recorded must be attributed to the fairly recent migration of the Ndom-villages from the Takkerawan site by the Kwantua river to their present site. In Bamol, where there are no memories of settlement or migration, the number of *patha* is much larger. The sector called Bomerau has more than 60 dwelling-islands though it consists, at present, of only 18 houses. The sector called Borandjidam has over 40 *patha* and no more than 7 houses. Epidemics have wiped out whole *kwanda* without leaving a trace.

There are various factors that may decide in which *kwanda* a person lives or to which *kwanda* he considers himself to belong. We have already seen, for instance, that a man may leave his father's *kwanda* as a result of a conflict but there may also be other reasons. Sometimes a woman returns to her own kinsmen after her husband's death, in which case she comes again under the authority of her elder brother. Any of her children who are still young and who have not been adopted by her husband's kinsmen come with her to live also in the *kwanda* of their mother's brother. In the genealogies such situations are more or less veiled because such children are often adopted by their mother's brother or mother's father.

Something like this happened in the village of Sabudom, where the village headman belongs to a different *kwanda*, even to a different sector of the village than his father used to. His mother's kinsmen

had formerly permitted his father to make garden-islands on their territory, so that in course of time his most important gardens came to be situated in their *kwanda*. He stayed in his own ward, however, but after his death his wife returned to her own kinsmen, taking her son (the present headman) with her. Her elder brother managed the gardens for his sister's child until the latter was grown up. When, later, the headman took over the management of his father's gardens he stayed in his mother's *kwanda* and his wife also came to live there.

Another, similar, case is that of Appolinarius in Bamol. After both his parents had died he was brought up by his much older sister, with whom he remained when he was grown up. He addresses his sister as mother and her husband as father. When Appolinarius was married, his wife came to live with him in his sister's husband's *kwanda*, to which his children now also belong.

These examples show that usually residence in marriage is not patrilocal so much as virilocal, i.e. a wife has to follow her husband to the *kwanda* where he is living, which is not necessarily always his father's *kwanda*. This virilocality is connected with the asymmetrical relation between the sexes in the direct-exchange type of marriage, in which women are objects of exchange (see chapter 4 paragraph 3). The exceptions to this rule are strongly bound up with particular situations such as adoption and garden property. In all the villages a man may follow his wife to her father's *kwanda* if the latter has no male descendants or other male relatives to take over the care of his gardens. No man likes to see his own work neglected to such an extent that it may perhaps never again be fit for use. A usual metaphor for a man without sons is: "He watches the weeds growing in his gardens". The same thing may happen when a man is on such bad terms with his sons that they have left his *kwanda*. In such a case he might adopt one of his daughter's children, but who is to look after the child while it is still young? And who is to care for the gardens and manage them until the child is grown up? And, last but not least, who is to look after the adoptive father himself during this time? For these reasons a man may prefer to have his daughter's husband move to his *kwanda* and there manage the adoptive father's gardens for his own sons who are the adopted sons of their mother's father.

This happened, for instance, in the case of Thomas in Woner. He had a large number of brothers who all had a right to part of their father's property, which was not very extensive. Thomas' wife's father did have a foster-son with whom, however, he was on very bad terms. At his wife's father's

request Thomas therefore moved to his wife's *kwanda*, where he now tends the gardens until his sons have grown up. As a matter of course Thomas' part of his own father's property went to his brothers.

A conflict, too, may cause a man to move to his wife's father's *kwanda*.

Tjõe, a notorious food-thief, had made himself impossible in his own *kwanda*. Several times already he had received a good beating from his fellow-members of the *kwanda*. He therefore moved to his wife's *kwanda* in a different village-sector.

Whether a man, after such a move, belongs to his new *kwanda* is in a sense a theoretical question. In theory a man who moves to a new *kwanda* remains a stranger there, for his own gardens are usually situated elsewhere. In practice, however, he takes part in all the *kwanda*-activities of the new group. The ties with the old *kwanda* are not completely severed, however, for he remains bound to assist his relatives in the old *kwanda* whenever necessary, unless his move was the result of a conflict.

The situation is different for the children of new residents in the *kwanda*. Garden-property and adoption form the decisive factors here and actually these two are closely connected. Children born in the new *kwanda* may be adopted by their father's kinsmen back into the old *kwanda*, for instance when the father still has gardens in that *kwanda* which would otherwise be neglected. If this is not so, the children are adopted by a member of the new *kwanda* if the latter has reserved gardens for the child in question, or if the father himself has made or acquired gardens in the new *kwanda*. In such cases the children are formally regarded as real members of the *kwanda*. With respect to *kwanda*-membership, the adoption of boys and the possession of gardens are two aspects of one and the same thing, namely the continuation of a man's relation with his gardens or the forming of such a relation.

Things are different if a man, at the time of his move to another *kwanda*, already has older or grown-up children. Grown-up sons usually stay in the old *kwanda* as well as any younger children who have already been adopted by another member of the *kwanda*. Only if this is not so and if they are still young enough to be adopted into the new *kwanda* do they follow their father.

After what has been said in the preceding paragraphs it is obvious that the kinship-structure of the *kwanda* depends on various factors. At first glance the

genealogies of the *kwanda* give the strong impression of being patrilineal (see appendix). The genealogies, however, suggest more than there is in actual fact, for the Kimam by no means regard their society as being patrilineal. The structure of the *kwanda* is not the result of a patrilineal system but rather of factors that, unintentionally we might say, produce a patrilineal tendency. Such factors are the structure of the *patha*-group, the process of separation from the *patha*, the virilocality of residence in marriage and the importance of adoption and of garden property. These factors exert their influence in the first place on the local groups, but through these they also give a slightly patrilineal touch to bilateral kinship groups (see paragraph 1).

With regard to changes of *kwanda*, we have only outlined some general rules. There are numerous possible variations, depending on local and more or less chance circumstances. In one case a ward will be strongly opposed to moving, while in other cases no objections will be made. In this respect it definitely makes a difference whether the proposed move is to take place within or outside the village-sector. On the whole, the latter type of move is less easily condoned because it entails a more definite separation and a loss of man-power (cf. also the animosity between different sectors of a village, paragraph 3). Persons who express a desire to go and live in a different sector of the village are sometimes threatened with magic in order to make them abandon their plan. If the move does take place, magic may in fact be practised against the person concerned. In the case of Tjõe (p. 84), on the other hand, people were glad to be rid of him. For a number of reasons adoption takes place extremely frequently on Frederik-Hendrik Island. It seems therefore quite likely that the demographic situation of a *kwanda* may be considerably influenced by this fact. The adoptive relationships of older generations are mostly no longer known, so that we can form no more than a fragmentary picture of the situation. For the village of Sibenda, with a total population of 101, the data are as follows:

Adoption outside the <i>kwanda</i> but inside the village	12
adoption outside the <i>patha</i> but inside the <i>kwanda</i>	6
adoption among the nuclear families of one <i>patha</i>	9

It is clear that adoption within a *kwanda* is at least as important as adoption

from one *kwanda* into another. Adoption is continually taking place, so that our data only illustrate the situation at one particular moment. At the time the genealogies were drawn up, the situation with regard to adoption between the *kwanda* was as follows:

Tjire	+4	-4	Merambu	+5	-4	Garbèn	+3	-4
-------	----	----	---------	----	----	--------	----	----

These data indicate that adoption has no great influence on the number of inhabitants of the respective *kwanda*. Although there is nothing to show that a conscious effort is made to keep the number of adoptions between the different *kwanda* in balance, that is indeed the effect of the general aim to make the group as strong as possible both through marriage and through adoption, while everything will be done to avoid diminishing the strength of the *kwanda*. Adoption is not an affair for the *kwanda*, but a private matter between kinsmen and it is the individual nuclear families who reap the benefits or suffer the disadvantages in each particular case of adoption.

Although the various functions of the village-ward are to be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, we may already state at this juncture that the *kwanda* is very important as a social unit. One of my informants in Jeobi told me: "I have six children and so far no one has asked to adopt any of them. By myself I can't provide for them, so my *nivanda* (fellow-members of the *kwanda*) will have to see to it that we don't go hungry." Apart from those small daily services which are a natural consequence of living close to one another and of mutual ties of kinship, the *kwanda* manifests itself particularly on those occasions which require a greater effort than can be raised by an individual family or *patha*-group. Such occasions may be the making of large garden-islands or canoes, or collective hunting, fishing of a lake or fishing by means of poison. The unity of the *kwanda*-group stands out most at big feasts and other important occasions. The *kwanda* from which a man gets his wife belongs, as a whole, to his affinal kin and may be mobilised as such. The same is true of everyone who has a close relative in a different *kwanda* to whom he may, if necessary, appeal for help. This man will, in his turn, appeal to his *nivanda* in order to be able to fulfil his obligations towards his kinsmen. In this way *tjipente* and *jaeentjewe* relations in other *kwanda* become very important, since through them, indirectly, a man can raise a much larger number of helpers. In practice a man will often carefully work out where he has close enough relatives to ask for a

large contribution. The demands made on these helpers vary with the number of their *niwanda*. Thus a *kwanda* may be mobilised for matters outside it as well as for its own affairs, while in the former case *jaeentjewe*-members act as go-betweens.

c *Paburu* (village-sector)

In the foregoing paragraph we have explained how the number of *kwanda* may increase. A group of *kwanda*, connected in this way, together form a territorial group of a higher order again, called *paburu* in Kimaghama and *potaka* in *Riantana*, both words literally meaning 'village-part' (*pa, po* - village, *buru, taka* - part).

With their defective genealogical knowledge, the natives usually no longer have any idea in what way the various *kwanda* are originally related. Nevertheless there is a strong community feeling in such a group of *kwanda*. The ideal of kinship is not altogether absent, but it goes no further than a vague sentiment of common origin and the feeling of being kinsmen as distinct from the strangers from other parts of the village. It is not likely, for instance, that magic will be used within the *paburu*, while moreover serious conflicts within the *paburu* are avoided as far as possible.

This vague sentiment of kinship, however, is not nearly as important as the fact that the members of a *paburu* inhabit a common territory. In this even more than in the other local groups, the solidarity of kinship is determined by territorial proximity.

Every *paburu* has its own name. Just as a *kwanda* may be named after the first or most important *patha*, the *paburu* is sometimes called by the name of the dominating or otherwise most important *kwanda*. This is so for instance in the two villages Woner and Kondjobando, but it is quite possible that the same was once true of other villages and that the *kwanda* in question have since disappeared. Sometimes, the names are clearly indications of direction or of place, such as Karaudu and Borandjidam in Bamol, for example, which are derived from the names of near-by lakes.

Sometimes names of local groups are found in different villages either for a similar local group or for a group of a different order. Wawandua is the name



of a *kwanda* in both Iramoro and Bamol, but the name of a *paburu* in Sabudom. We might suppose that in such cases the identity of names is the result of divisions and subsequent mergings with other villages, while the migrating groups retained their territorial identity. There is not much evidence to support such a theory, however, and what there is remains extremely vague. In Iramoro it was said that the two *paburu* Embebududi (on the side of Ambebe-Kondjobando) and Ruambududi (on the side of Suam) were formerly separate villages situated close to the sea. After having been repeatedly attacked they finally decided to settle jointly on the present site. This story is not, however, very reliable. Migrations that have definitely taken place, such as those from Kandir to various villages of the Ndom-group, or those by settlers from different villages in Teri, have nowhere led to the formation of separate local groups. In these cases, the immigrants have fused with the various *kwanda* and *paburu* of the receiving group. There is nothing to show, moreover, that the inhabitants of similarly named local groups in different villages are conscious of any common origin. In one case, however, the possibility of a union of formerly independent villages may not be wholly discarded. I shall revert to this question in the following paragraph.

Within the village, the *paburu* is far more of a closed unit than the *kwanda*. On Frederik-Hendrik Island, with its relatively large villages, the preference shown by Papuans for personal relationships and for living together in small communities manifests itself chiefly in the fact that village-life takes place to a large extent within the *paburu*.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays younger people do sometimes go to other parts of the village for pleasure, but for adults this is still rather unusual. They do not belong there, they say, and if they were to go there without a good reason, people will think they are out to get some food, or tobacco or *wati*. They would rather avoid making such an impression, as it would make them feel very ashamed. Visits to other parts of the village usually only take place when one is invited to a feast, where everyone brings in food and at the end receives food and *wati*. One of my informants from the *paburu* Karaudu once came to my house for some tobacco he had been promised. He was told that I was at that moment in the *paburu* Kantjimbe, only a hundred metres away. Rather than go to this strange *paburu* for his coveted tobacco, he waited

for hours until I returned, although he was not especially on bad terms with the people of Kantjimbe.

Fear of magic also plays a part. In cases of death, *undani* (sorcerers) from other *paburu* are often suspected of having caused them by magic. Pregnant women and small children rarely visit another *paburu* even when a feast is given there by kinsmen. Normally, however, visits to other *paburu* will take place much more easily and frequently if one has *tjipente* or *jaentjewe* members living there. Decisions about planting-times and about the choice of crops are also made separately by each *paburu*. It is by no means certain, therefore, that the same crop will be planted in all parts of the village, or even that they will all start their planting at the same time. Nowadays collective hunting and fishing parties are also mostly organised by the separate *paburu*. Members of other *paburu* may usually join in, for a greater number of participants usually also means a bigger catch. The *paburu* exercises a communal right of disposal over both the agricultural area and the hunting and fishing grounds (see chapter IV paragraph 1).

The initiative for head-hunting expeditions used to be taken by the *paburu*, while a number of men and older boys from other sectors of the village would usually also participate. Formerly, too, each *paburu* had its own bachelor's house into which no member of another *paburu* was admitted.

The importance of this division of the village even to the present day is clearly illustrated by the fact that most villages have succeeded in getting a separate headman or mandur (assistant) appointed for each *paburu*. Orders from a headman belonging to a different *paburu* would be simply ignored. Such a headman would, moreover, not dare to apply sanctions.

#### d *Pa* (the village)

The village is the largest territorial group clearly recognizable as such, as well as the largest social unit. With only very few exceptions, a native's life takes place wholly inside the village. There are not many connections with other villages and there is no tribal organisation transcending the separate villages. Inside the village a man feels safe, for the economic and social position of the individual is secure there, not only on account of kinship relations, but also

because all the inhabitants of the village recognise his rights as a member of this group and will, if necessary, defend them against outsiders. Emotionally too, he feels at home in these surroundings, where he knows everyone personally and where everybody speaks the same dialect. He is in touch with all important and less important happenings and is informed about all conflicts, whether latent or open. He knows the *umdani* and knows how to behave towards them. He is familiar with the many spots inhabited by supernatural creatures and the way to avoid the latter. If he is involved in a conflict with someone from another part of the village, the members of his own *paburu* and his kinsmen are at hand to give both physical and moral support, while in most cases efforts are made to avoid really serious conflicts within the village. In another village, this security is lacking. Even when staying with kinsmen, a man feels himself isolated and surrounded by enemies in a village that is not his own. He does not know the intentions of the people around him, nor the right way to approach them. There is, or at least was until recently, good reason for such feeling, for a man or woman who ventured alone or with too small a group into the swamps ran a great risk of being killed. Most *pangi* (head-hunters) have acquired heads in this way. It might even happen that people from another village were at first hospitably received and subsequently attacked and killed even if they were staying with kinsmen. The latter were then kept ignorant of the plot.

Formerly, trips to the higher grounds for purposes of hunting or cutting trees were undertaken only in large groups. During the work a number of men were permanently on guard. This danger no longer exists since pacification, but the fear of magic, which is equally real for the Kimam, persists. It is often found that *umdani* from other villages are held responsible in cases of magic. This is a result of a deeply rooted distrust with regard to the intentions of other villages in general. Death and disease, except in the case of old people or very young children, are always attributed to an *umdani*, usually from some other village. This is almost certainly so if the person in question has recently visited another village. On my tours I often witnessed how, on approaching a strange village, attempts were made to render any magic powerless by means of formulas and by blowing out a spray of saliva. When I employed permanent rowers, they would usually after a few days begin to press me to go to some

other village again because they did not feel safe. For the same reason it proved to be very difficult to take a boy or girl with us as a servant because the parents would refuse to give permission for fear of magic. Magic is regarded as a real alternative for war and massacre, as is evident from the explanation that is given for the big epidemic in Bamol. In the sector of that village called Borandjidam, a man from Jeobi was once staying on a visit to some kinsmen. Other people of the *paburu* plotted to kill him. After the murder, the people of Jeobi/Webu promised revenge. Because of the difference in numbers between the populations of the two villages, there was no need for those of Bamol to fear a head-hunting expedition. The people of Jeobi, in fact, promised to wipe out by magic both Borandjidam and the *paburu* Sabudom, which was closely associated with it. This threat was almost realised soon afterwards by an epidemic disease. To the present day, the people of Bamol greatly dread the power of the *undani* of Jeobi.

It would not, however, be correct to assume that different villages did not and do not have any relations with each other. The connections between the villages may be classified according to their nature.

*a* Peaceful relations based partly on mutual barter and marriage exchanges. The existence of marriage relations depends to a large extent on the number of inhabitants and the distance from other villages. Villages such as Woner and Kiworo have a fairly frequent marriage-exchange both with each other and with Jeobi/Webu. The same is true of the small villages Jeraha and Kaba with regard to Kondjobando. The villages of the Ndom-group, too, which form a group in other ways as well, have mutual marriage connections. The rules of exogamy often force smaller villages to find mates outside the village, although they do so with great reluctance. There can be no question of such a course if the village in question is too far distant or too difficult to reach. In such a case a girl married off there would be lost, with her children, to her native village. Wherever there are connections of marriage, they play an important part in intercourse between the villages. They form the only guarantee of being well-received in the other village. People are therefore very conscious of any such connections, even if they came about some generations ago and can no longer be traced. A marriage that took place long ago may be an excuse for a whole

*paburu* to lay claim to hospitality and protection. Within the village such relations would no longer be functioning. A typical example is provided by the relations between Bamol and Kiworo, which are said to be based on numerous marriage ties. In actual fact there is not one marriage between these villages still in existence today. All the same, kinsmen in the other village are pointed out with great accuracy and are even addressed with kinship terms. Kiworo has an extensive sago-plantation, but no high land. Bamol, on the other hand, has the greatest extent of forest as well as the reputation of making the best canoes. Therefore sago and canoes are, and were in the past, exchanged between these villages. A similar situation exists between Jeobi/Webu and Kimaam. The former is famous for its fattened pigs, which are exchanged for European goods and sago, of which those of Kimaam have a better supply than the other villages. Between these villages, too, there are marriage connections. It is hard to distinguish which comes first, exchange or marriage traffic. In any case one greatly facilitates the other. The relations between these villages must be already very old, as there are no stories about head-hunting expeditions between them.

*b* Relations of an alternately hostile and a more or less peaceful nature. Between some villages, head-hunting expeditions and *ndambu*-feasts succeed each other. Such were the relations, for instance, between Bamol and Kalwa and between Bamol and Suam. Quite characteristic for this situation is the fact that hostages were exchanged for the duration of the *ndambu*-feast, these being the children of *pangi* (head-hunters). When peace was made after a series of head-hunts or attacks, children might be exchanged for adoption, to make it more difficult to resume the hostilities.

Villages with which connections of this sort exist play an important part in marriage by elopement. If a boy and a girl want to marry against their parents' wishes, they may flee to such a village and stay there until the parents have acquiesced in the situation. The parents cannot easily fetch their children back from such a village.

*c* Relations of a predominantly hostile nature. Between certain villages there was a permanent state of war. The hostile relations were more or less traditional.

If people from such a hostile village were encountered, they ran the risk of being killed straight off. Although visits to such villages were not out of the question, the risk of not returning alive was great. The relations between Bamol and Kondjobando are an example. Even nowadays these villages accuse one another of practising magic.

*d* Villages between which there are no relations at all. Each village may be viewed as the centre of a circle enclosing the surrounding villages with which it has relations of some kind or other. Any villages outside this circle are usually terra incognita. People have heard of them only indirectly, through other villages. Thus there had never been anybody from one of the Ndom villages in Bamol, nor the other way around. The same is true of the northern villages and those of the southern sandy reef. Formerly there was no contact at all between Kimaam and the Ndom and Riantana groups.

The location of a government and mission centre at Kimaam has greatly influenced contacts between the villages. For many things it is necessary nowadays to go to Kimaam: for permission to organise a dance, for serving out sentences of imprisonment and for purchases of various articles in the two small stores there. The children at the mission boarding-school come from practically every village on the island. These children are in daily contact with each other and are, moreover, regularly visited by parents and other relatives. Both mission and government employ people from a number of different villages. On their way to Kimaam, the inhabitants of the western, southern and northern villages pass a number of villages with which they used to have no contacts at all, or only hostile ones. Those of the isolated western and southern villages prefer, even at the present day, to row past such villages as quickly as possible. If they are obliged, on account of the great distance to be travelled, to stay overnight in one of these villages, they do so preferably at the police stations that have been built by the orders of the government. These people make their stay at Kimaam as short as possible. They furnish the smallest proportion of the natives employed at Kimaam, as well as of those who leave the island to work elsewhere for some time.

The increased contacts between the villages have led to a greater sense of solidarity among the inhabitants of each particular village. Far more than

formerly, people now realise that they belong to one village. This is evident also from the *ndambu*-relations which are more and more being established between different villages.

### 3 *Dualism and antagonism*

The principle of dualism, as well as the reciprocity with which it is connected is fundamental in the social structure of Frederik-Hendrik Island. It manifests itself in bipartite structures, of which the *paburu-kavé* (*kavé* = two), that is the partition of the village in two *paburu*, is the most obvious and functionally the most important. This bipartition, however, which mostly finds expression in latent and often manifest antagonism, is also present on other levels. In this paragraph I propose to deal successively with the various bipartite structures.

#### a the bipartite division of the *paburu*

The various *kwanda* that together constitute a *paburu* are invariably split into two groups, whose antagonism manifests itself mainly in situations of conflict and by mutual rivalry in the collective activities of the separate *kwanda*-groups. Most groups formerly had their own bachelors' houses, which formed both the centre and the symbol of the group's unity. The part of Bamol called Wendu, for instance, consists of four *kwanda*: Jagawambörö, Karambudire, Kukemei and Wamanda. The first two form one group, with formerly its own bachelors' house, distinct from the latter two who also had a common bachelors' house. The situation is the same also in *paburu* with an uneven number of *kwanda*. For example, in Sibenda the *kwanda* Merambu and Tjire are opposed to one another and the third one, Garbèn, is divided between the two groups. In other cases a small *kwanda* may, as a whole, join one or other of the groups.

Although the bipartition of the *paburu* is clearly less important than the *paburu-kavé*, its significance must not be underestimated. It is not unlikely that this bipartition forms the germ from which a *paburu-kavé* may develop. An example of a *paburu* becoming a separate village while the *kwanda*-groups became *paburu* is furnished by the village of Sibenda. Originally this was a *paburu* in the larger settlement at Takkerawan, but after the migration it behaved as an independent village. The *kwanda* already named above have taken over various functions of the *paburu*, for instance in *ndambu*.

The significance of the different bipartitions appears most clearly in situations of conflict (diagram 5).

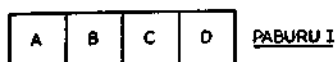
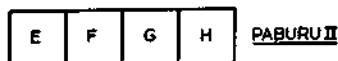


Diagram 5. Opposing territorial groups.



A man or woman from *kwanda* A who comes into conflict with a person from *kwanda* B can, ideally, count on the support of *kwanda* A as a whole, which means that *kwanda* A and *kwanda* B will be opposing one another. Should they come into conflict with someone from *kwanda* C or D, however, not the separate *kwanda* but the *kwanda*-groups A-B and C-D will constitute the two sides. A conflict, finally, with a person from a different *paburu* will, if it is of a prolonged nature, inevitably lead to action by each *paburu* as a whole.

The gradual disintegration of the *kwanda* means, as we would indeed expect, that the opposition between *kwanda*-groups is no longer obvious at present, except in the western villages. In Bamol, where the territorial identity of the *kwanda* is growing vague, the same must be said of the *kwanda*-groups, so that the significance of the opposition has greatly diminished. In Kimaam the groups into which the *paburu* used to be divided are even no longer known.

*b* The bipartite structure of the village (*paburu-keve*)

Practically all the villages on the island consist of two *paburu*, whose mutual opposition is not only antagonistic but, especially, ceremonial in character. The ceremonial function of the *paburu* appears most clearly in the mortuary rites and in *ndambu*, the feast of competitive giving, which is to some extent connected with this. As I propose to deal more fully with this subject later on, I shall not discuss it here but mention a few other ways in which this opposition is expressed.

If one of the *paburu* decides to make a big canoe, the second will soon follow suit so as not to be eclipsed by the other. For a *paburu* that has a big new canoe



will not fail to boast of this possession. The making of such a canoe in the forest will therefore take place in an atmosphere of mutual rivalry, which means that the greatest possible number of men will take part in it. The initiative is often taken by a *kwanda*, but it soon becomes an affair for the whole *paburu* when the other *paburu* shows signs of following the example. When the canoe has been roughly shaped, branches are laid out from the place where the tree was cut to the bivouac and over these the canoe is pulled by means of rattan ropes. All the men and women of the *paburu* are present, arrayed in their dancing-dress. To the accompaniment of singing in praise of its excellent qualities, the canoe is pulled over the rollers. The song is intoned by a man in front and answered by the others, while at the same moment the canoe is pulled forward a few yards in combined effort. When the bivouac is reached, *wati* and food are collected for a feast to which the people of the other *paburu* are invited. There is plenty of boasting and swagger on this occasion.

Next day the canoe is rowed towards the village, but it is always stopped overnight before reaching it. The idea is to enter the village early in the morning, before anyone has left for the gardens. The news of its approach has meanwhile spread through the village and towards sunrise a rhythmical beating is heard in the distance, caused by striking the bottom of the canoe with a punting-pole. In this way the men in the canoe warn the inhabitants of their approach, so that they will be able to make a big show in front of those of the other *paburu* on entering the village. Everyone goes out to watch the great event. The new canoe slowly enters the village, surrounded by older canoes, while the rhythmical beating continues. The men do not take the canoe straight to their own *paburu* but they first go right to the other end of the village and then turn back.

The following days are devoted to finishing the canoe to make it as light and fast as possible. In this work, too, every male member of the *paburu* participates. Finally the edges of the canoe are decorated by experts. Then it is painted in different colours and decorated with croton-leaves, after which it is ready for the second celebration, which consists of a race against the new canoe of the rival *paburu*.

As many men as possible form the crew and both canoes rush through the water with terrific speed. Usually the two parties are well-matched, so that

often the race has to be repeated once or even more times, after heated discussions. The people of the winning *paburu* are enormously proud and boast of this victory on every occasion, nor will they fail to mock the losers.

Another occasion on which the antagonism between the *paburu* stands out clearly is the dance. Both the *ngadzxi*, which was borrowed from the Marind-Anim and the native *watjip* are always danced in two groups. The division is marked by a bamboo strip, for if one were to set foot, during the dance, on the other group's territory, whether accidentally or not, this trespassing would straight-away result in a fight. Even without such an excuse, dances would formerly often end in fights in which men were killed or wounded. Each side sings its own songs, usually mocking songs at the other party's expense, while the men beat different rhythms on the drums. The pandemonium is frightful, as each party tries to surpass the other in the volume of noise produced. There is dancing from sunset to sunrise, but if one side is obviously the loser, they disappear long before that time. Usually, however, they do not like to acknowledge their defeat so openly, so they stay on. Most of the participants stop now and again to rest or to acquire fresh energy by taking a chew of betel. Renowned dancers often remain onlookers till midnight. They let the other party spend their strength before joining their voice in with their own side in an attempt to turn the scales in their favour. Each time the boundary-line is approached in the movements of the dance, derisive remarks are shouted to the other side. Men with bows and arrows act as if they were going to shoot, while others try, by means of magic, to make the other party's drum-skins burst. The songs in themselves may be quite melodious, but this is hardly noticeable during the dancing. An attempt to record some songs on tape failed miserably because people were not prepared to dance with one group only: "If there is no one to compete with we'll go to sleep!" Towards sunrise the bamboo-strip is removed and the two parties continue dancing together for about another quarter of an hour. The *paburu* which has invited the others to the dance is supposed to provide a meal for all participants as well as to supply *wati* and the ingredients to go with it. Immediately after the dance the *wati* is distributed by the hosts and hosts and guests together drink the intoxicating liquor. Drinking *wati* together is always a symbol of friendship. The rivalry of the dance is wiped

out in this way. The guests are obliged in their turn to invite their hosts to a dance at a later date in their *paburu*.

Rivalry and envy are two clearly recognizable elements in the game of oppositions, e.g. in activities such as the planting of root-crops, hunting, children's games and many other everyday matters. Part of that game, however, consists of taking precautions to avoid real conflicts, which may very well arise.

There are many stories about serious conflicts between the two *paburu* resulting in casualties on both sides.

#### c Double bipartition in the village

In two villages the bipartite division into two *paburu* is traversed by another partition, which joins the two *paburu* again. These villages are Kalilam and Jeobi (diagram, 7).



KALILAM *Diagram 6. Double bipartition in the village of Kalilam.*

Kalilam originally consisted of the two *paburu* Kalilam and Murba. In the fifties a number of ship-wrecked men from Tanimbar were killed by the people of Pembörö, a village a small distance away from Kalilam. When the government authorities happened to hear of this, they decided to make control easier by incorporating Pembörö into the neighbouring villages. On account of existing kinship relations, part of the inhabitants decided to join Wetau and the rest Kalilam. Those who went to live in Kalilam built their houses beside those of the *paburu* Murba. They have remained a separate local group, however. A new bipartition has come about, which has had the effect of connecting the people of Pembörö more closely with the rest of the village, since on some occasions they form one party together with one half of the otherwise strongly coherent *paburu* Kalilam, namely Junongwa. This bipartition functions particularly in dances and *ndambu*-feasts. In everyday life the

opposition between the two *paburu* Kalilam and Murba is far more obvious, the latter then usually being supported by Pembörö. The second bipartition is only for special occasions, when the antagonism between the *paburu* might easily lead to open conflict.

At first glance the situation in Jeobi-Webu is similar (diagram 7).

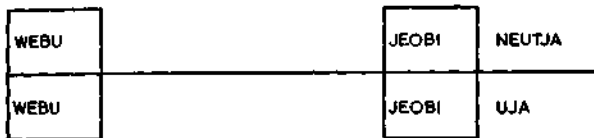


Diagram 7. Double bipartition in the village of Jeobi.

Here, however, the double bipartite structure is probably much older. Not only the *paburu* as in Kalilam, but also the other parts have their own names here, Uja and Neutja, respectively meaning light and dark place. Their correspondence with east and west, respectively, is purely accidental, for these two parts merely owe their names to the fact that the reeds grow very thick to the west of the village, while to the east there are open lakes.

The *paburu* Jeobi and Webu are more independent with respect to one another than *paburu* in most other villages. In many ways they act as separate villages. Our informants used the words *pa* and *paburu* indiscriminately to indicate the village-sectors.

Although the ceremonial exchange of food as a part of the mortuary rites takes place between the *paburu*, the opposition is in other cases concentrated as much as possible in the division into Neutja and Uja. This means that *ndambu*, as part of the mortuary rites, is usually held between Jeobi and Webu. But when the government officer gives permission for a dance to be organised, the two sides are usually formed by Neutja and Uja, unless the event is to be combined with a *ndambu*.

On collective head-hunting expeditions members of Uja and Neutja were not allowed to sit in one another's canoes, which means that men from the two *paburu* always went together on these expeditions. If a man from Uja had wounded a person, no Neutja man was allowed to cut off the victim's head.

Sometimes wrestling competitions are held between Uja and Neutja, but whenever the ever-present antagonism between the *paburu* leads to a real conflict, Uja and Neutja disappear and only Jeobi and Webu are left facing one another. The situation was described by my informants in Malay as 'potong' (lengthwise parts) and 'belah' (crosswise parts).

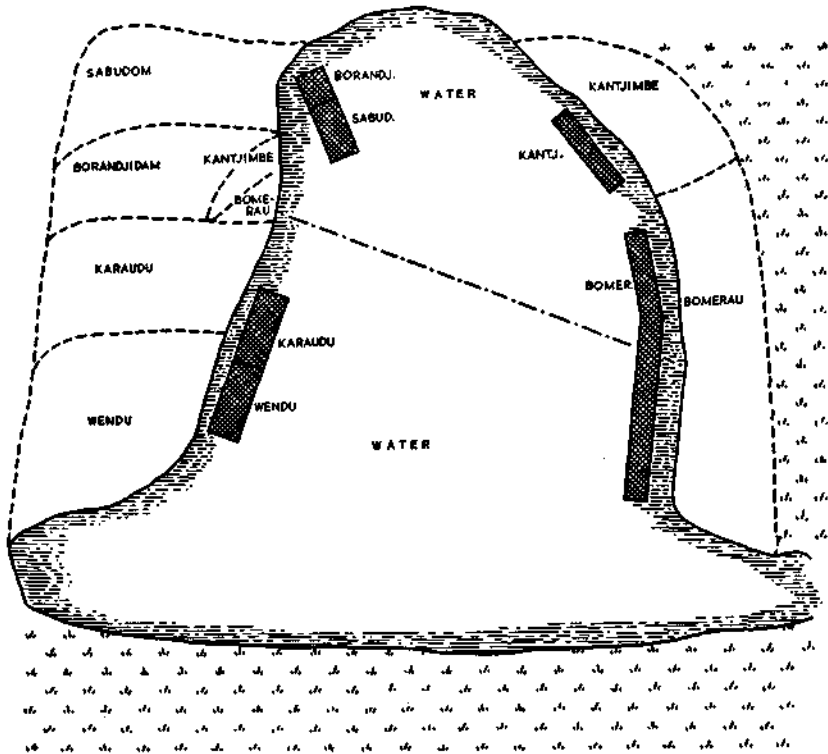
The situation described above is a specific development that is found nowhere else. From the gathered information one gets the impression that the crosswise division is regarded as a necessary expression of the totality of the village, in connecting the two parts which, far more than elsewhere, show strong diverging tendencies. Our informants were well aware of the part played in this regard by the double bipartition: "Quarrels between Uja and Neutja can never lead to war, for they are our *nanuko* and *nabarre*. (cf. tendency to *paburu* endogamy, chapter IV paragraph 4). From the accounts it appears that fights between Jeobi and Webu more than once resulted in casualties.

#### *d* The bipartitions in Bamol

The situation in Bamol is treated separately because the village consists, not of two, but of six *paburu*. The plan in diagram 8 indicates the location of the various *paburu* both in the old and in the new situations (the rectangles are the new dwelling-islands).

In both situations, but particularly in the new one, the different *paburu* are not randomly located with respect to one another. When the order was given to make common dwelling-islands, those *paburu* which were traditionally associated with each other built either one island to share between them or two next to one another. Thus the residential situation was, in a way, simplified. The plan clearly shows that the six *paburu* are divided into three groups of two, these being Wendu-Karaudu, Sabudom-Borandjidam and Bomerau-Kantjimbe. Each of these three groups regards itself as a separate unit with its own sense of solidarity in relation to the other groups. In all types of intercourse, including marriage connections, the contacts between the two parts of one group are more important than between the different groups. According to my informants dancing formerly often took place in three groups in accordance with the given division.

Diagram 8. The old and the new residential situations in Bamol



The three groups thus form units each consisting of two *paburu*, like all other villages on Frederik-Hendrik Island. Historically, the present situation may perhaps be regarded as the result of the combination of three villages which have not lost their territorial identity.

I have found no myths that might refer to such a combination, but the fact that the *paburu* Bomererau regards itself as the oldest part of the village may support my hypothesis. In this connection it is interesting to note that Bomererau and its complementary *paburu* Kantjimbe are situated, unlike the other parts of the village, on the two sides of the central lake which is their common possession.

A second indication may be formed by the name of the village. The name Bamol is, in fact, a corruption of Bomerau and is currently used as such all over the island. We have already noted above how a whole village may be named after the oldest or most prominent *paburu*.

All this considered, it seems very likely that the groups Wendu-Karau du and Sabudom-Borandjidam joined an already existing combination of Bomerau and Kantjimbe at a later date.

The complete lack of legends, however, indicates that this must have happened very long ago. It must be noted that in spite of all divisions the six *paburu* do function together as one village. Apart from all sorts of collective activities this unity manifests itself in another bipartition embracing all the *paburu*. One side consists of Sabudom, Borandjidam and Kantjimbe, the other of Wendu and Karau du, while Bomerau again takes a special place in that a part of its members join now one, now the other group. On the whole they count themselves as belonging to the Sabudom-Borandjidam-Kantjimbe group. Those two groups are the traditional *ndambu*-partners, the two parties in the ceremonial food-exchange during the mortuary feasts, and the two sides in dancing. The fact that these groups have no special name does not make the opposition any less real.

After the establishment of government, but especially since the move from the coconut and sago plantations the contacts among the *paburu* have increased considerably. This is true in the first place of the contacts between two *paburu* that form a combination together and it is shown for instance by their occupation of a common dwelling-island. To a lesser extent the same may be said of the other parts of the village. There appears to have been a noticeable shift towards the bipartite opposition which includes the whole village, at the expense of the oppositions between the *paburu* of the various combinations. Much of the gathered information gives the impression that ceremonial opposition was formerly concentrated in the *paburu* of one combination, while the relations with other groups and especially with those of the other half of the village were of a more incidental and hostile nature. The contacts between the two large parts were so few that their antagonism might easily lead to a real breach, proof of which are the sudden attacks that used to take place on both

sides. The *ndambu*-feast, too, which formerly took place especially between the *paburu* of a combination, is nowadays mostly an affair of the two village-halves. Pacification and regular government have therefore brought about a change of accent from smaller to larger units. Contact and distance are both indispensable factors in the traditional game of oppositions. The diminishing divisions, both territorial and psychological, between the *paburu* of one group led to closer integration and a reduction of traditional oppositions. The increase in contacts between the village-halves, though territorial and psychological divisions were here more markedly preserved, led to a more frequent as well as more peaceful opposition between the two halves of the village as a whole. This again had an integrating influence on the *paburu* of the various groups. The consciousness of that opposition fades away as the opposition is concentrated on new groups. The increased opposition between the two large groups also has an integrating influence on the village as a whole, for all the *paburu* are activated in this way so that the village becomes more and more like the usual type consisting of only two oppositional parts. The nature of the opposition is also changing. Formerly it was mainly hostile in character, while nowadays the less serious aspects are gaining in importance.

There are other factors as well that play a rôle in accentuating the division into larger parts. When the government was established on the island, each of the two parts of the village was given its own headman. The two *paburu* on the one side already formed a traditional combination, while the other side consists of two combinations less closely connected. By the fact, however, of being united under a headman with a particularly strong personality, the sense of solidarity in the latter group has unquestionably been strengthened. The authority of the headman in question does not depend solely on his government appointment, but equally on his traditional prestige owing to the fact of his having formerly killed a Chinese trader. He is most successful in standing up for the interests of his own village-half with the government authorities. For instance when the village was given planting-material for coconut-trees as part of an agricultural project, he protested against giving equal shares to the two village-halves. In his opinion, his part of the village ought to receive a double share because it consisted of four *paburu*. On the other hand, however, he sees to it most carefully that the village duties are equally divided.

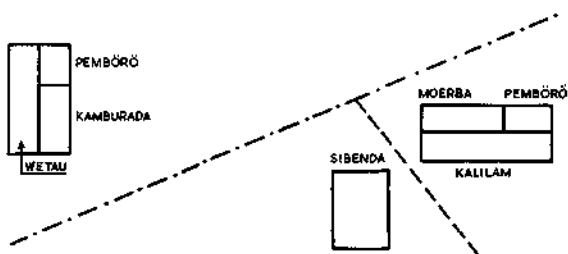


When men are recruited as rowers for government officials on tour, or to carry out repairs on the police-station, the church or the school, he tries to prevent members of the other part from shirking their duties at the expense of his own half. In such actions he is quite often successful, especially because Wendu-Karaidu do have a strong sense of solidarity, but lack a strong personality as headman to stand up for their interests.

*e* The bipartite opposition between villages

In the western Ndom-group there are traces of bipartite division between villages that must perhaps be explained as reminiscences of an earlier time when all these villages together formed one large settlement on the banks of the Kwantua river. This is seen in the location of the villages with respect to one another (diagram 9).

Diagram 9. Bipartite opposition in the Ndom-villages.



The distance between Kalilam and Sibenda is about ten minutes, and between the Kalilam group and Wetau about half an hour by canoe. The contacts between Kalilam and Sibenda are the most frequent, as are also the ceremonial oppositions. *Ndambu* is regularly held between these villages. When the people of Sibenda have made a large canoe they take it to Kalilam to show it off. The people of Kalilam are then expected to fill the canoe with food "in order that it may not return empty to Sibenda." When in course of time those of Kalilam have made a large canoe, the ceremony is repeated in the opposite direction. A tall and handsome youth is painted and is given a large sea-shell as a penis-covering, and a tail of rushes. In this attire he is taken to the other village to be shown there. The people of the latter village bring the youth all sorts of utensils and ornaments, such as bow and arrows, armlets and anklets.

He receives these tributes in silence and standing perfectly still, giving whatever he cannot carry himself to his companions to hold. After some time they return to their own village and the gifts are divided among the companions and kinsmen of the young man. This ceremony, too, is repeated in course of time by the other village.

The relations between the Kalilam group and Wetau-Kamburada-Pembörö are less numerous, but on special occasions they do act collectively. This happens, for instance, when one of the villages has obtained permission to organise a dance. The other villages eagerly seize on this rare opportunity. The parties for the dance are then formed by Wetau-Kamburada and part of Pembörö on one side as against Kalilam-Murba-Sibenda and the rest of Pembörö on the other.

Other such occasions are wrestling competitions and a game with the fruit of the pandanus-tree. The latter game is played during the dry season. Members of the two groups stand facing one another, each in their own part of the field. Members of both parties standing between the two groups have to try and catch the fruit thrown by the opposing party. Each catch is recorded by pulling a leaf off a coconut-frond. In the evening the score is made up and the losing party is put to shame. The losers then try to take their revenge the next day by recruiting a larger number of people.

The various bipartite divisions found on Frederik-Hendrik Island indicate that they proceed from a fundamental structural principle, which works quite independently of the specific organisation of a particular village or group of villages. Even when this organisation is changed, the principle continues to function, though the composition of the opposing parties may alter. The number of local groups involved in a bipartite opposition is not the same for every village, nor for every situation, but there are always two groups opposing one another.

Although the important consequences of the forced removal of the villages to new sites have already repeatedly been pointed out, I should like to bring out a few aspects a little more clearly.

As we have already stated, the importance of the *patha* has greatly diminished. It is true that the older people continue to identify themselves in the first place

with their *patha*-groups, but that is no longer true of the younger people who were born and bred in the new villages. Nor is it true even of the older people in those villages where the original habitation was abandoned long ago.

The same, to a lesser extent, may be said of the *kwanda*. The process of *kwanda* formation has been disrupted everywhere, but the change has sometimes taken place too recently to allow of any conclusions regarding the consequences. In the western group of villages the old *kwanda* appear still to be functioning in their original form, but in a village like Bamol, where the new dwelling situation has been longer established, a process of disintegration may clearly be distinguished. This is evident even from the plans of the villages, for in Bamol, in contrast to, for instance, Sibenda, the houses of the different *kwanda* are not grouped together, but are indiscriminately mingled. The development is still more obvious in Kimaam-Mambum, the district capital, which was moved to its present site a few years before the second World War. Here only the older informants were able to name the various *kwanda*, and even they felt very uncertain. In actual practice the *kwanda* no longer have any function in this village. A remarkable difference between the western and other marsh villages consists in the use of totemic names. In the western villages these names are never used. For purposes of registration with government bodies the *patha*-names are still used as family names. In the other villages, however, there is an increasing use of totemic names, usually borrowed from the Marind-Anim. This is quite in accordance with the greater and older influence of the Marind-Anim on these villages.

The use of these names is generally rather haphazard. Totemic names are mostly adopted by young people. Older persons often have none, so that it may happen that an old man is given his son's name for registration.

In all these villages a tendency was noted to graft totemic names on local groups, preferably *kwanda* or small *paburu*. All members of such a *kwanda* then initially bear the same name. When they move to some other *kwanda*, however, they retain their original names. Practically everywhere the *kwanda* are beginning to lose their territorial identity, a process which has already been completed, as we have seen, in some villages. The totemic names, however, survive and on account of the largely patrilineal structure of the original *kwanda*, the bearers of one and the same totemic name may form something

like a non-localised patrilineal lineage. At present, though, they do not yet act as a group. In as far as there is any group consciousness on the part of the bearers of the same totemic name it is still based on their common membership of a local group. It is not unlikely, however, that these name-groups may become more important in the future. It seemed to me that a tendency in this direction existed already in Kimaam.

A far more obvious functional shift may be observed from *patha* and *kwanda* to *paburu*. The move has brought the different houses and *patha*-groups into closer contact with each other. The houses are now situated next to each other and may all be reached in a few paces. Although water is as much a connecting as a separating element for the Kimam, the original habitation system on separate islands did constitute a barrier to more intimate contact. There is an obvious difference nowadays between those villages where the old situation has remained more or less unchanged and the new villages. In the former there is very little traffic after sunset, even between neighbouring *patha* of close relatives. Social life takes place mainly on the separate islands. In the new villages, on the other hand, there is a continuous coming and going all day and especially after sunset when the day's work is done, of men, women and children, past and between the houses. Men walk along the street, which is formed by the facing rows of houses, stopping here and there for a chat. They are constantly near one another to exchange the latest news, to make plans for the planting of root-crops or for a feast which is to be held. Mutual aid in all sorts of little matters has become much easier. People go and get some fire next door, or borrow their neighbour's whetting stone to sharpen a hatchet and watch one another's children as they run in and out of the different houses. Co-operation in undertakings which require much time and work, such as collective fishing and hunting, tends more and more to include the whole *paburu*.

Unlike the *kwanda*, the *paburu* have everywhere retained their territorial identity after the move. In Bamol each *paburu* or *paburu*-group nowadays has its own island. In the other villages the houses of the different *paburu* are situated in rows facing each other. Particularly in the young people nowadays a tendency may be noted to identify themselves in the first place with the *paburu*. Contacts between the *paburu* have considerably increased as a result of the move to the

new sites and this has led to a lessening of mutual distrust. Suspicions of magic are more and more directed at other villages. Formerly, if one was on bad terms with someone who belonged to another *paburu* it was decidedly dangerous after sunset to pass between the dwelling-islands of the opponent's *paburu*. A usual method to dispose of an enemy was to await the latter's canoe under water, turn it over and hold the victim's head under water until he drowned. The fear of such practices is for the greater part gone nowadays, as appears also from the greater freedom with which people move about at feasts held in other *paburu*.

I have the impression that the increase in contacts between the members of different territorial groups is most certainly appreciated, although people do have a number of objections, partly justifiably so, against the new situation. As a result of the fact that the new houses afford less privacy, it is said, there are a growing number of conflicts. Every private quarrel is witnessed by other people who, by trying to interfere, make it impossible for the difference of opinion to remain confined to one house.

The concentration of population which has been carried out on Frederik Hendrik Island clearly has certain drawbacks. The dwelling-islands are often too low and too small. The houses are too closely packed together, thus facilitating the spread of contagious diseases, since there is a lack of even the most elementary principles of hygiene. The new houses, moreover, offer insufficient protection against wind, rain and mosquitoes, which again adversely affects the general health of the population. These objections, however, do not detract from the fact that in the long-term the functions of the resettlement are positive.

### 1 *Property rights*

The most important aspect of property rights, namely the rights in land, must be regarded, on Frederik-Hendrik Island, from the point of view of the community right of disposal. This is a literal translation of the concept 'beschikkingsrechten' introduced by van Vollenhove. This term, as Ter Haar rightly points out, is etymologically misleading, because no actual right of alienation is vested in the community.<sup>1</sup>

Van Vollenhove defines the community right of disposal as follows: It refers to a case where a jural group ("rechtsgemeenschap"), either a territorial (native community, self-government) or a genealogical one (family, clan, tribe), claims with regard to a certain area to have the sole right of disposal over it. This manifests itself usually in the following six aspects:

- 1 the community and its members may freely use the uncultivated land within the area (for cultivation, founding a village, collecting products etc.).
- 2 others may do the same only with the permission of this community, and if they do so without permission they commit an offence.
- 3 for such use the members sometimes, and strangers always, have to pay either retribution or a homage-gift.
- 4 the community retains to some, lesser or greater, extent control over the cultivated land within the area.
- 5 the community is responsible for whatever happens within this area and for which no one else can be held responsible.

6 not the least remarkable aspect: the community cannot permanently transfer this right to others.<sup>2</sup>

For Frederik-Hendrik Island the question arises which of the social groupings we have mentioned in fact holds the community right of disposal. The very structure of the *tjipente*, being a personal kindred, prevents it from exercising corporative functions.

The community right of disposal, we find, is exercised by the local groups which on account of their clearer definition and greater continuity may act as corporate bodies.

As Ter Haar rightly remarks: "The community right of disposal is never static. It grows and shrinks in relation to the rights of individual members. Changes in social values concerning individual rights affect the strength of communal rights."<sup>3</sup> On Frederik-Hendrik Island, the right of disposal is determined by the structure of the village as consisting of local groups on different levels, while the interplay of individual proprietorship and collective right of disposal depends on the one hand on the type of land to which these rights apply and the use to which that land is put and on the other hand on the amount of personal labour that is put into it. I shall now discuss the various categories of land ownership separately.

#### a *The reed-marsh*

In spite of the low density of population and the small area that has been brought under cultivation, the importance of the reed-marsh as a source of various products must not be underestimated. Turtles, crabs, prawns, small fish, *boha*-eggs and water-snakes are among the different foods to be gathered there.

The most important product of the marsh, in this respect, is doubtlessly *mapie*, the significance of which for the native diet has already been set out in the first chapter. Besides all these, the marsh also furnishes all sorts of materials, such as drift-grass for the garden-islands and for the *paia*, reeds for making sleeping and sitting-mats, dead eucalyptus trees for fire-wood and clay for ornaments. All these products are found concentrated in small scattered areas, sometimes with great distances separating them. It is obvious, therefore, that every village of any size needs a relatively large gathering territory. For this

reason it would be quite wrong to believe that the big stretches of swamp between the villages belong to no one in particular. On the contrary, they are rather precisely divided among the villages. The boundaries are drawn most sharply for the water-ways connecting the villages one with the other. This is due to the fact that transport preferably takes place by water, while also every village is nowadays supposed to keep the water-ways on its own territory open by clearing them of reeds once a year. Ownership of the most valuable spots, such as small lakes, places with much *mapiè* or larger concentrations of pandanus trees is very exactly determined. Any trespassing of another village's rights immediately leads to a conflict between the two villages concerned. For the remainder of the swamp, the boundaries are in general less precise. They are sometimes indicated by conspicuous features of the landscape, such as pandanus or eucalyptus trees. Wherever possible, however, the boundaries follow the lakes and water-ways.

The rights of the village as a whole find outward expression in the fact that members of other village-communities are prohibited from gathering within its territory. Formerly when people from other villages were found on this territory they were inevitably killed, unless they had some good reason for their presence there. Within the village, the right of disposal is divided among the various *paburu*, each having rights over a definite part of the common area of disposal. Inside this separate sub-area every member of a *paburu* is entitled to go gathering wherever he likes. Although a woman mostly stays on the territory of her husband's *paburu*, she retains the right to make use also of the territory belonging to the *paburu* from which she originally came. Sometimes, even, a person may claim such rights on the plea that his mother came from the *paburu* to which the territory in question belongs. Theoretically, persons who are not related must first ask a member of another *paburu* for permission to go and gather on his territory. Usually, however, such permission is already implied in the situation when two or more women go out together to fish, fetch fire-wood or gather *mapiè* in the *paburu* of one of them. The prevailing relations between the *paburu* concerned determine in most cases whether the one will object against members of the other using its territory. If the relations of the moment are friendly, the rule of asking permission will usually not be insisted upon. If on the other hand the atmosphere is tense on account of a



conflict or in anticipation of a series of *ndambu*-feasts, the odds are that people without strong claims of kinship will not be given such permission. The *paburu* Borandjidam, for instance, has a relatively large amount of *mapiè*, while Bomerau has only a small supply of this plant. Normally, therefore, the women of Bomerau will go into Borandjidam territory to gather *mapiè*, but at times when one *paburu* accuses the other of magic they prefer to stay on their own territory.

Every member of the community may establish a personal claim within the compass of the communal area of disposal. Thus one may claim for oneself a spot of high ground, or a *wanni*-tree, the bark of which is used in the betel-chew, or a pandanus-tree, with its delicious big red fruits, or anything else that is desirable because of its scarcity or proximity. Such claims must, however, be effectuated in some way. Trees, for instance, may be cut down or marked. When travelling through the swamps one may suddenly, far from any village, meet with a single coconut-or sago-palm, or a poorly tended garden. These are small pieces of higher ground on which a tree has been planted to establish its individual ownership. They are mostly of very little practical use because of their distance from the village and the impossibility of watching against theft. All the same, they have been reserved in case they should come in useful some time.

#### b *The fishing-grounds*

For the lakes, water-courses and rivers, the same holds good, in general, as for the marsh. Here, too, the outward aspect of the rights is held by the village-community, while within the village these rights are shared among the *paburu* with separate claims on lakes, rivers, etc. Most of the villages exercise rights over one or more larger rivers at a certain distance from the village. These rivers are very important because they may be fished with poison. Such rivers are scarcely ever sub-divided among the various *paburu*. In these cases the communal right of disposal is not limited in its inward aspect. Every inhabitant of the village is entitled to fish in these rivers whenever he likes. Since government came to the island these rivers have gained considerably in economic importance through the crocodiles that

are caught in them. The sale of hides has become an important source of income in the form of money. In the western villages the amount of European goods is for this reason greater than in any of the others, in spite of their excentric location and their lack of contacts with the outside world. In course of time, however, more and more hunters, mostly Chinese and Indonesians, have been attracted from outside the island by the great profits to be made. With their superior equipment they have practically emptied a number of rivers of crocodiles. The inhabitants of the western villages often serve as rowers for them, without receiving any part of the catch or of the profits. The people of the villages concerned have repeatedly complained of this situation to the local government official, as they saw in it, and justly so, an infringement of their rights.

Although the lakes situated in and near the village are the property of particular *paburu*, it is not necessary, usually, for people from other *paburu* to ask for permission to fish there, providing this is done individually, with a rod or net. Only when there is a deceased in the *paburu* the water surrounding it is closed to all fishing. This applies to the people of the *paburu* itself as well.

The most profitable way of fishing in these lakes is by the method described in chapter 2, that is by collectively driving the fish up with big nets. Often this is done collectively by women from different *paburu*. For such a large-scale fishing-party however, an invitation from the *paburu* that owns the lake in question must be awaited, as it is not permitted to organise collective fishing in a lake belonging to another *paburu*.

Fishing in the water-courses is mainly done by means of various kinds of fish-traps. Inlets and corners of lakes may be dammed off and then fished with a small net by one woman or by a small number of women together. In such cases the rule is that as long as the trap, the dam or other signs of occupation of that particular place remain, the person who has put his work into it has the exclusive use of it. Such traps are his personal property. This is a principle recognised everywhere and even members of the same *paburu* cannot claim any rights to such places. The right of disposal is superseded by a stronger principle, namely that of the rights created by personal labour.

c *Forest and hunting-grounds*

Stretches of higher land are important for several reasons. They furnish trees for canoes in the first place, while they are also hunting-grounds and, to some extent, agricultural land. The rights of the various *paburu* are less clearly defined here. The pacification of the island, however, has made this land more valuable. During certain seasons a large part of the population spends a period of time in the forest-bivouacs, where they have some small gardens and from where they go out hunting from time to time. This more permanent occupation led to a conflict between the villages Bamol and Kalwa. A protest from the latter village induced the government officer to determine, in conjunction with the headmen of the respective villages, the boundary between the two villages on the high ground along the Manggu river. This arrangement was not to the liking of the influential men of Bamol. By long-drawn-out intrigues they finally succeeded in making the people of Kalwa assent to a boundary much further south.

The forest-bivouacs are situated on higher stretches of ground, where gardens can be laid out and near the savannah where kangaroos may be hunted. These bivouacs are split up according to village-sectors, who have a right to the territory for a considerable distance around these bivouacs. Hunting in this territory is therefore in the first place for the men of the *paburu*, but the same holds good for collective hunting as for the organised fishing described above, namely that its success is proportionate to the number of people taking part. Only the *paburu* to which the territory belongs can invite others to an organised hunt there. People of another *paburu* cannot take the initiative for them, but no objections are made to individual hunting, for instance with bow and arrow. The accessibility of the land in question forms a factor in the delimitation of the areas of disposal. Land at too great a distance from the forest-bivouacs is not subdivided. Every inhabitant of the village has the right to hunt there or to cut down a tree. The boundaries between the villages are also less distinct there.

Within the territory of the *pa* or *paburu* every member may make an individual claim to a suitable tree for making a canoe, or to a piece of land for a small garden. A tree can no longer be claimed by anyone else as soon as it is cut

down or otherwise clearly marked. Once a garden has been laid out, one or more trees have been planted in it or a fence placed around it, the piece of land in question has become individual property that is not to be touched by anyone else. This individual right remains as long as there is any outward sign of occupation of the ground, even if it is no longer in use. In the latter case, however, the owner will usually not withhold his permission if another member of his *paburu* wishes to take it over. Such permission will not readily be granted to people from other *paburu*, although it is not altogether out of the question.

#### d *The garden-islands*

Whereas in the preceding categories the *paburu* held the immediate right of disposal, it is the *kwanda* which exercises this right for the area in which garden-islands are made. Within the domain of the *paburu*, each *kwanda* has its own planting area, called *paku*. The different *paku* are territorially clearly defined and all have their own name, as in the *paburu* Borandjidam:

<i>Kwanda</i>	<i>Paku</i>
Waniëbörö	Jundoröwö
Pabu	Kijmpoda
Kontjendiwo	Börö

The ways of access to the *paku* are barred with branches and sago-leaves. Only members of the *kwanda* are allowed to enter. If anyone from a different *kwanda* is encountered there, he is immediately assumed to be there for purposes of stealing. Many people therefore do not even know the way to the *paku* of other *kwanda*.

Inside the *paku*, every member of the *kwanda* is allowed to make a garden-island wherever he wishes. People who do not belong to the *kwanda* in question first have to obtain permission. Such permission is usually given if the request is made by someone belonging to the same *paburu*, especially if the number of inhabitants of that particular *kwanda* has considerably decreased. Persons from other *paburu*, however, are only very rarely admitted. Such rare exceptions may occur, for instance, in the case of persons who have already acquired a number of garden-islands by inheritance, which they wish to increase or enlarge with the permission of the members of the *kwanda* in question.

The *paku*, being the domain of the *kwanda*, thus forms a part of the domain of the *paburu*, which in its turn is part of the village domain. Therefore the group defending the *paku*-rights will be in each case the one corresponding to the group that infringes upon those rights. For instance a violation of them by a different *kwanda* will lead to a conflict between *kwanda*, but if the offending party belongs to another *paburu* the whole *paburu* will, theoretically, rise in defence. If, finally, a *paku* or part of one is claimed by a different village, a conflict between villages will be the result. This last possibility, however, only occurs when the distance between the villages is small, as in the western part of the island. A conflict between *paburu* arose in Bamol when part of the *paku* Jundoröwö was claimed by both Karaudu and Borandjidam. In the old residential situation these two *paburu* were neighbours. Nowadays, however, this conflict hardly has any practical significance, as the population of Borandjidam has decreased to such an extent that this *paburu* has more garden-islands than can be worked by its members.

The fact that the right of disposal rests with the *kwanda* does not say a great deal about the proprietary rights in the individual garden-islands. A man who has made such an island has a particularly strong personal claim to it. Like each *patba*, each *möthö* has its own name and is bound very closely to its owner. The principle of personal labour creating individual rights obviously applies here. The garden-island exists only as a result of this labour, for the swamp as such is of no value for agricultural ends.

When extra gardens are laid out on high grounds temporarily for the purpose of a *ndambu*-feast, the various beds within the common enclosure are still individually owned. Even if the *möthö* is neglected for many years it does not revert to the *kwanda*. There is no obligation of maintenance. Only when the whole island has subsided into the marsh another member of the *kwanda* may make a new one on the same spot. When an island is made with other people's help, a gift of *wati* is compulsory, even if the helpers are brothers. This gift is not only a reward, but also an endorsement of the giver's exclusive proprietorship of the island.<sup>4</sup> If a garden-island has not been worked for many years and its proprietor or any possible heirs of the latter are no longer known, it does revert to the *kwanda*-community. This has happened, for instance in the *paburu* Borandjidam, where dozens of garden-islands have not been used for some

generations, while their proprietorship can no longer be traced. These islands may be put under cultivation again by any member of the *kwanda*.

A garden-island can be bestowed by its maker, as a gift or by inheritance, outside the *kwanda*, the *paburu* or even outside the village, though the last possibility remains largely theoretical in view of the relations between the villages. A person who has acquired proprietary rights in a garden-island in this way is fully entitled to work it, which right cannot be curtailed by the *kwanda*-members. The same holds for an outsider who has been given permission by the *kwanda* to make an island. In all these cases the *kwanda* can exercise its right of disposal only when the person in question is guilty of stealing from neighbouring islands. He may then be refused entry into the *paku*. He does, however, retain his rights on the gardens in question, which cannot be used by anyone else without his permission. No such measure can be taken against a member of the *kwanda*. In cases of theft by *kwanda*-members other methods must be used. The *kwanda*-right of disposal is attached to the soil itself rather than to the garden-islands.

Ownership of *möthö* outside the *kwanda* is of no great significance, however, and remains rather an exception. When a *kwanda* becomes extinct, though, its *paku* may pass to another *kwanda*.

Objections against the alienation of garden-islands are strongest for members of other *paburu*. Of the more than 150 garden-islands belonging to the domain of the *paburu* Bomerau, only six were owned by outsiders, two persons altogether.

Garden-islands may be given in usufruct for a certain time. This happened, for instance, in the *paburu* Wendu, where the *kwanda* Kukumei counts only two adult males, who between them own the whole *paku*. Since Wendu is surrounded by deep lakes, while its population has not decreased to the same extent as that of other village-sectors, this *paburu* has a latent shortage of garden-islands. The two men in question therefore gave part of their gardens in usufruct to kinsmen from other *kwanda*. In such cases no payment is determined beforehand. Officially there is no need for any payment to be made in return, but it is customary for the occupier to leave some part of the harvest in the ground for the proprietor, or else to help the latter in working his gardens or in collecting food for a feast. It is said that if no such payment is made, the garden in ques-

tion will not be given a second time to the same person. I myself did not witness any such cases, as such transactions usually take place between kinsmen, in an informal atmosphere.

In the foregoing remarks we have talked only about individual proprietorship of garden-islands. The paragraph about the rules of inheritance will show that not nearly all garden-islands are individually owned.

#### e *The sago and coconut plantations*

What has been said about the garden-islands applies, in principle, also to islands planted with sago- or coconut-trees. Within the territory of the *kwanda*, each member is entitled to plant sago, coconuts or any other fruit-trees wherever he likes. Here, too, the communal right of disposal has been reduced to a large extent by individual proprietorship. The situation differs from that of garden-islands in that proprietorship in this case is more a matter of particular trees than of ground. This is natural, since the value of each island consists only in the trees that grow on it. Unlike the *mōthō*, these islands cannot be used again once the trees have been cut down. Through inheritance the coconut-trees on a particular island may therefore be owned by different people. The trees belonging to a particular person are sometimes marked.

#### f *Movable property*

Property other than land consists mainly in tools and implements. In general such objects belong to the person who has made them or who has received them as a gift. A fishing-net is the personal property of the woman who has made it or received it as a gift from another woman. The same is true of bows and arrows and hunting-clubs. The possession of tools and other objects has lately gained in importance through the introduction of European goods which the natives themselves cannot make, such as spades, chopping-knives, mosquito-nets, paraffin-lamps and clothing. These goods are acquired by the sale of crocodile-hides, by serving as a rower or by taking a job outside the island for a while. It must not be thought, however, that introduction of these goods has brought about significant differences in property. With regard to all

objects, whether home-made or foreign, the ideal rule holds that no one should possess more than he can use. Anyone with more than one spade, mosquito-net, fishing-net or hunting-club who kept these objects for himself would make a very bad impression in this society where liberality is regarded as one of the greatest virtues. Any person who possesses more than he himself can use will distribute the superfluous goods among his kinsmen. At my departure, when I distributed touring-clothes and household goods among some of my best friends, their kinsmen were waiting at the other side of the house to receive in their turn anything that was given double. My friends themselves ultimately kept only a shirt and a pair of trousers each.

The ideal of liberality does not imply by any means that each person should not keep a close watch over his own interests. Every gift is made on the assumption that an equivalent return will be made some time (see *ndambu*, chapter VI). The discrepancy between the ideal of liberality and the self-interest pursued in practice is sometimes very clearly manifested. Informants who were given a reward in the form of tobacco tried in all sorts of ways to hide it from their kinsmen. Some of them left the tobacco at my house and came to get some each time they wanted it, while others had cleverly made a special compartment, almost invisible, in their betel-bag, for tobacco and money. If any questions were asked, they demonstratively showed their empty betel-bags. Objects that are scarce, such as stones for whetting knives or hatchets, are carefully hidden away and if others want to borrow them, the owners will invent some excuse, for instance that the object in question has been stolen.

In canoes there is a difference between the small ones used for local traffic and the larger ones meant for use outside the village, the *ditjarane* and the *dijangera*. The first one is an absolute necessity for everyone, for without a canoe one would be confined to one's house. In making a *ditjarane*, some help is given by others, but it remains largely individual work.

A *ditjarane* is the maker's personal property. A man makes such a canoe also for his wife and sometimes for his children, who then also have exclusive control over it.

A *dijangera*, however, can only be made by a number of people in co-operation. Since timber for such canoes is scarce and has to be fetched from a great distance, there is usually no more than one *dijangera* to a *kwanda*. Every member



of the *kwanda* is obliged to help in the making of it. The person who takes the initiative must first inspect his *wati*-garden to make sure he will be able to give his helpers the customary reward. Every important stage in the work is marked by a distribution of *wati*; when the tree has been cut down, when the canoe is pulled into the water and when the decorations have been cut around its rim. The gifts of *wati* are reciprocated with gifts of food by the other participants. Every member of the *kwanda* has the right to use the canoe, with the permission of the man who took the initiative for its construction, unless he did not fulfil his obligation to help in making it. The initiator of the scheme may never refuse this permission, unless he needs the canoe himself at that particular moment. He thus has a certain preferential right above the communal right of utilization held by the *kwanda*. The *kwanda* right of disposal rests with his person, which situation is endorsed by the giving of *wati*. Any discussion afterwards about rights of utilization and of proprietorship is decided by checking who distributed the *wati* when the canoe was made. Large canoes are not very numerous and are used for many years. It may therefore happen that the initiator is no longer known to everyone or even that he has died and his rights have gone to his descendants. As was shown in the previous paragraph, the distribution of *wati* is, also in the making of garden-islands, an outward sign of establishing proprietary rights as well as a reward for services rendered.

## 2 *Inheritance*

All things that fall under a local group's right of disposal are the unalienable property of that group. Thus a lake or water-course cannot become the property of another village-sector unless a sector were to become totally extinct, which is not very likely to occur. A *kwanda* may indeed become extinct, after which its *paku* will become the property of another *kwanda*.

To objects that are more or less individual property, different rules apply. Such articles of every day use as were made by the dead person himself are usually put on his grave or else destroyed. They are regarded as being too closely associated with the dead person to be used by anyone else. Partly for the same reason fruit-trees and other plants are destroyed, though in this case only a few coconut-or ságo-trees that were planted by the dead man are cut

down, while the harvest of root-crops planted by him is also destroyed. In the latter case, moreover, only the ceremonial crops, yams and taro, are pulled out of the plant-mounds.

European goods are not usually destroyed or put in the grave. They are inherited by sons or daughters according to whether they are commonly used by men or by women. Only the clothes that were last worn by the dead person are not used again. Mostly a person is buried in these clothes.

In the inheritance of gardens two factors play an important part. We must remember, in the first place, that agriculture is, ideally, an affair of men only, no matter how considerable the women's share may be. In the second place rights are acquired, as we have seen above, by personal labour, so the rules of inheritance distinguish between any garden-islands that a man has made himself and those he has inherited.

The first factor means that gardens are passed on from one man to another man. Women are excluded from inheritance. Inheritance is not purely patrilineal, for sometimes gardens may be given to daughter's or sister's sons. Usually, however, these kinsmen have been adopted, which means that, in theory at least, inheritance is indeed patrilineal. On account of the system of adoption a *môthô* will only rarely be inherited outside the *kwanda*. In this connection an important rôle is played again by the question whether the number of garden-islands is greater than can be worked by the population of the *kwanda*. In a number of *paburu* in Bamol, for instance, where this is so, the *kwanda* are on the whole less strongly opposed to alienation of garden-islands. In considering the second factor it must be remembered that, except in villages with a declining population, every man during his lifetime makes at least one garden-island himself and sometimes more, especially if his father's property was not very large. When a man dies, therefore, or merely, being old, wishes to pass his gardens on to someone else, his property will consist of a number of inherited islands and some that he has made himself. The former, however, are not his individual property, for he shares them with all his brothers. Being the eldest of the brothers, he does have the greatest say, but he cannot deny his younger brothers their share in the right of disposal. They are joint proprietors of the inherited *môthô* property. The eldest brother is, in fact, manager of the collective garden-property of the father. When the elder

brother dies his special rights automatically pass to the next brother. Only when all the brothers have died or grown old the gardens are divided among their sons. Those who have been adopted into another *kwanda* are left out, since they have acquired future rights there. Sometimes after the death of the youngest brother the gardens are not divided, but remain collective property instead.

Those garden-islands which a man has made himself are obviously not collective property. These may be directly passed on to the eldest son, who must in his turn, of course, allow for his younger brothers' rights. Such gardens may also be left to a man outside the *kwanda* if so desired, unlike gardens acquired by inheritance.

The above exposition forms a supplement to what was said in the previous paragraph about property-rights. In these rights a gradation may be noted from an almost completely individual right in those islands one has made oneself, via the collective rights in inherited gardens held by a group of brothers, to the free right of disposal exercised by the *kwanda*-community over any gardens of which no heirs are known. The latter situation occurs also in cases where the gardens are not divided after the youngest brother's death but remain collective property instead, for in actual practice a *kwanda* consists of real and classificatory brothers who thus collectively exercise their common rights. After some generations the *mōthō* one has made oneself may therefore become part of the collective property of the *kwanda*.

The position of the eldest brother with regard to collectively owned gardens is not quite clear in every respect. His authority is a fact, but opinions are obviously divided as to the extent to which he takes the place of the father. One extreme holds that the inherited property remains under his personal control until his death, after which it passes to the next brother. During this time he may use the gardens mainly for his own profit, as long as he fulfils his duties towards his younger brothers and his sisters. On the other hand, however, some hold that the property is managed by the eldest brother only for so long as the younger brothers have not grown up, but that after that time the latter must be given a number of garden-islands for their private use. The eldest brother does retain certain preferential rights, for instance in any island that might be left fallow. These different interpretations of the eldest brother's

rights lead to conflicts between the brothers. The attitude and personalities of the eldest brother and the younger ones are of great importance in this. In Chapter 3 we gave two examples of men who went to live somewhere else on account of conflicts with a brother with whom they were living. In both cases the cause of the conflict was the division of the inherited gardens. In the *paburu* Kantjimbe (Bamol) two brothers quarrelled because the younger had cut down a sago-tree that had been planted by their father during his lifetime. He had not asked his elder brother for permission to do so, for which reason the latter accused him of theft. The dispute rose to such a pitch that one of the brothers in anger completely destroyed the house in which they were living together. For days on end they continued abusing one another. Finally they both moved to a different village-sector and if one brother went to a feast, the other demonstratively stayed away from it.

Whatever may be the exact position of the eldest brother, it entails, besides certain privileges, also certain obligations. He is obliged, for instance, to care for his brothers and sisters as long as they are not grown up. When his sister marries he still has certain obligations towards her and her children. At the time of her marriage he may hand over some garden-islands for her husband's use. If he does not do so, he must provide some other substantial contribution for the support of his sister's family. It is customary, moreover, for him to adopt one of his sister's sons, who will later share in his inheritance.

If a man dies before any of his sons have reached manhood, his gardens are managed by his younger brother or his daughter's husband until the first son is old enough to take over their management and to support his younger brothers and sisters.

For coconut, sago and other fruit-trees the same holds good, in principle, as for the garden-islands. At the time of his sister's marriage the eldest brother allots her the use of a few coconut-trees. She also receives one or more sago-palms, which her husband is allowed to cut down in due time. She has the right, moreover, to cut sago and pick coconuts in her brother's gardens for her family in case of need. It is true that she has to ask permission for this, but normally such permission may not be denied.

The above description represents a more or less ideal situation. The actual

situation has more aspects than may be described in a few lines. We have not taken into account, for instance, the important fact that in some villages there are more garden-islands than can be worked by the population. Contrary to expectation, however, the inheritance of garden-islands is important in such villages, too, as *möthö* deteriorate quickly when not used. In such cases any conflicts centre around the better-quality *möthö* and the well-tended sago-islands. For younger brothers it is quite easy to acquire garden-islands of inferior quality. Thus Viktor inherited a garden-island from his mother's father in the *paburu* Sabudom, while he himself lives in Wendu and he received another *möthö* from his wife's father in Borandjidam. Franciscus inherited two *möthö* from a friend he had looked after long ago when the latter was ill. Warika was given a garden-island by his wife's father's brother. Personal relations also play an important part. In Sabudom a man adopted two boys. One of them returned after a few years to his own kinsmen in Kantjimbe. The other stayed and inherited all his foster-father's gardens after the latter's death. This man, however, was on such friendly terms with the man who, as a boy, had returned to Kantjimbe that he gave him some *möthö* although he was under no obligation to do so.

In many cases, too, we must remember the brothers live together in one house and together consume the produce of their gardens. The precise definition of each one's rights in the different garden-islands is then of no practical importance. It is important only if the relations between the brothers deteriorate or if they do not live together.

### 3 *The exchange-marriage*

Among the numerous manifestations of the principle of reciprocity, the practice of direct marriage-exchange is one of the clearest. This form of marriage, in which two men marry one another's sisters, is regarded everywhere on Frederik Hendrik Island as the most ideal one.

Women are the objects of an exchange that takes place for the benefit of their brothers. This does not mean that the marriage is always arranged by the elder brother. In most cases the parents arrange a marriage for their children when the latter are still very young. It is therefore not surprising to find instances of

an elder sister being used as an object of exchange for a younger brother. In spite of his sometimes relatively passive rôle in bringing about the exchange, the elder brother is clearly in a position of authority with respect to his younger sister, since he is the interested party. If the father has died, he is clearly the one who should arrange the marriage of his younger sister.

A marriageable girl in Sibenda wished to marry a crocodile-hunter from the Marind-Anim region. To do so, she needed the permission both of her father and of her scarcely elder brother, who wrecked the plan by his obstinate veto. He was directly dependent on her for finding a wife, for which reason he was even less prepared than his father to give his permission.

The principle that a woman must be given in return for every woman handed over, manifests itself clearly in all sorts of complications in the exchange mechanism. Thus it may easily happen that a man simply has no younger sister, in which case a classificatory sister has to be used instead. In Bamol I traced in 46 exchange-marriages the relations between the men and their exchanged 'sisters'. In 25 cases these proved to be real younger sisters, in 13 mother's brother's daughters and in 8 cases father's brother's daughters.

Although there is evidently a preference for a real younger sister, it is certainly not the only possibility. As will appear below, the absence in this connection of mother's sister's daughters is by no means accidental.

If no younger sister is available, the next most suitable exchange-sister is a mother's brother's daughter. So this relationship does play an important part in marriage traffic. A successful marriage-exchange does not mean that a man has no further rights or obligations with respect to his sister and her children. It is his duty to contribute to her support and that of her children while, on the other hand he has the right, for instance, to adopt one of her children or, especially, to use one of her daughters as exchange-sister for his son. In a direct exchange-marriage, father's sister's daughter is also mother's brother's daughter. The exchange-partners therefore have the right to use the other's daughter as exchange-partner for their son, as well as the obligation to give their own daughter to the other for the same purpose. Their position with regard to one another is one of creditor and debtor simultaneously on both sides. The number and sex of the children of each partner will determine which aspect is activated in each actual case. The situation is expressed in the remark

that *naiokoné* (exchange-partners) have to provide exchange-partners for the marriages of one another's sons.

After mother's brother's/father's sister's daughter, the next candidate for the function of exchange-sister is father's brother's daughter. Here again, the division of the cases named above is not accidental. The local group makes its influence felt, for father's brother lives in the immediate vicinity, often even on the same *patha* or in the same house. In the 46 cases cited above, only six exchange-sisters came from other *kwanda* and even then without exception from the same *paburu*. In the first place, a man will more readily give his daughter as exchange-sister for his brother's son as the latter's wife will be living near him, so that her help may furnish some compensation. In such situations, however, adoption is a more important factor. Usually a man who gives up a daughter or sister for purposes of marriage-exchange to another man's son acquires the right to adopt a daughter of the latter at a later date. The unity of the *kwanda* and, to a lesser extent, of the *paburu* provides a certain guarantee that this obligation will be fulfilled. If the son in question does not have daughters, his obligations are transferred to his brother or to his exchange-partner. In the latter case the father adopts his own daughter's child. The brother may in his turn adopt one of his exchange-sister's or of his brother's son's children, and so on. In this way a most intricate system of adoptive relationships is built up, which is never in balance. It extends over different generations and has acquired gigantic proportions. In actual practice a request for adoption made by someone belonging to the same *kwanda* or *paburu* can scarcely be denied. Outside the *kwanda*, but especially outside the *paburu*, the chances of obtaining an exchange-sister are much smaller. The local groups are usually strongly opposed to giving up a woman without receiving direct compensation. It is true that in this case too they would get a claim to adoption, but the chances that this claim will not be honoured are felt to be too great.

A second method which is much used is one of adoption, not as compensation for supplying an exchange-sister but, of a baby-girl who may when she grows up serve as exchange-sister for an elder son. The two methods are closely linked and here again the siblings are the first to be called upon for help.

A third method is that in which no direct exchange takes place, but where the first daughter that is born to the married couple is given to the woman's

parents. This happens mainly in what I would term "marriage by elopement." Such a marriage comes about when a girl and a boy, without regard for the rules of exchange, run away to another village and thus force the match. Such a course will be at first strongly opposed by the parents, for the breaking of the exchange arrangements means that in more than one nuclear family the complicated system of adoptions has to be adjusted. In course of time the girl's parents usually resign themselves to the situation, as they can scarcely expect help from their daughter as long as she is living in another village. If she returns to her own village, there is a possibility, moreover, of making a compromise. This is usually done by the payment of a bride-price or by giving up the first-born daughter.

The village-headman of Sibenda and his classificatory brother both carried off a woman from the neighbouring village of Kalilam in this way. Although the people of Kalilam made several attempts to get the women back, they did not succeed, for after a few unsuccessful attempts the two women were finally defended with weapons by the men of Sibenda. Those of Kalilam gave up resisting only when both men had yielded up a daughter to their respective parents-in-law.

This type of arrangement will also differ according to whether the marriage takes place within or outside the *paburu*. In the latter case the situation will be finally accepted only when compensation by adoption has actually taken place. For the young people in question it is practically the only generally accepted way of personally choosing a husband or wife.

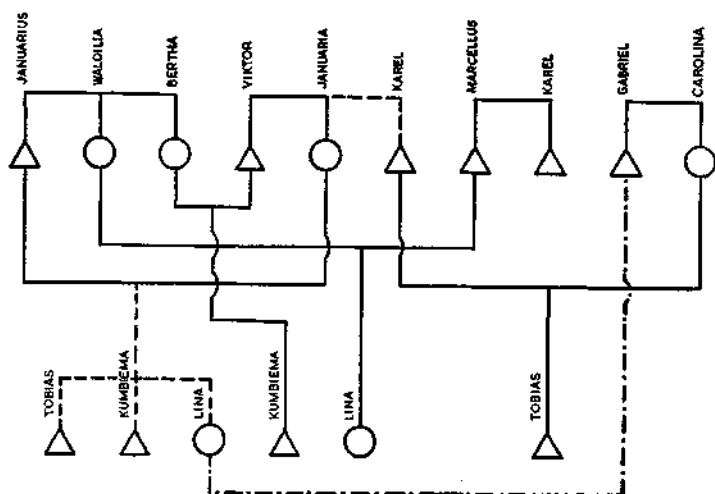
Another fact which makes the adoptive relationships even more intricate is the possibility of a claim to adoption of a boy taking the place of that of a girl, for instance in cases where a boy is more appreciated in connection with the upkeep of gardens.

An example of mutual adoptive relationships is given in diagram 10. Januarius gives his younger sister Waldilia to Marcellus. For compensation he adopts the latter's daughter, Lina. Januarius himself marries Januaria, for whom he gives another younger sister, Bertha, in exchange to Viktor, Januaria's brother.

Januarius' father-in-law has adopted Karel, a younger brother of Marcellus. This Karel arranges an exchange with Gabriel, using for this purpose Lina, his elder brother's daughter (also foster-sister's foster-daughter) as exchange-sister.

Januarius had earlier adopted the son of a third classificatory sister, but this boy was crippled in an





*Diagram 10. Exchange-marriages and adoptive relations in Bamol.*

accident. As a compensation for giving up his foster-daughter Lina for Karel's marriage he therefore asked the latter for a boy instead of a girl (Tobias). When his exchange-sister Bertha became pregnant he hoped she would give birth to a daughter whom he might adopt to serve as exchange-sister for Tobias at a later date. It was a boy, however. Januarius, who had no children of his own, accepted this boy (Kumbiema) to look after his gardens together with Tobias.

After some time, however, a serious complication arose. The exchange between Karel and Gabriel had been a deferred one because Lina had not yet reached marriageable age. Lina suddenly announced her intention of marrying quite a different young man and ran away to Kimaam. The situation was very serious, as both Januarius and Karel had already anticipated her marriage. A large group of men therefore went to Kimaam in order to persuade the girl to return to her village. My departure from the village made it impossible for me to witness the outcome, but before the expedition to Kimaam attempts were already being made to find a substitute for Lina.

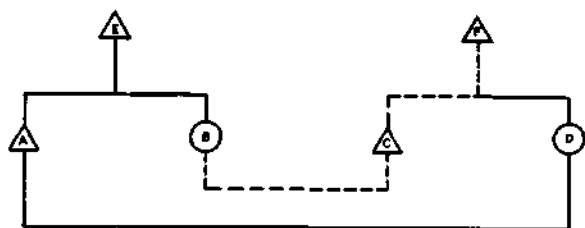
The elimination of the element of risk in the exchange of women constantly appears as an important aspect of the direct-exchange system. The various local groups harbour a deeply-rooted distrust of one another with regard to such matters. Each group is always intent on getting as many women as

possible, if necessary at the expense of other local groups. A woman who runs away with a man to the latter's village is received there with open arms. The same is true of the different *paburu* of one village. A man who succeeds in carrying off a woman from another village gains prestige in the eyes of his own village and may always count on their support. As was shown by the example from Sibenda, there is no hesitation felt in using (physical) force, if necessary, to prevent relatives from fetching the women back. The element of risk increases with deferred exchange. A big difference in age between the exchange-partners may cause the second part of the transaction not to take place till a number of years later.

The case of Lina and Gabriel shows that the girl may in the meantime make a different choice. It is also quite possible that the girl may die in the meantime and that no substitute is available. (The repeatedly occurring epidemics may sometimes wipe out whole *kwanda*).

Formerly this risk was not infrequently accepted, because the girl, if she was not too young, went to live with the boy's parents after the betrothal, so that they could exercise a certain amount of control as well as having the benefit of her help in the house. Since the abolition of the bachelors' houses, however, the young man stays at home, which means that his betrothed cannot live with her parents-in-law-to-be before her marriage. In these circumstances a deferred exchange is not readily undertaken without special precautions. Such an exchange-marriage is especially risky if it takes place between different *paburu*, for in that case adoption does not furnish an alternative should complications arise. In such a situation, when the first marriage takes place the boy's group hand over a complete bride-price to the girl's group. Both parties carefully count and measure all the objects and the food that make up the payment, for the idea is that it should be returned in full when the second part of the exchange-contract becomes effective. In such cases the payment has no connection with a ceremonial gift or counter-gift, but is regarded purely as a security.

Less frequently if an exchange-agreement is broken, a bride-price may be claimed as compensation afterwards. The case shown in diagram 11 from one of the southern villages is an example of this.

*Diagram 11. Deferred exchange marriage.*

Here, again, is a case of deferred exchange. The marriage of A and D has taken place but not yet the one between B and C. C is the foster son of F, C's real mother is a widow. E is a widower. It is customary everywhere on Frederik-Hendrik Island for widowers to take a widow as their second wife. E therefore asked C's mother to marry him but she preferred another widower, for which reason E refused to give his daughter to her son. He thus broke his exchange-contract with F, who demanded from the local government officer that E should be obliged to give up his daughter or else pay a bride-price. E, however, was not prepared to do so as he regarded his daughter as an object of exchange for himself rather than for his son at that moment.

In former times, too, the type of marriage with bride-price, a form of indirect exchange, was not unknown. It only took place, in general, when no other method could provide a solution. There is no doubt that this type of marriage is becoming more and more important nowadays. Although direct exchange is still regarded as the ideal way, many people no longer have serious objections against a bride-price marriage. Various factors have influenced this development.

a The possibility for young people to have their wishes taken into account is increased. Nowadays a marriage can no longer take place against the express wishes of the young man and woman because all marriages are solemnized by the priest. The latter's standards are different from those used by the parents in judging the desirability or possibility of a marriage, although he will often take the parents' wishes into account. The government prohibits the use of force in fetching back a woman who has run away. Neither government nor mission are opposed to the direct exchange marriage on principle, but their

activities do, unintentionally, cause the young people's position to be strengthened. From Bamol I know of several cases where young people ran away to Kimaam to place themselves under what they felt to be the protection of the government. In view of the European's ethnocentric appreciation of the freedom of choice in marriage, such young couples may expect to meet with at least a sympathetic attitude in that quarter.

*b* The risks attending indirect exchange have greatly diminished since pacification. The various local groups have more contacts now and even the contacts between the villages have become more regular. This process of integration has increased the possibilities of finding a marriage-partner, as the number of groups from which such a mate may be obtained has grown considerably.

*c* The ever-increasing demand for and dependence on European goods has caused some parents to prefer a bride-price, since this is for them often the only way of obtaining the coveted goods. The collection of sufficient goods and money for a bride-price was one of the most important motives for many young men to go and work away from the island for a year or more.

A notable rule is the one which requires widowers to take preferably a widow for a second wife. For a second marriage no compensation in the way of exchange, adoption or bride-price is required. A man who has lost his wife without his fault has a certain right to compensation from his wife's group, but he cannot claim another unmarried woman, for she will be needed as exchange-sister for another man. If, however, a man dies in this group, his widow becomes available to compensate the widower for the loss of his first wife. The group may thus dispose of the widow in question, as they have paid or given, someone in exchange for her originally, so that they retain authority over her even after her husband has died.

Often a marriage between a widower and a widow has the character of indirect exchange. The limited choice often forces a man to marry a woman from a group which is not that of his first wife. The latter group will reciprocate, however, if a married man dies among them.

Sororate marriages occur only if both partners are widowed. Levirate marriages are more numerous in some villages, probably in connection with the fact that

the widow's children have a right to their father's gardens and the desire to keep this property within the local group. (Young children often follow their mother.) Polygyny is not a frequent form of marriage, as is to be expected when noting the strong emphasis placed on direct exchange of sisters. At the time of our stay there, Bamol counted only four polygynous marriages. The number has of course decreased considerably since government was established and the missionaries came to the island, but both the reports of the earliest travellers in these regions (for instance the fathers Thieman and Verhage) and the information supplied by the natives confirm the assumption that this form of marriage has always been rather exceptional. Although the possession of more than one wife does lend a man a certain amount of prestige, acquiring prestige on Frederik-Hendrik Island is by no means only a question of property. One's rise on the 'social ladder' is in the first place determined by one's skill in the cultivation of the ceremonial crops, taro and yam. In this respect, however, women are almost totally excluded from giving assistance, being even, as they see it, a threat to the success of the crop, which means that a man can expect no great advantages in this connection from the possession of more than one wife. Even in non-ceremonial crops a second wife cannot help one to a significant economic surplus. Any advantage in fishing and *mapiè*-gathering is cancelled out by the heavy claims made by a woman's kinsmen on her husband's root-crops. (cf. paragraph 5)

Sexual motives cannot be considered as a possible reason for polygynous marriage since the culture offers particularly wide scope for extra-marital relations. (cf. chapter 5 paragraph 9).

A reasonably stable polygynous marriage is possible only for a very skilled and industrious cultivator, who can meet the demands of the numerous relatives of his wives or, especially, for an *undami*, who can, by threats of magic, press others to give him a woman without direct compensation, while his magical practices often provide him with an important extra source of income.

#### 4 *Exogamy and endogamy*

Incest is one of the most serious offences imaginable. Here, as elsewhere, cases of incest are not unknown. In Jeobi the story was told, with great disgust, of

a woman who married her foster-son. The thought of these two eating from one *yoomba* (food-bowl) was repulsive and symbolical in a way of the repugnance inspired by a relationship of this kind. The biological relationship was rather problematical, but in cases of adoption the actual degree in which the parties concerned are biologically related does not affect the general notion of whether or not the relationship in question is an incestuous one. It is interesting to note that in connection with this case a sort of avoidance pattern for mother and son was construed. Although those who told the story obviously believed in it at that moment, I have never noticed any such avoidance in actual practice. Apart from inspiring disgust, incestuous relationships also appeal to the community's love of mockery. In Kalilam the opposite took place. A man adopted a girl and when her father and her elder brother had died he married her. Here too the biological relationship could not be traced. In conversation people made fun of it, but apart from that at every opportunity the couple were reproached for their serious offence. When the relations between village-sectors or villages have been broken off, such offences are related in other villages with a certain satisfaction to place the whole village or *paburu* in a bad light. In the village where the offence occurred people are usually ashamed to speak of it to a stranger, so that one has to go to other villages to hear about it. Both in Kalilam and in Jeobi the disapproval and mockery of the community proved to be insufficient to prevent or break off the incestuous relationship. The case from Kalilam shows clearly that only the father and the elder brother can actually interfere. If they are no longer living, the community can only exert indirect pressure. However, such pressure is in general sufficiently effective.

The two instances given above are clear cases and leave no doubt as to whether or not incest has been committed. The question remains which relatives fall under the rules of exogamy and which do not. Two formulas are used for this on Frederik-Hendrik Island, which, in combination, present a fairly exact picture of the group of kinsmen who are prohibited from marrying or having sexual relations with each other. In general such a prohibition applies to members of one *tjipente*. It is not difficult, however, to find instances of connubial relations within this vaguely defined group. Muremuja in Bamol married his mother's foster-father's daughter's daughter, Chrysantos his

mother's father's brother's daughter's daughter. In these cases people were aware that the partners were really members of the same *tjipente*, yet their marriages were not regarded as incestuous. The criterion of kinship is in fact given a territorial interpretation. People who live together are regarded as being ipso facto related. The smaller the territorial group, the more closely its members are felt to be related. So it is strictly forbidden to marry someone living on the same *patha*, even if this person did not originally derive from the same *patha*. The same holds for neighbouring *patha*, as their inhabitants are also regarded as being closely related on account of the splitting-off process. The further away a *patha* is situated, the less stringent the rule becomes, which is theoretically in agreement with the further removed degree of relationship. Theoretically it is not impossible to marry someone belonging to a peripheral *patha* of the same *kwanda*. In practice, however, such marriages seldom occur, as the number of *patha* in a *kwanda* is usually quite small, while the relations between the inhabitants are pre-eminently experienced as ties of kinship. The few known examples of marriages within the *kwanda* met with very strong opposition.

Outside the *kwanda* marriage is prohibited, as a general rule, between persons whose ancestors can be traced to the same *patha*. Outside the *kwanda*, however, the ties of kinship are less intensely experienced and also traced less far back than within it.

Ego's mother's *kwanda* is exogamous, as relations with this group are numerous and frequent and the kinship ties are actively functioning. Yet a marriage with a person from a peripheral *patha*, considering the distance from the one from which one's mother comes, meets with less opposition than a similar case within one's own *kwanda*. There are still fewer objections if the relationship has to be traced by way of several *kwanda*. In both instances from Bamol there were few objections because the wives belonged neither to their husband's nor to their husband's mother's *kwanda*. Strong disapproval was expressed, however, at a marriage with father's mother's brother's son's daughter, not because of the degree of biological relationship, for this was no closer than in the other cases, but because the girl belonged to the same *kwanda* as the boy.

In the grandparents' generation only the *patha* is exogamous, i.e. little objection is made to marriages with persons from other *patha* of the *kwanda* in question.

(This holds therefore for mother's mother's and father's mother's *kwanda* unless this should also be the *kwanda* of one of ego's parents.)

For the definition of the rules of exogamy, therefore, the local groups form the frame of reference, while the actual degree of relationship is to a certain extent of secondary importance. Taking into account the genealogical knowledge of the Kimam, we may say that marriages between cross-or parallel-cousins are out of the question. Such a marriage is regarded as a very serious case of incest. When such a marriage was suggested, the reaction was most interesting: "Who would we be giving food to in that case? We would be exchanging gifts with ourselves!"

Marriage between second cousins is prohibited if they belong to the same *kwanda*. Outside the *kwanda* it is not a priori out of the question, but of rare occurrence. Marriage between third cousins generally meets with few objections, unless, again, *kwanda* or *patha* lend a prohibitive aspect to the genealogical relationship.

As opposed to the exogamy that is the rule in *patha* and *kwanda*, there is a strong tendency to endogamy within the smallest possible local group after the *kwanda*. The larger the group, the smaller the number of interlocal marriages. This is clearly seen in Bamol, where we noted down 152 existing marriages. In only five of these did the wives prove to be from other villages and we may safely assume that the number of women who went to other villages is no larger. As we have already seen, the number of marriage-ties between villages with fairly small populations is necessarily greater, but there is always a strong preference for marriage within the village.

In fourteen cases the marriage took place between the two halves into which Bamol is primarily divided (see chapter 3 paragraph 3d), in 21 cases within the village-half, but with a *paburu* other than the complementary one, in 30 cases with the complementary *paburu* and in 55 cases within the *paburu*. The intermediate position of the *paburu* Bomerau finds expression in the fact that it exchanges women in two directions, with Kantjimbe on the one hand and with Karaudu on the other, in conformity with the local situation (see chapter III paragraph 3d).

Various factors contribute to this preference for marriage within the smallest possible local group:



*a* Within this group it is easier to find an alternative for **direct exchange** of sisters (classificatory sister, adoption, deferred exchange)

*b* A marriage is not merely a matter for the young couple, but it is in a way a contract between two groups. Affines who belong to the same *paburu* or village-half, will be less hostile towards each other and have more frequent contacts, to the benefit of both groups.

*c* A marriage within the *paburu* means that the daughter or younger sister, and her children, remain in the immediate vicinity, so that it is easier for her, or them, to give help on all sorts of occasions.

A correct picture of the circulation of women in and among the various village-sectors can only be derived from a study of marriage-traffic in the whole village. If a single *paburu* were to be studied, there might easily seem to be a fixed rule of intermarriage with the complementary *paburu* if at that moment there are relatively many marriages between those two village-sectors. The reason for this, however, is simply that the rule of *kwanda*-exogamy makes it necessary to find a mate outside the *paburu*, while the tendency to stay within the group causes the complementary *paburu* to be preferred. The same is true of the marriage-relations between the *kwanda* of one *paburu*. There is no question of any fixed marriage-relations between particular local groups. On the contrary, such marriages take place only for want of a better solution. The idea of a coherent system of connubial relations connecting the various village-sectors or *kwanda* is quite foreign to the Kimam. The *kwanda* are indeed the groups between which the exchange takes place, but there are never more than two such groups involved in a mutual exchange-relationship.

##### 5 *The relations between affines*

“My wife’s kinsmen are the heart, the whole world. Nothing and no one is more important than they are. If I have anything at all, I share it with them; if I have nothing, I feel ashamed of having nothing to give them.” This is how one informant expressed his attitude towards his affinal kin. The es-

essentially subordinate position of the bride-receiving group with respect to the bride-giving group which is shown by this remark, manifests itself in the fact that a wife's brother and father are on practically every occasion entitled to claim her husband's help, which the latter may never refuse to give. Although, in practice, a father-in-law may often give help to his daughter's husband, the latter has no right to claim such help. The husband's subordinate position with respect to his wife's kinsmen is veiled to a certain extent by a number of factors. In the first place, the principle of direct exchange means that the bride-receiving group is at the same time the bride-giving group, so that there is a reciprocity of rights and obligations which manifests itself clearly in the terminology (see Appendix 4). In the second place, the relationship of affines is counterbalanced by the sibling-relationship. A wife's elder brother has not only a position of authority with respect to his younger sister- he is also, after her marriage, actively interested in her life and her children's (cf. paragraph 3, 6). He is partly responsible for their well-being and the husband can take advantage of his brother-in-law's obligations in this respect. It is true he can never directly ask his wife's elder brother for help, but indirectly, via his wife, he may bring pressure to bear on him: "So often I have helped my *nabarre* when he gave a feast, why doesn't he help his sister when her children are hungry?" or "It is time your brother pointed out a sago-tree in your father's plantation." In this way the gifts and help between affines acquire a reciprocal character.

Although in affinal relations, again, personal relations play an important part, there is inherent in them an unmistakable element of rivalry. The elder brother's responsibility with regard to his younger sister and the more or less implicit distrust of the sister's husband often lead to suspicions and accusations of magic if the wife dies young.

An instance of this occurred when Fidelis' wife, in Bamol, died in childbirth. Shortly afterwards Fidelis was accused by his father-in-law of having 'sold' his wife to an *umdani* in Kondjobando. The reason for this accusation was the fact that Fidelis had quarrelled a few times with his wife shortly before her death. For me the accusation was a complete surprise, as the relations between Fidelis and his wife had seemed to be very good, while his grief at her death was sincere in every way. At one of the feasts for the dead his father-in-law demanded sea-shells and a string of dog's teeth from Fidelis' family as compensation.

In another instance a wife's death was attributed by her elder brother to her husband's repeated adultery, which caused her eventually to 'sell' herself to an *undani* in another village.

Relations between affinees are characterised by obvious avoidance. The taboo on uttering the affine's name is very strict and applies to all those for whom special affinal terms are used, including the parents of both marriage-partners, who address one another as *menuko*, and including also the *naiokoné* relationship. In drawing up the genealogies my informants were not prepared to mention the personal names even of people to whom they were only distantly related by marriage and who were not present at the time. The affine in question would be angry if he were to hear of it, while the offender would be very ashamed of his "mistake". The strict observance of this taboo is not so much a question of supernatural sanctions being attached to the uttering of the personal name but rather of the lack of respect demonstrated in doing so. The taboo does not apply to baptismal names, either for the sake of convenience, as in Mimika,<sup>5</sup> or merely because these names still form an essentially foreign element in the culture.

Affines almost never address one another directly. They make use of a go-between or else speak in general in such a way that the other person will know what is intended for him in particular. If an object is to be handed to one of one's parents-in-law, it is placed some distance away from them, where they in turn will pick it up. If one is sitting in front of a door through which one of one's parents-in-law wishes to enter, it is customary to move aside so that they need not step over one. Affines who live in the same house always keep a certain distance, especially if they are of different sexes. *Jatjeboe* and *nanarre* (daughter-in-law and father-in-law) must never be together in a house if there is no third person present. In such a case the father-in-law goes out, saying he must see to his gardens, or the daughter-in-law does so with a similar excuse. If a woman wants to ask her father-in-law something, and nobody else is present to act as a go-between, she must do so standing up and at a distance. Having obtained an answer, she must immediately retire. The very worst demonstration of a lack of manners would consist in having a meal with or giving food to an affine belonging to the other sex. In general, this is forbidden even between affines of the same sex, but with a person of the other sex such

actions would immediately call up associations of incest, as eating together is eminently a symbol of sexual relationship. The sexual element is also expressed in the reluctance shown towards the joint-dwelling of two brothers without a third party: "Other people might think that the brothers had sexual intercourse with each other's wives."

In the Kimaghama-speaking group the pattern of avoidance does not apply to the wife's or husband's younger kinsmen. In the Ndom-group the situation is somewhat different again. Here the attitude towards a wife's younger brother is more or less friendly, sometimes tending to joking. This is so only for as long as the young man in question is not married. As soon as he is, the special affinal term is used for him, too, while the rest of the avoidance pattern also applies, although not too strictly. With regard to a wife's younger sister no joking is allowed even before she is married, although there is no actual avoidance. It is interesting to note that in the Ndom-group the avoidance pattern towards the parents-in-law and especially towards the wife's mother becomes less strict as the latter grow older. It is not unusual for the relations to grow more like those between mother and son, while in such a case the mother-in-law is also addressed as "mother". This occurs particularly if one's own parents have died, so that the parents-in-law more or less take their place. The pattern of conduct towards affinal kin applies in the first place to the wife's or husband's parents and siblings. In a wider sense it also applies to other members of the wife's or husband's *kwanda*. In practice, however, there is a great diversity in degrees of observance. For a wife's younger brother's wife, for instance, avoidance is not so strictly observed, in fact only the name-taboo applies. The avoidance pattern is far more strictly observed for a wife's elder brother's wife, as the latter is more or less identified with the wife's mother. Obligations towards distant affinal kin are largely traditional, being limited, generally, to formal contributions at feasts, unless the persons concerned happen to be on particularly friendly terms with one another. Even more distant affinal kin who do not belong to the wife's or husband's *kwanda* are no longer regarded as true affines. No special affinal terms are used, for instance, for a husband's younger sister's husband's brother or for a wife's younger brother's wife's brother, unless these persons happen to be married to a sibling of one's wife or husband (cf. direct-exchange marriage).

6 *The relations between mother's brother and sister's child and between cross-cousins*

The special relations between mother's brother and sister's child are a consequence of the elder brother's special position with respect to his younger sister. The solidarity of this sibling-relationship as expressed in mutual help, causes the elder brother to be more than commonly interested in his sister's children's lot. A child is always warmly received in his mother's brother's house; he will be given food there if he asks for it and looked after if his parents have to go away for any length of time.

As bride-giver, a mother's brother has certain rights with regard to his sister's children. The rivalry between him and his younger sister's husband in this respect is expressed by the fact that the children immediately turn to their mother's brother if they fear their father's punishment. The father cannot prevent this. When they are older, mother's brother and sister's child help one another in making garden-islands, in planting and harvesting. If one of them has no tobacco or areca nuts, the other will share whatever he has. They may use one another's gardens and harvest tubers there without first obtaining permission, provided they leave a sign.

The attitude of a mother's brother towards his sister's child and vice versa has the character of a joking relationship. A sister's son displays, in spite of the difference in age, a conspicuous lack of respect towards his mother's brother. They play all sorts of pranks on one another, at which neither one of them does or should get angry. I have repeatedly watched *nawa* (mother's brother) and *namavor* (sister's child) throwing clods of mud in each other's faces when engaged in making a garden-island, a game which they would keep up for hours to the great entertainment of the spectators and without either one of them growing visibly irritated. The *nawa-namavor* relationship is the only one in which the use of obscene language is permitted, a privilege which is freely used by some. Towards a sister's daughter joking is allowed but no obscenities.

The *nawa-namavor* relationship contains an educative element because a mother's brother may correct his sister's son's behaviour. Under cover of his special position as *nawa* he may level the most serious reproaches at his nephew, while the latter may never get angry. The uncle will certainly not fail to do so if his sister's son repeatedly commits serious offences such as for instance an illicit

love-affair, notorious laziness, theft or neglecting his parents.

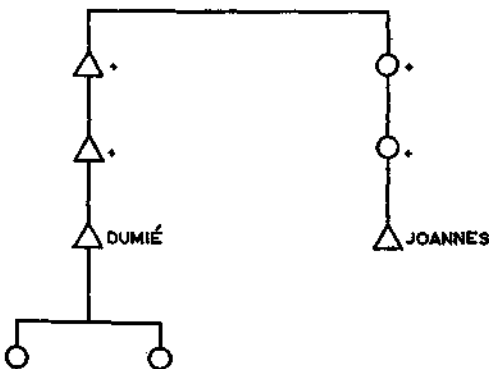
In some villages the *nawa* may in cases of extreme laziness of his sister's son even hold a *ndambu*-feast against his nephew if the latter keeps ignoring the repeated warnings and rebukes of his parents and other kinsmen.

In the Kimaghama group no special terms exist for the relationship between mother's brother and sister's child, but its function is similar, though not quite as clear as in the Ndom group.

*The relations between cross-cousins*

The joking and generally intimate relationship with mother's brother is continued, inherited as it were, with and by the latter's children. In direct-exchange marriages, mother's brother's child is also father's sister's child, which means that a reciprocal joking relationship exists between cross-cousins. In the Riantana group they call each other *pana*, in the Ndomgroup *namavor*. In the latter group, if there is a considerable difference in age, the elder cross-cousin may also be called *nawa* (mother's brother).

Since this relationship may again be taken over by the children of cross-cousins, such joking relationships may be numerous and traditional. In Kondjobando I noted a joking relationship between Joannes and Dumié and Dumié's children. With some difficulty I succeeded in tracing their relationship as follows.



Apart from reciprocal joking and assistance, the relations between cross-cousins also consist in keeping each other's secrets. They confide in each other if they have stolen food or committed adultery. In case of conflict they help one another as much as possible. Two men between whom such a relationship exists preferably go out hunting, and women fishing, together. A woman who has quarrelled with her husband can go and stay a few days with a female joking-relation. Her husband does not have the right to take her away from there. A man may go and have a meal with a joking-relation if he is on bad terms with his wife or if she has not cooked a meal for him.

In the course of our inquiry we did not succeed in uncovering all aspects of the cross-cousin relationship. It is a fact, however, that this relationship is of a highly ambivalent nature. Between male cross-cousins there is not only joking but sometimes also avoidance. This ambivalence is not so very difficult to understand if considered in the light of the bilateral kinship-structure with its strong tendency to extension of the sibling-relationship towards classificatory brothers and sisters. Apart from being cross-cousins, they are also members of the *jaentjewe*, for whom sibling-terms may be used. In such cases, however, the avoidance pattern between elder and younger brother also applies to a certain extent.

### 1 *Pregnancy*

From the foregoing chapters it has become clear that it is of the utmost importance, both for individuals and for groups, to have children. The following chapters will show that the moment of birth is also a very important one from a religious point of view. A pregnant woman and her husband must take all sorts of precautions to reduce the possibility of miscarriage to a minimum.

These precautions consist in the first place of avoiding certain foods thought to be dangerous. Yam and taro, the ceremonial crops, are considered as particularly dangerous during this time. The touch of these foods and even being associated with them might be fatal for the child. For this reason a man should not plant these crops as long as his wife is pregnant. If there is a feast in the village at which taro and yams are brought in, both the expectant mother and her husband must keep away.

In the western villages these rules do not apply to those taro-roots which do not come from the garden-islands. These are the small taros that are grown on dried-up patches in the swamp and which are not intended for any ceremonial purpose. For these no magical ritual is performed, so that they are not so dangerous for pregnant women.

Other food-taboos concern, for instance, pig's meat, which must not be eaten as the child might be born with a pig's snout. Turtles, with their slow movements, might cause the child to be slow too. Ikan duri, a type of fish with a sharp thorny protuberance which easily causes small wounds, is also forbidden



as well as water-snakes, which are not allowed mainly on account of their association with Werendika, a mythical creature which is supposed to inhabit small lakes and which has the shape of an enormous snake. All these food-taboos have a practical significance in that they force a pregnant woman to do without a large proportion of the usual supply of animal proteins.

The fear of sorcery during pregnancy is particularly strong. Women will rarely go to other villages during this time and they will certainly not eat any food that has been brought in to a feast in another village-sector. A husband who is offered such food does not eat it himself, but gives it to other kinsmen. *Undani*, who are present at every feast, might easily in passing cause a dangerous influence to enter the food. For the same reason, special care is taken with left over food and betel spittle.

The birth of a boy may be influenced by a certain medicine which is known only to a few older women. This medicine is rubbed on the woman's navel and belly. The virtue of the medicine must penetrate into the belly and during this time, i.e. for about a month, the husband may have no sexual intercourse with his wife. If a boy is particularly wished for, both man and wife are subject to a number of taboos. The woman may not cut *ikan duri*, nor chop firewood and if her hair is shorn she must leave a patch intact. She may not hold sharp feathers in her hands nor eat any food left over from the previous day. The man may not hold a hatchet with the sharp side turned towards his body. If he has to work in his garden or cut down a tree, in which case he is obliged to use a hatchet, he must first rub the blunt side against his belly "to show that the hatchet is meant only for the reeds or for the tree." The man is not allowed to make a fire by rubbing and neither husband nor wife may split a coconut lengthwise. It must be split across and they may eat only the bottom part with the hollow and not the top with the pointed protuberance. All these taboos are intended to make sure the child's penis is not cut off. In general both man and wife must avoid everything that is not a normal part of daily life, since such things are always potentially dangerous. A garden-island, for instance, that remains unusually high above water-level during the rainy season is not an ordinary thing and the husband must not go too close to it or fetch any food from it. If the expectant parents have to cross a big lake, they first take certain precautions. With mud from the environs of the lake the woman draws a line

across her body above the breasts to allow the "smell" of the lake and everything in it to touch the body, so that it is no longer automatically dangerous during the crossing. Both man and woman always carry a bunch of leaves around their necks to protect them against any evil influences for which they are not prepared or of which they are not aware. A general precautionary measure is also to accept no food from older men, as amongst them there are many *undani*. Frequent cohabitation during pregnancy is not considered necessary.

The birth of twins is not favourably regarded. Apart from the risk it entails for both mother and children, the birth of twins is proof, at least in the Ndom and Riantana groups, of the fact that besides the husband a supernatural being has cohabited with the woman. Only in the first of these groups was one of the children killed at birth formerly.

Pregnancy is diagnosed from the swelling of the breasts. It is said that a girl is born about six months after this time, a boy well over a month later because he needs to be stronger and therefore must stay longer in the womb.

In spite of the great value attached to a large number of children, certain means to procure abortion are not unknown. Such measures may be taken, for instance, if a man does not look after his wife, if he frequently commits adultery or if he drinks too much *wati* so that he cannot work. In such cases the wife may consult an old woman who knows the ways to procure abortion. Usually some drug is used, made of various pungent spices and plants such as pepper-roots mixed with lime, *djeruk nipis*, chillies and *wati*. Concerning the effectiveness of these measures I have no information. On the whole, attempts at abortion occur only very rarely. Usually they go no further than threats. It must all take place in secret, moreover, for if the husband finds out, he may kill his wife as well as the woman who gave her the drug. Mostly, however, he will not go to such extremes and in the worst case merely leave her. People are, on the whole, well informed concerning the development of the foetus in the womb. Several informants attributed this knowledge to the practice of head-hunting in which pregnant women were not spared. The victims' bodies were cut open when the flesh was distributed.

## 2 Birth

During the last months of pregnancy the woman must bathe frequently, in

order that the water running down the body may facilitate parturition. She keeps on working until the labour-pains start. She then asks her elder sister or her mother, or sometimes her husband's mother or elder sister to help her.

In the western villages the birth may not take place in the house. Usually a special maternity-hut is built for a number of women who are expected to give birth at about the same time. The maternity-hut is of very simple construction, usually no more than one and a half metres high in the centre, cone-shaped and covered with strips of eucalypt-bark.

In the other language-groups no such special huts are known and the confinement always takes place in the house. Sometimes in the western villages, too, no special hut is built. In that case the woman goes to a coconut island to bear her child.

Everywhere the husband is prohibited from seeing his wife during or shortly after her confinement, in fact from coming at all near her. Other men, too, are strictly prohibited from approaching her, so that of us two only my wife could a few times visit a woman in childbed.

Where the confinement takes place at home, the husband disappears for a while to stay with relatives.

During the parturition, the midwife continually throws water over the woman's body to facilitate the delivery. This takes place lying down. The umbilical cord is cut at the level of the knees with a sharp piece of bamboo. In the western villages it is cut once more after a few days at the navel. In the Kimaghama villages the navel-string is made to drop off by continually kneading it between thumb and forefinger, after first heating the fingers at the fire. Deformities at birth are explained as resulting from the cohabitation of some supernatural creature with the woman because she is very beautiful and because the husband has boasted of this fact too much in public, thus attracting the attention of these creatures to his wife. This explanation is not given everywhere, but the practice of killing such a child shortly after birth did exist all over the island. To justify this practice, the excuse was often added that these children cannot look after themselves when they grow up. Normally in such a case the mother would after a few days place the child near the edge of the dwelling-island, so that it would fall into the water through its own movements and drown. A child might be killed only immediately after birth, later it was no longer possible.

In the western villages the afterbirth is immediately buried in a very secret spot.

In the other villages too, it is treated with great care, as it offers a particularly good opportunity for practising magic on the child. Also in the western villages the mother keeps the umbilical cord and wears it around her neck until the next child is born. If she should neglect to do so, she would not be able to have another child.

As long as the navel-string has not dropped off, both man and wife are subject to strict rules of taboo. The birth is considered incomplete and especially during this time the man's actions may greatly influence the child's welfare. He is not allowed to leave the house, for instance, or to do any heavy work inside. He is not allowed to touch water because that would make the child cold, nor may he see the child lest it grow old too quickly. He must keep away from people who have planted taro or yams, for that might suck away the woman's vitality and the child might die.

Even after the navel-string drops off and the man is allowed to go outside, he is still subject to a number of taboos. For the time being he must not go too far outside his own *kwanda* or *paburu*, because he might meet with evil influences. The child is constantly kept warm by the midwife, who keeps pressing her hands against its body after warming them at the fire. The child's arms and legs are continually pulled because otherwise they might never straighten out. The first few months the child may not be bathed, which means that when they are first taken outside many infants are in an indescribably filthy state. In this respect some improvement may be noted in some places due to the influence of the village welfare workers who have been appointed by the Government Health service and who are called *prawats*.<sup>1</sup> The husband, his wife, the midwife and her husband are none of them able to gather food during this time. They are all looked after by the other members of the *kwanda*. Women of the *kwanda* bring food from time to time, usually already cooked. Sometimes uncooked food is given, which the midwife prepares for the mother. The man must carefully note who gives food during this time, for it must all be returned at the child's feasts. For every contributor he keeps a counting-stick.

Apart from the danger the man represents for his child's health, should he approach too closely, his wife is also dangerous for him. This is no doubt connected with the fear of menstruation. Sexual intercourse is strictly prohibited for the time being. The man would be using 'the child's road', thus depriving

the child of its chances to get safely through the first difficult period of its life. Every care must be taken not to sever its ties to its mother.

The man may go outside after three or four days, but the woman is not allowed to do so for the first few months. If she has to go outside to relieve herself, she does so preferably after dark and with her whole body covered in a long plaited hood of the same type as is worn in mourning (see paragraph 13). She must make sure she sees nobody and is seen by no person.

### 3 *Adoption*

In the previous chapters adoption has already been repeatedly mentioned. Two motives for adoption especially came to the fore: the adoption of boys to look after and inherit garden-property and to support the adoptive parents in their old age, and the adoption of girls in connection with marriage exchange. There are a number of other reasons for adopting a child, perhaps less important from a structural point of view, but nonetheless very real ones to the Kimam. An older couple, for instance, may particularly wish to have the care of a small child, besides wishing to ensure that they themselves will be looked after in future years.\* Apart from a special love for children, an important factor is the fear of childlessness. This may have been intensified by the frequent occurrence during the thirties of sterility in women.\*\* Sometimes a child is adopted by a young man who is not yet married. Here again both factors play their part. Even before marriage, a man wants to be sure of having children. Often, too, children are adopted before the wife has been pregnant. People would rather not wait till it has become quite clear that the wife is incapable of having children (childlessness is always blamed on the woman).

The relations between parents and children are not in the first place determined by the factor of blood-relationship. The important ties are sociological, not biological ones. This pragmatic attitude is expressed in the belief that one acquires claims on a child not only by its birth, but rather, in the first place, by caring for it. They proceed on the assumption that the child's affections, if

\* Adoption, however, may also take place without a directly apparent motive.

\*\* For the northern and eastern villages 25% of the women born before 1920. Vogel p. 15.

the necessary precautions are taken, will be focused on the foster-parents rather than on the natural parents. It is thus less difficult for them to part with one of their own children at a later date. If the number of children grows too large such a step is unavoidable. My informants placed particular emphasis on the fact that without the possibility of adoption, it would be very difficult indeed for many people to support all their children. Adoption is one of the forms, therefore, in which the group's responsibility with respect to the individuals that constitute it, manifests itself.

It is difficult to acquire an exact picture of the extent of adoption compared to the size of the population. In former times people often never knew all their lives who were their real parents. This makes the data for the older generation quite unreliable. There is no reason to assume, however, that cases of adoption have increased during recent years, so we may get some impression from the data concerning the younger generations. The two youngest generations in the village of Sibenda consisted of sixty persons in all, 23 of whom had been adopted. The youngest generation of the *kwanda* Jagawambörö and Karambudire (Wendu-Bamol) consisted of fifty-eight persons, of whom 26 had been adopted. These figures are corroborated by impressions from other villages.

It will be clear from the previous chapter that adoption takes place mainly between siblings or by the husband's or wife's parents. Sixteen of the twenty-six cases of adoption in Wendu-Bamol were by siblings and six by the husband's or wife's parents.

A man or woman can never offer a child to kinsmen for adoption. They would be ashamed to do so, for it would seem as if they did not want the child themselves. The other party must always ask for permission to adopt the child. In practice this is no serious obstacle since the rights of adoption on the one hand and the possibilities on the other are always exactly known.

An application for real adoption, *patha-imba* (*imba* 'adoption') must be made during the woman's pregnancy. Such an application can only rarely be refused, the interrelation of rights and obligations between siblings and parents being too strong. If the parents do refuse to part with a child, if it is their first child, for instance, their kinsmen will bring heavy pressure to bear on them. About the time the child is expected, the mother goes to stay with the prospective foster-parents. In the Kimaghama and Riantana groups the confinement also

takes place in their house. The mother stays with the foster-parents, whose directions she has to follow since she has already handed over her authority with respect to the child. The foster-mother tries to make the association with the child as complete as possible by nursing it now and again, even if she has no milk herself.

The time during which the real mother stays with the child is kept as short as possible. As soon as the foster-mother thinks the child can do without its mother's milk, the mother is given to understand that she had better return to her own house. This arrangement is clearly not always in the interest of the child's health. Especially if mother and foster-mother are not on very good terms, the child is often weaned too early. In Bamol a child died of under-nourishment for this reason during the time of our research.

From then on the real parents' position with respect to the child is that of parent's siblings and they are expected to behave as such towards the child. The child may have meals with them from time to time, but may not sleep in their house. It is strictly not permitted, moreover, to tell the child who are its real parents. Even nowadays this still holds.

By the time the child is grown up, however, it will have heard from friends or kinsmen who its real parents are. This is not considered very serious, as the child's affections are supposed to rest permanently with its foster-parents at this stage. Neither the real nor the adoptive parents, however, will ever inform the child.

Adoption places the foster-parents in a position of debt towards the real parents. The latter must be asked to every feast that is given for the child and they share in the food that has been collected. They receive a part of every harvest and they may at all times use canoes, tools and other objects belonging to the foster-parents. The foster-parents never ask for their property to be returned and when the real parents bring back the object in question it is always first refused. As well as between kinsmen, adoption may sometimes take place between people who are not related, mostly from different village-sectors. In such a case a child has to be paid for with useful objects and dog's teeth. In Bamol, for instance, the payment for a boy was, in one particular case, a canoe, a string of dog's teeth, a nautilus-shell, *wati* and food. If some child tells the foster-child that the people with whom it is living are not its real parents, the foster-father

will take it back to its real parents because it is feared that in such a case the child will tend to become too strongly attached to its real parents. The father of the child that told the adopted child the truth is obliged to refund to the foster-parents all expenses incurred on account of the adoption, i.e. a payment as described above if the adoption in question was not between kinsmen, or all the foster-parents' contributions to feasts, etc. in cases of adoption between kinsmen. For the child it is very important that the real and adoptive parents should be on friendly terms with one another. Although the real parents have renounced all rights with regard to the child, they do remain interested in it in other ways. It is necessary for both parties to keep minutely to their rights and obligations. In cases of serious disagreement the child is given back to its real parents, who are then obliged to refund all expenses made on its behalf by the foster-parents. An important factor in this arrangement is the fear of sorcery. The real father is in a position to practise sorcery on account of his close ties with the child during the pregnancy and the first days of its life. The foster-father will certainly resort to sorcery if his expenses are not refunded. His daily association with the child makes it possible also for him to practise sorcery on it.

A certain amount of antagonism may be noted between the two pairs of parents, especially between the real mother and the foster-mother. This does not, usually, lead to actual conflict, thanks to the close ties of kinship linking the foster parents and the real ones and also because the children usually live close to the latter. The following myth, however, shows that the real parents do retain an interest in their children's lot:

Kerewaremma was a man with an abnormally large penis, so big that he had to tie it around his neck. When he went bathing in the big lake he used to untie it, but one day a fish bit it off. A woman who went fishing in the lake caught this fish and took it home. When she opened it she found the penis. She fastened it to the ceiling of her day-shelter and from time to time she sat down with her legs apart holding the penis in her hand and it used to enter her of its own accord. After some time she was pregnant and when the child was born it turned out to be the sun. When she went out fishing or gathering firewood she left the child, as was the custom, with her sister. One day when she returned from fishing she found her sister, also called foster-mother, gone together with the child. The sister (foster-mother) had taken the child eastwards. The real mother went westwards and now we see the child every day going from its foster-mother to its real mother, where it is not allowed to stay in the evening, for the night must be spent with the foster-parents.



Besides *patha-imba*, a number of other relationships, also indicated by the general term *imba*, are known which, however, differ from real adoption in various ways. *Wontj-imba*, for instance, is adoption for a limited period only and *aghavemamu-imba* adoption of an older child. Compared to the adoption of infants, the essential difference here is that the father keeps his authority over the child. During the period of adoption he shares this authority with the foster-father. In such cases the child is allowed to stay with its real parents from time to time and the father may fetch it back for good any time he likes. Usually, again, some compensation is then paid for the expenses incurred by the foster-father.

Temporary adoption may become permanent adoption if the real father dies, for instance, providing the kinsmen do not object. This will usually take place if the adoptive relationship has already existed for a long time. If the foster-father dies, the child usually returns to its real father, unless one of the foster-father's siblings takes over the adoption with the real father's consent.

In the various adoptive relationships, many shades may be distinguished ranging from a definite and complete surrender of the child on the one hand to, on the other hand, a relationship that we would scarcely call adoption, consisting as it does merely of an intimate relationship between, for instance, a child and its grandfather. In the latter case the child remains under its father's authority and usually also stays in his house.

An aspect that must not be overlooked in connection with this institution of adoption is formed by the special bonds it creates between the families concerned. Thus two friends may, in order to strengthen and perpetuate their relationship, each adopt one of the other's children. A stranger coming from elsewhere to settle permanently in the village will either be adopted himself or allow his children to be adopted. Adoption also used to be a means of perpetuating a peace concluded between two villages. Thus, adoption is at once an expression of concord and a means of establishing it.

The extent to which adoption may actually be an expression of friendly feelings is shown by an example from Bamol. Wilhelmus had adopted his classificatory brother Joachim's child, and in accordance with the rules of adoption Joachim was staying at Wilhelmus' house. When I saw Wilhelmus some months later, the adoption proved to have been cancelled. Wilhelmus had refused the child because Joachim had taken it to his own house for a few days. Wilhelmus commented: "Joachim obviously has no friendly feeling for me, so I don't want his child either."

#### 4 *Childhood*

The various feasts that are given for a child must be regarded as marking the different stages in the process of growing to independence. At each consecutive feast one or more taboos for parents and child are lifted, because the child has grown older and therefore less susceptible to evil influences. Gradually the ties, especially with the mother, are loosened and the child becomes less restricted in its movements.

Among the most important precautions are those taken with regard to the child's faeces. This is one of the most common means for practising magic, so it is important to prevent *undani* getting hold of them. In the Kimaghama and Riantana villages the faeces are not thrown away but carefully wrapped in leaves and kept in the house. By the time the child can walk this precaution is no longer necessary. In the Kimaghama group the burning of the faeces forms an occasion for giving a small feast, called *Karajei*. At this feast a first payment is made to the woman or women who helped the mother during and after her confinement and also to all those who gave food.

The second burning of faeces coincides with the feast given on the occasion of first showing the child. At this feast the husband sees his child and his wife for the first time. By then the child is usually already two or three months old. At this feast, called *Warowonjere*, the child is carried to the threshold of the house, where it is held by the woman helper. The mother stays inside, near the door but not visible to the guests. This time again a small payment is made to all those who helped at and shortly after the confinement.

Sometimes the feast of *Warowonjere* is omitted. In that case the child is shown at the next feast called *Muraredde*.

These as well as most of the other feasts of Frederik-Hendrik Island are characterised by a lack of elaborate ritual. Their most important element is formed by the collection and distribution of a quantity of food. The principle of reciprocity is at the core of all these festive occasions.

In Bamol the following quantities of food were collected for a *Muraredde*-feast:

176 coconuts	10 bunches of bananas	
44 taro-roots	6 <i>wati</i> -plants	1 kangaroo

small quantities of tobacco, gambir, sago and sugar-cane.

Altogether 23 men contributed, but the size of their contributions varied with the degree of kinship with the woman or her husband. Relatively large contributions came from the child's father and this man's foster-father, who lived in the same house. Smaller contributions were made by members of the *paburu* with whom less intimate relations existed and some people only made a nominal contribution. This was so, for instance, in the case of an old *pangi* (head-hunter), who used to have a great influence in the village and who had *imba*-relations with many younger members of the *paburu*. In the last category too, there are at every feast a number of persons for whom the feast is merely an opportunity to get *wati*. The *wati* collected for the feast is not meant in the first place for the women helpers, but rather for paying all those who have contributed food for the feast. The distribution of *wati* is made without taking into account the amount of food brought by each contributor. Everyone receives enough for a normal dose of *wati*-juice. For these people such a feast is an excellent opportunity to bring about a forced exchange with a minimum amount of food (usually six coconuts). For them the obligation to help is of altogether secondary importance. Usually they come from other village-sectors while their genealogical relationship to the feast-giver is not known. If, however, there is not sufficient *wati* for all those present, such people are the first to be left out.

The distribution of *wati* is closely watched by all the guests and it gives rise to all sorts of comments. It is customary, therefore, to entrust this distribution to an older man whose prestige in the village is high, in order as far as possible to prevent open criticism.

Anyone who is not given *wati* although he believes himself entitled to a share on account of his relationship to the feast-giver and his contribution to the feast, will usually make no secret of his displeasure, especially if he is in no way inferior in authority and influence to the person performing the distribution. He will resent not only the lack of *wati* but also the failure to recognise his relationship to the giver and his prestige in general.

At a feast in Bamol a very influential person was once left out. From a distance he closely followed the distribution. When it became clear that he was going to be forgotten, he walked a few times past the spot where the *wati* was being distributed, in order to attract attention to his person. When this

too, had no effect he struck the collected food a few times with his stick and threatened to make it unfit for consumption by means of sorcery. All those present ran away in terror, for the man was considered an able sorcerer. The distributors made haste to correct their error.

Sometimes people do not wait as long as this man, but instead grab a pile of *wati* if it looks as if they would not be receiving a share. In such a case, however, their claim has to be a strong one or else a fight will follow. The food that has been collected is meant for the women helpers, the mother herself and all those who brought food during the first few weeks after the birth of the child. As soon as the mother is seated in front of the house with her child, the signal is given to start the distribution. In the case recorded above the food was distributed among seventeen women. The midwife and the mother herself received considerably more than the others. The midwife had given the most help, while the mother must be paid for the pain and trouble during and after the confinement. There is also an element of reciprocity. The woman, they say, presents her husband with a child, so the husband must give her something in return. She does not share in the *wati*, however, for women are usually not allowed to drink *wati* until they have passed the menopause.

The order of the first children's feasts is slightly different in the other language-groups.\* In Kondjibando the first feast is the one at which the child is shown, called *Pumwa*. Here the child is held not by the mother or the midwife but preferably by its mother's brother. The mother also sits in the doorway and shows her body for the first time. From this time onwards she does not have to wear the plaited hood any longer although she must not go too far from the house as yet.

The second feast, *Adade*, follows when the child first begins to crawl. This, too, is a typical feast of reciprocity. A man whose own wife has recently had a child carries the child on his arm through the village, showing it to all the village people. From now on the child is allowed to go everywhere in the village and the parents, too, are no longer subject to restrictions in this respect.

The food that has been collected by the father is meant for the man who carries the child around. He in his turn is obliged to ask the other man to carry his child around. Often this is done at the same time, so that the two stores of food merely change owners. This feast is usually also combined with the celebration of the final feast for a dead person.

The third feast follows when the child can walk. Now the child's faeces are burned for the first and last time. At this feast, *Didere*, a first small payment is made to the women helpers and others who gave assistance when the child was born.

\* Within the language-groups, too, there may be variations from one village to another.

The main payment is made at the fourth feast. The payment takes place in the same way as was described for Bamol. Here, however, an important taboo for the child is also lifted, i.e. the one prohibiting the eating of the ceremonial crops yam and taro. The father first gives both kinds of food to the child to eat and after that the parents themselves also eat. This procedure may on no account be reversed, as that would be very dangerous for the child. From this moment onwards the child is no longer susceptible to the dangerous influence of these crops. The parents may also eat and plant them again. Partly on account of this lifting of the taboo this feast can be celebrated only in conjunction with the final feast for a dead person (see chapter VI paragraph 1). This feast is called *Mètjeweute*.

In the Ndom group the first feast is held when the child is about two months old (*Tuburèatta*). The mother or some other female relative holds the child and stands it on its feet. For this feast no food is collected, but a larger cooking-oven is made in which food is prepared to be distributed among the guests.

The second feast, *Ejjerèi*, is held when the child has learned to walk. Its mother's brother carries it on his shoulders to show that the child is now so big that it no longer has to be carried around in a basket by its mother. This is the mother's brother's first official act in connection with the child with whom from now on he will have a joking relationship (see chapter IV paragraph 6). At this feast, too, the taboos on yams and taro are lifted, both for the child and for the parents. In these villages the child is not allowed to eat *boba*, couscous, lizard and various kinds of fish. For the boys these are prohibited until they enter the bachelors' house, for girls the ban remains all their lives.

The third feast, *Naratatèr*, is the feast of name-giving. In the other villages this feast is lacking and the child is given a name without ceremony directly after its birth. In the Ndom group this is put off until the child can run. Till then all boys are called *arka* and all girls *tsabutòr*. At this feast the mother's brother holds the child by one hand and with the other hand he makes a circular movement over the child's head with a coconut-shell, saying: "*Arka (tsabutòr)* is finished now, from now on you will be called N.N. till the time of your death." He makes movements as if to throw away the coconut-shell and names the child, usually after one of its grandparents who has died recently. For a girl the name of a grandmother, for a boy that of a grandfather. The ideal is that the name should continue to exist. In other language-groups a similar inheritance of names takes place. The name may be inherited both by way of the mother and by way of the father.

After this feast the most critical period in the child's life is considered finished. There are no more special rules after this, only the food-taboos named above.

The last reminiscence of its birth and the last associations with the womb are removed when the child is three or four years old, at the ceremonial shaving of the head. This is one of the most important children's feasts in all the village groups. In the Kimaghama group this feast is called *Munawarre* (*Muna*-hair). The child's first hair is the same hair with which it left its mother's womb. As long as the child is small it cannot do without such ties with its mother and cutting its hair would expose the child to grave danger. As the child grows

older, however, this hair may become a hindrance to its growth, since it pulls the child back, as it were, to the womb. Sometimes a small tuft of hair is left on top of the head so that the break between mother and child may not be too sudden, but this is not a general rule.

The hair is shorn by a relative from the complementary *paburu*, always a male kinsman of the child's father. By breaking off the ties with its mother the child is definitely placed under the father's authority. The man who cuts the hair must give the mother a canoe, a paddle and a string of dog's teeth, partly as a payment for the pain and trouble of giving birth, but also in compensation for "handing" the child over to its father. The latter is obliged to return these gifts, with a large quantity of food.

The father must also supply a pig, which is laid on top of the other food. The child is placed on the pig and stays there while its hair is cut. The hair is not allowed to drop directly to the ground. It is a symbol for all the trouble and pain experienced by the mother during pregnancy and at the time of birth. The hair forms a link between mother and child and must fall on the food in order that the child may always remember that it should support its mother and give her food when she is in need of it.

The hair is not merely thrown away. It is thought particularly important to see that it does not fall into the water or get into the hands of an *umdani*, for in both cases there would be grave danger threatening the child. One of the worst insults one can fling at a person is to say that his father must have thrown his hair into the water. In the Kimaghama villages the hair is placed, directly after it is ceremonially shaved off, in a young sago-palm, which from then on is the unalienable property of the child in question.

The father and the man who cuts the hair change rôles in course of time when the latter himself has a child whose hair must be cut. For this feast, too, it is necessary to await the right occasion, namely the final feast for a dead person.

The next few feasts, until the boys enter the bachelors' house, proceed, in principle, in the same way as the *Munawarre* feast. The first feast to follow this is the one at which the ears are pierced, called *Wokétarare* in the Riantana group. In the Kimaghama group this feast consists of two separate parts. At every one of these feasts a number of children are present whose ears are not actually pierced because they are not yet considered strong enough. Their bodies are

therefore first made familiar with the operation by touching the ears with a painted piece of pig's bone. At the next feasts the operation is really carried out. Such feasts are rarely held for one child only. Usually they are combined with a *Munawarre* feast and always with a final feast for a dead person.

The same kinsman who cut the child's hair now also pierces its ears. This time again he brings presents consisting of all sorts of utensils, which must be returned with food by the father.

The blood that comes out of the ear-lobes when they are pierced is supposed to be blood from the womb that must disappear (blood-letting is one of the most frequently used methods of medical treatment). Just as at the previous feast, the child sits on top of the food, so that the blood may drop on it.

During this ceremony the children are adorned with jambu berries, croton-leaves, etc. The piercing is done very carefully to hurt the child as little as possible. Nevertheless the women are expected to wail and lament for the pain the child is suffering and also because of the "loss" of the child, for whom this feast means another step forward on the road to adulthood. As a result of pressure from the part of the village-teachers, who considered this custom contrary to European habits, this feast is nowadays only held for girls.

The feasts following this one, the piercing of the nostrils (*Tjimbeteterarre*) and of the nasal septum (*Menangaterarre*) are no longer celebrated in any of the villages. These operations were again performed by the same person as in the preceding cases and the procedure also was the same. These feasts have fallen into disuse, not only as a result of the village-teacher's disapproval, but also because they were always considered to be of minor importance. They are all more or less repetitions of the *Munawarre*-feast, the first and most important of the series, which is still celebrated as of old. The ears, the nostrils and the nasal septum were pierced to make it possible to wear ornaments in them. The new fashion in ornaments (the wearing of European clothing) has caused these feasts to lose much of their significance. The wearing of a pig's bone through the septum, to show that one is a head-hunter, naturally no longer has any meaning for the young men of today.

One more feast, celebrated before the young man's entry into the bachelors' house, must be mentioned here. This is the feast held when a boy is for the first time taken out hunting in the forest or when a girl first goes out fishing with

other women. The boy's male relatives take him to the forest and teach him the secrets of the hunt, the way to use a throwing-stick and bow and arrows, how to approach the quarry. They also tell him which creatures of the forest are particularly to be feared. The men do not return before they have caught a kangaroo or a boar. The father himself stays at home and spends this time collecting food. When the men return with the boy and the catch, the boy hands the spoils to his father. They symbolise the duties which the young man from now on owes to his father: to support him and go out hunting for him when he needs meat. The men who have actually made the catch are rewarded by the father with the food he has collected. Strict reciprocity, again, is at the core of this feast.

The girl is taken out fishing by her female relatives. The women teach her all she needs to know to be able to take home a catch of fish or water-snakes. The fish that are caught by the women are given to the girl, who hands them to her mother when she returns home. Father and mother in their turn have collected food for the women who accompanied the girl. On the whole, however, the children learn much more from the constant company of their parents than from that one occasion on which they are taken out for the express purpose of being taught various techniques. The ceremony has a symbolic rather than a practical character. There is no question of systematic training in any sphere at all. Now and again certain techniques may be explained to the children in a haphazard way, such as plaiting mats, setting out bait and planting the non-ceremonial crops, but most things are learned by mere imitation.

Very young children will in their play imitate their mother handling pieces of reed, or small boys will help their father with a stick in cutting loose the pith of a sago-palm. No pressure at all is exerted on the children in this respect and they receive relatively little encouragement. During the years before the bachelors' house the education is of an extremely permissive nature. There is little compulsion and no use of physical force at all. It is definitely a *faux pas* to beat a child, which explains why people were hesitant about sending their children to the village-schools when these were first established by the missions, as the teacher mostly ruled with the rod.

The great aversion to the use of physical violence towards children is illustrated by a case in Bamol



where a child had stolen food from a neighbour's house. The stealing of food is a very serious offence so the neighbour dealt the child a blow when he surprised it in the act. Crying, the child ran to its father, who would not suffer such violence towards his child and in revenge ran out and killed his neighbour's pig with a hatchet. The quarrel reached such a pitch that the two men fought each other with spears.

An important aspect of the education of children is formed by the fact that they accompany their parents to their work from an early age. Thus they learn in play how to supplement their own menu with all sorts of small eatables. In this way they also learn to handle a canoe and to keep afloat in the water – a first requisite in this watery land. For very young children the danger of drowning is not imaginary. When they play near the house without someone to watch them, a rope is tied around one of their ankles so that they cannot reach the water. I have never, for that matter, met a grown-up person, whether man or woman, who could not swim, although no systematic training is given in this respect either.

When the girls grow older, the parents' attitude does change a little in that they are now given particular tasks. Beating sago, fishing with the small nets, plaiting and gathering firewood are some of the regular tasks a girl is expected to carry out.

By this time the boys used to be living in the bachelors' house under the strict supervision of the older men.

##### 5 *Burawa* (Bachelors' house)

Most of what follows in this paragraph is past history now. All over the island the bachelors' houses disappeared fifteen to twenty years ago, but middle-aged and old men can still provide us with reliable information, as they have all passed through the various stages of the *burawa*.

From the beginning both government and mission regarded this aspect of Kimam culture with disfavour. We should bear in mind that the fact of Kimam culture being different was not sufficiently realised for many years. The Kimam were supposed to have been strongly influenced by the Marind-Anim, whose neighbours they are. For a long time any measures that were taken in regard to the latter applied automatically to the whole government district, to which

Frederik-Hendrik Island also belonged. Although dr. van Baal, in his memorandum of transfer (1938)<sup>2</sup>, had already pointed out the individual character of this culture, the official attitude remained practically unchanged to the present day.

As a result of more intensive missionary and government activity, more became known about the practices of the bachelors' houses, providing all the more reason for the authorities to persist in their attitude. Any attempts on the part of the natives to re-instate the *burawa*, such as were made in the village of Teri in 1961, were nipped in the bud. It is hard to say whether the disappearance of the bachelors' houses automatically entailed the disappearance of the sexual practices connected with them, as the fear of imprisonment if anything were to become known about their continuation makes it impossible to get any reliable information on this point.

For simplicity's sake we have in the following paragraph consistently made use of the ethnographic present tense. I would therefore emphatically point out that the use of this tense by no means implies that the practices in question still exist today.\*

The *burawa* is constructed like an ordinary *paia*, but it is considerably larger and is therefore also situated on a larger dwelling-island. Each *paburu* has one or two bachelors' houses, the number depending on the numbers of its population and of the *kwanda* into which it is divided. Where there are two *burawa* there is one for each of the two groups of *kwanda* that make up the *paburu*. The traditional antagonism between *paburu* or *kwanda* groups is concentrated to a large extent on the bachelors' houses.

The age of entry into the bachelors' house may vary considerably. Usually a boy will enter between his tenth and his fourteenth year, but there is no question of any fixed age, as the ceremonial entry may only take place on the occasion of the final feast for a dead person. When such an occasion presents itself a number of boys of different ages are usually admitted as a group. For this

\* The rules connected with *burawa* varied considerably from one village to another. It would, however, carry us too far to describe all the variations. An exception has been made for the Ndom group on account of the important part the bull-roarer plays in these villages.

feast (*Tawaki*) a considerable amount of food must be collected by the father and the parents' kinsmen.

The boy stays home until the dancing is drawing to a close in the early hours of the morning. His older relatives meanwhile prepare him for his departure. His face is painted with betel-juice: two curved lines from the eyes over the cheeks to the mouth and short lines below the eyes. These decorations are the same as are painted on a dead man's face. No variations are permitted and no clay or other paint may be used.

The men now place a number of canoes next to each other and cover them with sago-leaves to make a big raft. On this raft the collected food is heaped up, with a pig and *wati* on top. The boy is placed on top of the pig, as on previous occasions. His female relatives begin to wail and sing mourning songs. They clasp his legs, caress his face and move his arms up and down as is done with a dead relative. The men constantly pour sago over the boy's head and back in order that he may grow up to be a great cultivator.

Just as at a burial, the woman are finally driven away by the rowers. They now take the vessel to the dancing-place. Again in accordance with burial ritual, these men come from the ceremonially opposed *paburu*. Often the same ceremony takes place simultaneously in the other *paburu*, another case of reciprocity between the *paburu*.

Slowly the raft is rowed towards the dancing-place, where people from both village-sectors are still dancing. On their arrival the men form a long line and solemnly walk towards the dancing-place, the boy in front. A quick ruffle is now sounded on all the drums. A man from the other *paburu* steps forward and without warning he throws a mourning-hood over the boy's head. The drums cease immediately and the dancing comes to an end (cf. the ban on sounding the drums during the period of mourning). The male relatives now take the boy straight to the *burawa*. The other men go home to drink *wati* and to sleep.

At his entry the boy becomes *munaka* and is put under the charge of a *tjutjine*, a boy in the second grade of the *burawa*. The *tjutjine* is said to have 'adopted' the *munaka*, but this is an euphemism, as the difference between their ages is far too small, while moreover the *tjutjine* has the right to perform homosexual acts with the *munaka* who has been placed in his charge. This 'mentor' is usually a

classificatory elder brother from the same *paburu*\* On account of the customary homosexual relations, however, real elder brothers are strictly prohibited from acting as mentor to the new-comer. One case in Bamol where this function was performed by a real brother was explained as resulting from the fact that the mission had been active in the village for a few years and that homosexual relations no longer existed.

On the day of his entry into the *burawa*, the boy for the first time receives the appendages to the hairdo, which are plaited into his hair by his mentor. These *tjatowa* are worn in the same way as was customary with the Marind-Anim. With a fine bone from a kangaroo paw the boy's hair is parted in the middle of his head. With the help of the bone the hair is then plaited very tightly, strand by strand – a rather painful operation. A number of very narrow strips of areca or sago-leaves are tied to the end of each strand and these are also plaited together around a thin reed-stalk.

For the *munaka* the *tjatowa* comes down to the ears. Because of their long stay in the *burawa* the hair of many older men has continued to grow in small strands. At their entry the boys are also rubbed all over with a mixture of charcoal and coconut-oil, which may not be removed during the whole of the *munaka* period. During this time they are not allowed to go into the water. The resemblance to the period of mourning also appears in the strict isolation observed during this time and in the fact that they have to wear a long plaited mourning-cape whenever they leave the *burawa*. They must not be seen by others nor may they themselves see other people, especially older women. For them the boy is 'dead'.

In the *burawa* the *munaka* are given a place in a corner, usually so narrow that they cannot sleep with their legs stretched out. They are not allowed to eat certain foods, such as turtles, ikan-duri, the head or legs of a kangaroo or the fat from its belly, large crabs or shrimps and they are also forbidden betel and tobacco. An infringement of these rules would make the boy weak and slow-moving.

\* In many cases this was a mother's (younger) brother or a cross-cousin, cf. the cross-cousin relationship par. 6, ch 4. Cf. also the 'binahor' relationship of the Marind-Anim (v. Baal, Dema). At the time the present work went to press, dr. van Baal's 'Dema' was still printing. Consequently all references to 'Dema' had to remain unspecified as to chapters and pagenumbers.

On the day of entry incisions are made in the boy's upper arms, upper legs and abdomen with a sharp piece of bamboo by his mentor. This is done with a view to the rubbing with sperm. Everywhere on the island sperm is believed to contain great powers. It is an excellent medicine against illnesses. Just as by cohabitation a man may with his sperm produce life and cause his vitality to pass into that of his child, so it is thought possible to cause the outstanding characteristics of great cultivators and head-hunters to pass into the children in the *burawa*.

From the various customs accompanying admission into the *burawa* we may conclude that this admission is regarded as a ritual death after which the boy is born again renewed and invigorated. For this reason only those men who have particular prestige in the village on account of their exceptional performance in agriculture or war provide the sperm that is to turn the boys into strong and valuable members of society.

The sperm-rubbing does not take place in the *burawa*, as it would make the close relatives who are present feel ashamed. The boys are taken to a coconut-island in the vicinity after the sun has gone down. Their arms are rubbed by *pangi*, the right arm by the *pangi* who holds the highest record in head-hunting. The boy's legs are rubbed by the great cultivators. Boys who have been treated in this way are not allowed to touch water for a few days, for the sperm that has been rubbed into the wounds must first be allowed to penetrate into their bodies.

For the purpose of arousing the sperm the 'mentor' has to put his betrothed at the men's disposal. Immediately after the betrothal the girl goes to live with her father-in-law. At the same time the boy goes to the *burawa*, for he is not allowed to see the girl. Sometimes he does not even know who she is. At this stage, however, the girl is not yet sexually mature. The *tjutjine's* betrothed, on the other hand, is mature, but the *tjutjine* are not allowed to have sexual intercourse with women. As a compensation for the use of his betrothed, the *tjutjine* has sexual claims on the *mumaka* for whom his betrothed is used. Sexual intercourse as such is therefore not prohibited for the boys. Only contact with women is considered dangerous at this critical period of their lives.\*

\* In view of the special potency attributed to sperm it seems quite likely that the homosexual relations

About the time when the *tjutjine* makes the incisions, sexual intercourse takes place at the other side of the island between a number of men and the girl in question. Sometimes the girl has to put herself at the disposal of as many as ten to fifteen men, but she may be helped out by another girl, for instance by her sister. The sperm is collected in a banana-leaf and taken to the other side of the island, where the *munaka* is waiting. The sexual practices in connection with the bachelors' houses must be regarded as part of the whole system of reciprocity. Sexual intercourse is something that may be given away or received, thus creating certain rights and obligations just like exchanges of food or of women. The father needs his daughter-in-law to make his son strong and vigorous, for her duties in this respect are only performed by the *tjutjine's* betrothed as long as she herself is too young. Later she will have to be available for her own betrothed and for the *munaka* who is under his charge. Thus the girls are indirectly responsible for the welfare of their future husbands. If the boy runs away later with another girl, the result will often be a fight between the two young women. The girl who has been deceived may cast the following reproach at her rival: "I have always been diligent and I have often had intercourse with the old men, so that my betrothed has grown tall and handsome. You have always been lazy, so your betrothed has remained small. Now you want to steal mine."

Even before marriage a man depends on his wife for his physical welfare. This gives the woman certain claims on her future husband. It is not surprising therefore that a large share of the food collected by the boy's father for the feast of his entry is meant for the *tjutjine* who lends his betrothed for the occasion. Much of this food, however, is passed on again to this girl's father or foster-father. It is a part of a man's obligations towards his affinal kin, which start already before the marriage-ceremony. At the same time it is a compensation for the use of the girl.

Another part of the collected food finds its way to the opposite village-sector,

with older boys were intended, like the rubbing with sperm, to make the boys big and strong. Among the Marind-Anim and the Keraki, too, this line of thought played a part in homosexual relations (see v. Baal, Dema). On the other hand, there is the danger which women represent for growing boys.

for it is meant for the men who took the boy to the *burawa*. Usually a return gift is made, since in the other *paburu* one or more boys are taken to the *burawa* at the same time. This exchange of food is a part of the *ndambu*-festival and mortuary feast which is coupled with the *tawaki*-feast (see paragraph 13). The men who have rubbed the boy with their sperm are rewarded with *wati* by the father. The *wati-gift*, however, usually merges into the normal pattern of reciprocity, since for the greater part these are the same men who assisted the father in collecting the food and for that reason alone are already entitled to a reward in *wati*.

For three or four days after the sexual intercourse took place the girl, like the boy, is not allowed to go outside or to work, as she might otherwise cancel out the effect of the sperm. According to the first missionaries young girls who were not yet sexually mature were sometimes used for this purpose and they might be ill for many days afterwards.<sup>3</sup>

After about a year another feast follows, called *Jagaribakatje*. On this occasion the hair-appendages are renewed and lengthened to reach halfway down the boy's back. This time again the boys are rubbed with sperm in the same manner and on the same conditions as at the *tawaki*-feast. (During the intervening period this also takes place repeatedly). The food is also shared out in the same way. If the appendages decay very quickly this feast may be repeated. For this reason the boy's hair is rubbed with sperm, as well as his arms, legs and abdomen, to prevent the reeds of the appendages from being eaten too soon by lice. (I do not know whether this method was effective or not).

The third feast, *Mabukulu*, is the one at which the boy is given a pubic covering for the first time. This consists of a large cone-shell. This feast also marks the transition from *mumaka* to *tjujine*. The hair-appendages are again renewed and lengthened. They are no longer made of areca- or sago-leaves, but of a coarse type of reeds split lengthwise. They reach all the way down the boys' backs.

Their bodies are also painted differently. To show that they are now between the lowest and the highest grade, the top half of their bodies is painted red and the lower half is smeared with charcoal. The hair-appendages are painted in both colours. But as long as part of their bodies is still black, the boys are not allowed to appear in public. In the customary manner this feast, too, is celebrated together with a final mortuary feast. When in the evening the boy has

ceremonially been given the large shell to wear, he is led to the dancing-place. On his arrival there a few men with torches light up his face so that all those present, including the women, may see him for a moment. All the rest of the night the boy is allowed to take part in the dancing, but towards sunrise he must again cover himself with the cape and go back to the *burawa*.

At this feast again the customary rubbing with sperm takes place. In the *burawa* the boys now move up to a place between the *munaka* and the *mabureede*.

It is usual for the older men, when they pay a visit to the *burawa*, to play with the younger boys. If a man pays special attention to a particular *tjutjine*, this is interpreted by the boys as meaning that he has already had sexual relations with the boy's betrothed.\*

Often the *tjutjine* will be told by his "mentor", who has in the meantime become *mabureede*, when his betrothed is sexually mature: "N.N. already has big breasts, we shall go and see her presently". An arrangement is made with a small boy living in the same house as the girl. He is to let her know when her betrothed comes in the evening, giving a signal by striking the bottom of his canoe with the punting-pole. When the girl comes out of the house she at first sees only her betrothed, but she is led by him to the older men, who take her by the wrist and lay her down in the canoe. The girl is not supposed to resist. When she hears the signal, she goes outside on the pretext of having to relieve herself. Her parents-in-law know, however, that she is going out to have sexual intercourse with the older men. Often, too, they will go away themselves, saying they are going to sleep in the *paia*. Everyone thus pretends to be ignorant of what is going on.

The next feast is called *Bapandawarre*, which means casting away the mourning-cape. The boys are now much less restricted in their movements. They are allowed to go wherever they like outside the *burawa* and no longer need to cover themselves with the long mantle when they go out. They are now also allowed to see women and be seen by them, but they may not yet be intimate with them. Nor may they as yet enter their father's house. All contacts with

\* It is not clear whether there were homosexual relations in these cases.



their home take place through go-betweens. The food-taboos are all lifted except those on betel and tobacco.

On this occasion the hair-appendages are again renewed, but now they only reach to the elbows. The large pubic shell is replaced by the small penis-cap that is worn by all grown up men. The boys are smeared all over with red clay and in the *burawa* their place is in the middle, around the fire. The *bapandawarre* feast is the last official occasion on which the boys are rubbed with sperm. For this purpose only their own betrothed is used, for by now their "mentor" has left the *burawa* for good and is already married. If their own betrothed is tired from the intercourse, a fellow-*mabureede* will lend his. By doing so he obtains the right to a similar service some other time. Sometimes the *mabureede* in question is not even asked for permission. The girl is simply fetched and if the young man recognises the canoe or paddle and realizes that the men are having intercourse with his betrothed he makes no allusions to it, but in time he merely does the same thing.

As we have already said, the rubbing with sperm often also takes place between feasts. The initiative, however, must be taken by the boy himself. Since he would be ashamed to ask the older men direct, he will employ some customary signal, such as throwing some areca nut shells towards them, while casting meaningful glances in the direction of a nearby island.

The last feast is celebrated when the boys have been *mabureede* for a few years. By then they are considered old enough to marry. At this feast, called *Purakuru* a broad belt of plaited rattan is put around their bellies with a tail of rushes hanging down to their ankles.

The girding with this belt is a sort of trial, for it is a most painful operation. The belt is made so narrow that it only just encircles the waist. The boy is made to lie down on the ground and with combined efforts the belt is pulled up over his legs and buttocks. Since this entails some risk to the genitals, the boy's former 'mentor' is especially charged with the protection of those parts during the operation.

Once it is in place the belt is so tight that the boy can scarcely eat. After four or five days it is removed and the long tail is replaced by the short one that is worn by the adult men. Now the boy is ready to marry, but it is not certain he will

do so in the near future, for although he may take the initiative, his father and elder brother have a decisive voice in the matter.

As soon as a boy has entered the *burawa*, the attitude of the older people towards him changes radically. Obedience and respect are now demanded of him and any offence against the rules is severely punished. If, for instance, a *tjutjine* has had sexual relations with a woman and the older men hear of it, he is beaten with burning sticks and he is not allowed to brush the sparks away.

During this time the boys are also taught agricultural techniques and the magical chants associated with agriculture. Sometimes they are given a small garden to work, the produce of which goes to their betrothed. The older men often tell them myths and head-hunting tales and when they have reached the last grade they are allowed to take part in head-hunting expeditions to other villages.

In the Ndom group there were no such bachelors' houses. Only in Kalilam a bachelors' house did exist for a few years, in imitation of the Kimaghama and Riantana villages. This was during the first few years after government was established, when on the one hand there was more mutual contact between the villages, while on the other hand bachelors' houses were not yet prohibited.

The isolation of adolescent boys in this group of villages takes a form closely connected with the important rôle played in this culture by the bull-roarer.

This instrument represents here a mythical figure named *Jet*, which is also the name given to the bull-roarer itself. *Jet* is supposed to live in Takkerawan, the site of the former central village. In stature he is a kind of superman with a completely white skin and a beard twenty or thirty metres long. He has a wife but no children. Although he can produce sounds (the bull-roarer), he cannot speak like ordinary men.

From time to time a large amount of food must be collected for *Jet*. The men then call him and he swallows the whole pile at once. After that he returns to the hole he has made in the ground and descends to his conjugal bed.

The age at which the boys are isolated in the *jetörendör* (Jet's house) varies even more than in the other villages. The older men designate a number of boys who have not yet been initiated, regardless of their ages. They may be anything from ten to eighteen years old.

On a small island a large amount of food is collected for *Jet*. The older men gather there, each with his bull-roarer. This is about 25 cms long and three to four centimetres wide. It is not decorated and it is set in motion with a rope and a pliant twig. When all the men together start to swing their bull-roarers, the result is a terrific howling and screeching noise.

The young men who are to be initiated are gathered with the women and their *nawa* in a house at the other end of the village. Towards midday the men begin to move slowly in the direction of this

house, constantly swinging their bull-roarers. The women and boys are supposed to believe that *Jet* is on his way to the house to devour the boys. The women are frightened or pretend to be afraid and they are supposed to weep at the loss of their children.

When the men arrive at the house there is a loud knocking on the wall, three times repeated. The *nawa* take hold of the boys and take them outside, holding their hands before the boys' eyes, for they must not see the bull-roarers.

Together with the boys they then enter a number of canoes which are lying ready and to the constant accompaniment of the bull-roarers' sound the men return to the spot where the food was collected and where a temporary house has been built for the boys.

On arriving there the men make a final effort, swinging their bull-roarers to produce an ear-splitting noise and when the boys' fear has reached its culminating point, the *nawa* suddenly remove their hands from the boys' eyes and they can see for the first time the object that produces the noise. The swinging of *Jet* continues all afternoon, for the boys have to be taught how to use it so as to produce the maximum amount of noise. Towards sunset the boys are taken into the house.

During the whole of the isolation period the father and the *nawa* also stay in the house to assist the boys and give them instruction in all sorts of important matters. The father and the *nawa* are not allowed to see their wives during this time and may most definitely have no sexual intercourse with them, since that might have a serious effect on the boys' health, making them ill or old before their time. Here again there is a striking association with the burial ritual, in which *Jet* also plays an important part.

Each morning the boys have to wake up before daybreak and the men take them to the river to bathe in the cold water. This is done to accustom the boys to early rising and to the morning cold. At about eight o'clock they are given a trifle to eat, but that is all for the whole day. For this whole period they live on a starvation regime, also in order to harden them against periods of scarcity. In the evening they are again forced to bathe.

During their stay in this house the boys are strictly forbidden to see women and they are threatened with death should they ever tell a woman the secret of the bull-roarer. My informants told me that nowadays the women know about *Jet* and no longer fear the noise, but when I tried a bull-roarer out myself the women fled from the village and hid among the reeds.

Eating-utensils, being closely associated with women, are carefully kept in a corner of the *jetörendör*. The boys must not go near them or else their teeth might drop out and they would remain weak all their lives. During the night the boys must sleep sitting up, with their arms and legs stretched to make them straight-limbed. The father and the *nawa* take turns watching all night to straighten out the boy's legs should he try to curl up. If the boys want to chase away a mosquito they are not allowed to do so with their hands, but they have to use a leaf and afterwards rub their hand first under their armpits and then over the spot where they hit with the leaf. (All over the island a particular virtue is attributed to armpit sweat).

With white clay a line is drawn across the boy's body from his left shoulder to his right knee or the other way around. *Jet* has ordered this to give him a strong chest. As soon as the boys are admitted they are also given their first pubic covering, the small coconut-shell worn by all the men, and a short tail of rushes.

Before the boys leave the house, they are instructed in the myths and stories of *Jet*. They are taught the chants that go with various kinds of magic and how they should behave during magical rituals. They are also told the way to have sexual intercourse and they are given a medicine to put on the woman's body the first time they have intercourse to prevent them breaking their noses or getting crooked limbs.

After a few weeks the boys leave the *jetörendör* and this occasion is celebrated with a feast at which all the men dance. The boys pull their bow-strings, while the men beat the drums. The women watch from another island. They are not allowed to mix with the dancers, but they are supposed to weep for joy at seeing their children again. At the end of the dance they each bring their son a young coconut, which marks the end of the boys' isolation from the women. Now they are no longer subject to any taboos. From now on they may even eat *ikhan duri* and *boba*.

In this group there is no custom of hair-appendages or of rubbing with sperm such as in the other villages. The appendages to the hair-do are here worn only as ornaments for dances, as is also the custom nowadays in the other villages.

The bull-roarer played a part also in other villages, e.g. along the south coast, in Wanggambi, Kawé, Woner and Kiworo. (As far as I know, however, it had no rôle in Kalwa, Bamol, Suam and other northern villages) Its name here is *Wèwi*. *Wèwi* is essentially the same as *Jet*.

His appearance and the initiation of the young men into this secret was in all probability accompanied by homosexual relations between the men and the boys who were to be initiated. It appears therefore, that the rôle of the bull-roarer here was similar to the part it used to play among the Marind-Anim (Sosomcult) and the Keraki, where homosexual relations also formed an essential part of the bull-roarer cult. 4

All the time the boys stay in the bachelors' house, only one feast is given for the girls. This is called *Rarèntemtar* in the Ndom-villages and it marks the occasion on which they first put on the pubic apron made of rushes. This usually takes place at the time of the first menstruation. Food is collected for this feast, but no men are present at it.

The girl learns from her mother how to behave in future. She is told that from now on she will menstruate so that her breasts, which were close together, will grow further apart, so that she may be able to nurse her children later on. Her mother tells her that menstrual blood is very dangerous for boys and men and for the growing crops. During her periods she must from now on keep away from men. In the western villages the women usually go to stay at the maternity-hut, elsewhere they sleep in a different corner of the house during this time. Sexual intercourse is strictly prohibited. The woman is not allowed to prepare food for her husband or even hand it to him. In the Kimaghama

villages she is even prohibited from carrying out her normal duties. She is not allowed to fish, to fetch firewood or to pound *mapiè*.

A woman will never actually tell her husband when she is menstruating. The fear is so great that it is better not to talk about the subject at all. When the woman goes to the maternity-hut, or puts on a new apron of rushes, the man knows that he must not approach her for a few days. The men believe that the touch of a woman during menstruation may cause all sorts of calamities, as well as being disastrous for the crops they are tending.

## 6 *Betrothal*

Betrothal usually takes place at a very early age, mostly before the boy and girl are sexually mature. At this age they have not yet formed any liaisons, so that the arrangement meets with the least possible resistance on the part of the young people concerned. By the time courting begins, the relations between the families have already grown so firm that the partners usually acquiesce in the situation, although sometimes there may be strong resistance. In most villages the initiative for an arrangement may come from either father, except for the Riantana group where the initiative must be taken by the girl's father. The one who takes the initiative calls on the other, bringing with him, two doses of *wati*. During this first visit the men talk about anything at all, except about the matter in question. It would be most unmannerly to use this first occasion to mention the match. Usually no mention of it is made even during the second call. The third time the intentions of the caller are clear at any rate, for it is unusual to pay such frequent visits to someone who is not considered a close relative, while moreover both parties know that they each have a child that has reached the age for betrothal. While drinking *wati*, half intoxicated already, the caller drops the remark that he has a son or daughter who will have to be married some time. His host immediately asks about an exchange-partner. With this question the negotiations start. When an agreement is reached after a while, whether involving exchange or a bride-price, an exchange of food takes place.

The gift of food offered on this occasion by the girl's family consists mainly of *mapiè*, which is considered a 'female' food. The boy's relatives give mainly

*wati*, a 'male' plant which also signifies the conclusion of a contract.<sup>5</sup> The betrothal is effected by the eating of *mapè* by the boy and his group and the drinking of *wati* by that of the girl. The girl is now also informed of the arrangement by her father, if she did not know of it yet. He impresses on her that she is from now on only for this boy and that she must never do anything that might disturb the relations between the two families, for "we have now drunk *wati* and accepted the boy." Her father tells her that she must in future assist and obey her parents-in-law-to-be.

As long as the boy has not yet entered the *burawa*, the girl must avoid him. She carries about with her a cape of rushes, with which she covers herself when she happens to meet the boy. If the boy did not know of the arrangement, the change in the girl's behaviour will make him suspect what is going on. His friends will further inform him.

In former times the boy went to the *burawa* on the very first occasion that presented itself after his betrothal. At the same time the girl went to live with the boy's parents. On leaving her parents' house, she was supposed to weep. Her father used to take her by the arm to the house of her parents-in-law, under whose authority she remained until her marriage. After the bachelors' houses were prohibited, however, the girls stayed at home with their own parents until the time of their marriage.

During this time, until the marriage takes place, there are regular exchanges of food between the families. Members of the two families address each other with the customary terms for affinal kin and all the taboos and mutual obligations are the same as between affines.

## 7 *Courting*

In theory the boys are forbidden to have any contact at all with women during their stay in the *burawa*. In practice, however, this applies mainly to the lower grades of *munaka* and *tjutjine*. For the older boys the ban applies mainly to their betrothed, whom they do in fact avoid all this time. At this age practically all the boys have a sweetheart, who is called *irakonè*. Usually such relationships are only of a temporary nature, though sometimes the lovers try to force the marriage by eloping. Most boys, however, have had several *irakonè* by the time

they are married. No objections are raised against such relationships as long as they are kept more or less secret.

If a boy is attracted to a girl and would like to come into closer contact with her, he will put out his tongue in passing. If she in her turn bows her head, it means that she agrees. The next step must be taken by the girl. She tells a girl of her own age, preferably one of the boy's sisters, that she would like to have a spoon belonging to him. The boy who receives this message knows it to be an invitation, for eating and everything connected with it is symbolic of sexual relations. Through his sister he lets the girl know that he will meet her at a particular time and place.

The reason why such meetings have to take place in secret is to be found in the general attitude with regard to sexual intercourse. While on the one hand the sperm is believed to have healing and invigorating properties, sexual intercourse is nevertheless always considered potentially dangerous. This is probably connected with the pronounced fear of menstruation. If this holds for grown men, it is all the more true for growing boys, for whom everything is done during this time to make them big and strong. A boy's father in particular will therefore be annoyed when he finds out that his son has sexual relations with a girl. His train of thought is expressed in remarks such as "so much food I have given to make my son strong (by the rubbing with sperm) and now all my trouble has been in vain." This is why it is said in Kondjobando that the initiative for a liaison must be taken by the girl. At least she must make it quite clear beforehand that she would like it, otherwise the boy faces the risk that she might tell others about his advances, which would have unpleasant consequences.

The situation becomes serious when the lovers express the desire to be married, in spite of the arrangements that have already been made for them with others. If both the boy's and the girl's parents persist in their opposition, the young couple must either give in or elope. (see paragraph 3, ch. 4.). If the boy's parents agree to the match, a conflict will probably arise with the families of the girl and her betrothed. The boy's betrothed will also object on account of the services she has already rendered him through her sexual relations with the older men. Such conflicts, however, rarely result in large scale shooting or fighting. If neither side will come to terms, the quarrel is decided by a wrestling

match. The strongest men of both parties stand in two rows facing each other. Two men come forward each time and try to push one another to the ground, making use of all sorts of tricks. The one who ends up lying on his back has lost the match. For each pair of wrestlers the two sides put aside a stick, to count the number of losers. The winning side gets the girl. If the outcome of the match is not accepted as decisive, the conflict must be settled by a *ndambu*-festival or a series of these, or else by force.

## 8 *Marriage*

Formerly it was usual for the young men to be married shortly after the *purakuru* feast. But sometimes the marriage was postponed, even for a number of years, the young men all this time spending their nights in the bachelors' house. Even if the girl became pregnant through intercourse with other men, this by no means implied that the marriage had to take place. Her betrothed was responsible for her and her child and was in all respects considered the father. But this in itself was no reason for him to leave the bachelors' house earlier than he had intended. Only if his father considered him old and strong enough he would press his son to come and live with his family.

The marriage ceremony is extremely simple. In the western villages it consists solely in the paying of the bride-price or, in the case of an exchange-marriage, in an exchange of food.

In the other villages the girl and her relatives prepare a kind of porridge of tubers collected by the boy and his relatives. When the meal is ready, the girl sits down with a number of friends of her own age at the extreme end of the day-shelter, which has been decorated in the meantime with *wati*, jambu apples, tubers and other kinds of food. The young man arrives next, also accompanied by his friends. He is supposed to be very shy, for theoretically the couple now see each other for the first time after a long period of avoidance. When he turns around as if to go away again, his *irakonè*, who is with the bride's group, will stand up and, taking his arm, she will say: "Well, didn't you want to be married? Then sit down, there is no need to be afraid." In this way she leads him to his bride. He sits down next to her or opposite her and together they



eat from one *yoomba*. The other young people present remain seated at opposite sides of the day-shelter, eating their porridge separately.

This joint meal constitutes the actual marriage ceremony, at which none of the older people are present, as it is a matter concerning solely the young people in question.

Formerly, even if this ceremony had taken place, it did not mean that the young couple would be living together from now on. During the first few weeks at least the young man would still spend the nights at the bachelors' house. After a while his father would let him know, through other older men, that it was time for him to come and live with his wife, because he (the father) was no longer able to provide for his daughter-in-law. The young man would then send a message through a child to say that he would come home in the evening to have the meal with his family. After the meal he would stay home for the first time and sleep with his wife. Even at the present time a young man is expected to keep a certain distance from his wife at first. They do have sexual relations, but in public they should still appear to be avoiding one another. Usually this situation does not change until the first child is born.

The original marriage-ceremony no longer takes place in all the villages now that all marriages are performed in the Roman Catholic church. In some villages the joint meal takes place directly after the church ceremony, in others it has been replaced by a meal with the village-teacher. But everywhere it is still customary for the friends of the young couple to assemble to have a meal together. There is singing and sometimes even modern dancing, though a natural hesitation regarding the latter activity is not easily overcome, because for boys and girls to be in close contact in public is not approved of. They are seated strictly separately and only the boldest among them will venture to approach a partner to ask her for a dance.

In the meantime the men are making a pile of the food that is to seal the contract between the two families. The young people, in their turn, take no part whatever in this ceremony. The exchange of food, that is the contractual element, is far more important than the young people's ceremony. Even nowadays a marriage without such a ceremonial exchange of food is quite unthinkable.

Some idea of the quantities exchanged may be gathered from the following example witnessed at Bamol.

The girl's family received:

30 taro roots	3 bags of sago
30 ripe coconuts	3 clusters of bananas
7 <i>wati</i> plants	3 bunches of areca nuts

The return-gift from the girl's to the boy's family consisted of:

48 taro roots	12 <i>wati</i> plants
100 ripe and young coconuts	6 cassava roots
2 clusters of bananas	11 bunches of areca nuts

The quantities of food exchanged are more or less equivalent. All the same, every effort is made to make as good an impression as possible on the other party and on the other people present. The biggest tubers are put on top and the smallest are hidden underneath the other food. The large *wati* plants again form the *pièce de résistance*. This food was collected by thirteen and fourteen persons, respectively, and distributed in the first place among those who had brought in food themselves.

It is worth noting that these mutual gifts of food also take place when the marriage in question is not of the exchange type. In such a case the young man's family gives to the girl's family, besides the customary quantity of food, a bride-price (*gathö*) consisting mainly of goods. The father, the mother's brother and the young man himself are in the first place responsible for collecting the *gathö*.

A traditional bride-price usually consists of the following goods:

- 6-10 nautilus-shells
- 1 string of dog's teeth, about three feet long, or a number of shorter strings.
- 1 small canoe
- 1 paddle
- 1 large sea-shell of the type worn as a pubic cover by the young men in the *burawa*.

A modern bride-price is the following example from Bamol:

10 nautilus-shells	1 cooking-pot
1 string of dog's teeth	1 small mirror

3 jackets	1 shirt
3 lengths of cotton cloth	1 pair of scissors
1 dress	some boxes of matches
1 hatchet	bird of paradise feathers
1 pair of long pants	2 empty bottles.

The value of the goods that traditionally form part of the bride-price, such as dog's teeth and nautilus-shells, may hardly be expressed in terms of money. We may be certain, however, that their value has recently decreased considerably as a result of the great demand for European goods. The value of these latter, though considerable variations occur, rarely exceeds a total of seventy-five Dutch guilders.

The nautilus-shells and dog's teeth are a traditionally fixed part of the bride-price. These may never be absent. The introduction of European goods has caused a considerable change in the fixed and variable proportions of the bride-price. The great demand for European goods has brought about a considerable increase in the number and importance of the variable portion. The amount of non-traditional goods, however, is by no means always the same, for European goods are as yet so scarce that the parties must necessarily be content with whatever is available. The example given above shows that the value of the European goods is extremely low in comparison with regions that are more advanced economically. There is no doubt that, as the money income of these people increases, for instance because many young men go to work elsewhere for some time, the bride-price shows a tendency to increase as well.

### 9 *Sexual prohibitions and sexual licence*

The potential danger present in all sexual intercourse is expressed in many myths. One of these is the story of *Koné*.

*Koné* is a woman who has no husband and who therefore tries to molest men whenever possible. When the women are out fishing and a man is alone in the house, she may come to tempt him. The man tries to pull off the hood (mourning-cape) she is wearing over her head, which is impossible, however, as it is one with her body. Then the man knows who she is and he will take to his heels with some excuse or other. Formerly he used to go straight to the *burawa* and tell the men there that

*Koné* had visited him. It is very dangerous to have sexual intercourse with *Koné*, for with her vagina she cuts off the man's penis, to take it home.

Once upon a time a young man wanted to find out if it was true what the men told about *Koné*. When *Koné* came to visit him and lay down he said: "Wait a moment, I am very hot, I will take a bath first". He went outside and cut off the sprout of a banana-tree. Returning to *Koné* he put this sprout into her and ran off to the bachelors' house. When the men went to have a look in the morning the sprout was cut through.

Nowadays *Koné* lives somewhere in the old village-sector of Bomerau, behind a tree. No man will go past this tree alone, for fear of being assaulted.

Naturally, sexual intercourse is thought to be dangerous especially on those occasions where it is most important that a certain undertaking should be successful. It is therefore prohibited in the first place during the planting and growing periods of ceremonial crops (see chapter 6, paragraph 1) and after the birth of a child (see paragraph 1, 2). Sexual intercourse is believed to make a man unfit for undertakings that make demands on his body, as it takes away his physical strength. A man who loses a wrestling-match is ridiculed with the accusation that he slept with his wife the night before. The same is said of a man who makes a poor show on a hunting expedition. If no intercourse has taken place recently, such obvious failures are attributed to infidelity on the part of the wife, who has stayed behind in the village. A man who fails to encounter a boar for days on end, while usually he is successful, who misses with a well-aimed shot, who finds that a tree he has cut down is full of knots or whose axe keeps slipping, will suspect his wife of adultery. On his return to the village he will carefully inquire from his friends whether perhaps his wife received other men during his absence. Often a man will warn his wife before leaving for the forest that she had better behave, as he will certainly know if she has any contact with other men.

Sexual intercourse is also prohibited while one is making a drum. A drum is a typically male instrument and it will only have a good sound if all associations with women are avoided while it is made. For the same reason the man should not eat *mapiè* or fish, which are female foods. These prohibitions apply not only to the owner of the drum but also to any men who help him in making it: the man who cuts the timber, the one who makes the decorations, the one who stretches the skin and so on.

The attitude regarding infidelities on the part of husband or wife differs according to whether it is a question of incidental adultery or of a more or less permanent relationship. As a matter of fact, adultery is never permitted, but it rarely leads to divorce. A woman who commits adultery may expect a beating, but usually that is all. If a man is guilty of adultery, his wife may make life difficult for him, by refusing to cook his meals for instance.

Things become quite different if husband or wife regularly commit adultery or have a permanent relationship with another. This will definitely cause serious difficulties between the marriage-partners and will often lead to a divorce or to the death of one of them. The following case from Bamol may illustrate this:

For a number of years already H., who was married, had had a liaison with another woman who was also married. This woman's husband had been advised several times by his friends to catch the offenders in the act and if necessary to kill H. The husband, however, feared sanctions on the part of the government and made no move. Finally his son decided to act and gave H. a beating, but this did not deter H. from continuing the relations. Like most of the villagers, H's wife also knew of the affair. The relations between husband and wife were decidedly bad. The wife would not openly take action against her husband, for she was afraid he would in that case commit suicide by taking poison.

Although the whole thing was an open secret, it would be a very serious step to make it public. Persons who publicly accuse their wife or husband of adultery know beforehand that the other person has only one course open to her or him, namely suicide. The most usual methods are to drink fish-poison – four cases of which were noted during my stay, one being fatal – or else to have oneself killed by an *undani*. Most cases in the latter category are construed afterwards. Persons who enlist the services of an *undani* for this purpose always run the risk that their husband or wife might find out about it and have counter-magic practised. A woman, however, has a powerful weapon at her command to prevent this from happening. She will first give herself to an *undani* and only then ask to be killed. Because he is now involved in the matter himself he cannot refuse, while for the same reason he is not likely to tell anybody what the woman has asked him to do. In contrast to the suicide by taking poison, suicide by magic is practised usually with the ulterior purpose of taking venge-

ance on the persons whose actions were the direct cause of it. Not only the one who commits suicide by magic will die, but also his or her children. If a child dies a short time after one of its parents, its death is automatically attributed to a curse laid on it by the dead person. Such a spell may work even many years after the parent's death. In such cases the death of the children is thought to be practically inevitable. Only when it is known who is responsible for the magic in the case in question, an attempt may be made to buy off the spell. During my stay in Bamol the following instance took place:

A boy of about seventeen years of age returned to his village seriously ill, after having worked for a year in Okaba (Marind-Anim region). After consulting a number of *undani* without success, he went to one in Iramoro who was considered an expert in the special sorcery of the Marind-Anim, which is greatly feared all over the island. When even he could not provide a cure, the boy's illness was associated with his father's death.

His father was married to a notoriously quarrelsome woman. Once they were planning to go to Teri, when the boy came and interrupted them. His father was annoyed and said "What do you want? Don't you know we're going away for a few days.?" Whereupon his wife interrupted him, saying: "Why are you angry with this child of your own making?" When the man denied being angry, his wife continued: "You are always angry and it would be better for us to have no further sexual relations from now on." This insult the man could not allow to pass. He grabbed a paddle and hit his wife across the back with it. Their quarrel reached a climax when the woman pulled off her husband's pubic shell. This was a breach of a strict taboo, for neither a man's shell nor a woman's skirt may be touched by any other person. Pulling off the shell meant more or less breaking off the marriage ties. The man went to Suam and Teri and in both these villages he asked *undani* to kill him. He actually died shortly afterwards.

When the elder brother of the boy in question, returning from Merauke, passed through Teri on his way to Bamol, the *undani* concerned let him know that he must pay to undo his father's spell. This cost him a canoe, a pair of pants and some dinner plates. On his arrival in Bamol a similar message was awaiting him from Suam. Some months later the young man actually recovered, which the natives interpreted as proof of the fact that his illness had been caused by his father's spell. One of my informants was involved in a similar case. According to the people of the village he had lost his wife and child through magical suicide after he had repeatedly refused to break off his liaison with another woman. The wife died in childbed and the child died shortly afterwards. People remembered that she had visited Iramoro a short time before the child was born, and this was sufficient reason to assume that she had visited an *undani* in that village.

In most cases, obviously, the mere threat of suicide is sufficient to keep the other party from acting, regardless of who is the guilty one. If such a threat

does not have the desired effect, there is still no immediate need to go to the irrevocable extreme. Often a certain amount of poison is taken enough to make one quite ill, but not enough to cause one's death. This same line of conduct is often adopted by young people who wish to force a marriage with someone other than the betrothed chosen by the parents.

If a woman wishes to start a liaison with a man in another *paburu* and wants to leave her husband, she arranges for her lover and some friends of his to come and abduct her. Some time when she is alone, the men go to her house and carry her off. When the husband comes home and discovers his wife has disappeared, he calls together his relatives and the men of the *paburu* and together they go to the man who has taken the woman away. In the ensuing fight with sticks and hunting clubs, heavy blows may fall on both sides but it is only very rarely that someone gets killed.

If the husband succeeds in taking his wife back home with him, the affair is closed for the present. My informants assured me, however, that the reconciliation is only temporary if the woman is really set on going to the other man. She will be a model wife for a few weeks, until her husband's suspicions are lulled and then suddenly she will run off again. Nowadays cases of this type hardly ever result in actual fighting, for fear of action on the part of the government-appointed police officers. A method much used is for the woman and her lover to seek refuge in another village. This makes it more difficult for her husband to fetch her back. Usually therefore he will acquiesce in his loss, provided his wife's kinsmen pay him back the bride-price he paid for her or else give him some compensation for the woman he gave in exchange for her. Yet another way to solve the conflict is by some form of competition. The two parties go to the forest and spend some days hunting, each on their own grounds. When the catch is thought sufficiently big, a platform is built to roast the meat on. The party with the longest platform and the biggest catch are the winners. The losers are ashamed and should now definitely give up the woman. Here again, however, the question is usually decided by the wishes of the people directly concerned. Nowadays the *ndambu*-festival has taken the place of the hunting competition as the most usual method to reach a decision. If the deceived husband does not wish to resort to such a competition and if

he has little hope of receiving any compensation for the loss of his wife, he may go to his rival's gardens in company with some men of his *paburu*, and cut down a number of fruit-trees. After such an act of vengeance the matter is closed. The man whose gardens have been destroyed may not retaliate, but on the other hand he has no further obligations to pay compensation for the woman.

In contrast to sexual taboos and the serious consequences of continual adultery, there was on the other hand a considerable amount of sexual licence on special occasions. This licence, however, was permitted only to married persons. Examples are the occasions when sperm has to be collected for the boys in the *burawa* (see paragraph 5).

In most of the villages sexual intercourse with other women also took place before and after head-hunting expeditions. Older and more experienced head-hunters used to take special charge of boys from the *burawa* on such expeditions. They used to teach these boys the best way to approach their victims without being seen and how to attack. If they succeeded in killing their man, the head was given to the boy. As a compensation for this, and partly, also as a sign of their friendship and intimate connection during the dangerous expedition, the young man would lend his betrothed to the *pangi* (head-hunter). After the expedition their close connection continued.

The factor of compensation was absent in the western villages, where all the women and head-hunters used to take part in promiscuous sexual intercourse before and after head-hunting expeditions (*thubòdubòr*). In these cases kinship was the only restriction. On entering the house or setting foot on the island where the sexual intercourse was to take place, a man must first ask where his female relatives were, so that he might keep away from them.

The explanation offered by my informants for this promiscuity was the possibility of the men being killed, so that their sperm would no longer be available. But this may be only a rationalisation. Probably the special bond it created between those taking part in the expedition was a more important factor: in the same villages it used to be permitted for a man to lend his wife for a few hours to a friend who asked for this favour. Denial was possible only if the man wished to make use of the privilege too often, or if he kept the woman for the whole night. The privilege was reciprocal, so it happened quite often



that two men exchanged wives. Theoretically the wife had to comply with her husband's wishes if he decided to lend her to another man, but in practice it was not easy to do so without her assent. Henceforth the two men were inseparably bound to one another and they were supposed to help each other on every occasion.

In the Ndom group it was also customary that a woman who had run away for some reason or other could be used by all the married men of the village in which she had sought refuge. These men were obliged, on the other hand, to defend her if the men of her own village came to fetch her back. According to Verhage it used to be customary in some villages to pay for help given in the making or raising of garden-islands or for planting material for *wati* or other crops by lending out one's wife or betrothed.<sup>6</sup> In most villages, however, this type of payment was not permitted. I received the impression that it also occurred only rarely in the villages named by Verhage. In lending a woman to an *undani* the purpose usually was to arouse the life-giving sperm that was thought necessary for the treatment of certain diseases.

In this connection we should note once more the importance of the forced removal to new villages. Both in the Marind-Anim region and on Frederik-Hendrik Island this concentration of the population was intended to make it possible to supervise the observance of certain measures taken to exterminate promiscuous practices. Such practices greatly facilitated the spreading of venereal granuloma in both regions. Many experts consider this disease to have been the cause of the fast depopulation of this area. The prohibition of the *burawa* and of drinking *wati* and holding dances must all be regarded in the first place in this light.

Although many of these measures mean a rigorous interference with the original culture, it should be stated here that in some ways their effect has been beneficial, (if I may allow myself this value-judgement). In contrast to the usual practice of the Marind-Anim region, the girls who had to be available for sexual intercourse with a large number of men were, on Frederik-Hendrik Island, young and sometimes very young indeed. Although I have not sufficient information at my disposal on this question, we may safely assume that such sexual intercourse must have had a traumatic effect on girls who were not yet

or scarcely sexually mature. The early mission reports show that the girls used to be absent from school because of illness for a number of days following every feast. This was certainly not only on account of the rule which forbade them leaving the house when the boys in the *burawa* were smeared with sperm.\* In the second place it may be noted that, thanks to these measures, a stop has been put to the spreading of venereal granuloma on Frederik-Hendrik Island as well as in the Marind region, to the extent that it has been, with a few exceptions, totally eradicated.

#### 10 *The significance of magic*

The magic used in horticulture and the magic for the purposes of healing or killing people are often practised by the same *umdani*. Nevertheless I will limit myself in this paragraph to the latter category of magic, as horticultural magic is to be dealt with in the next chapter. It is not easy to overestimate the part played by magic in the ideas of these people on the subject of illness and death. Only the death of very young children and of old people may be, but by no means always is, ascribed to natural causes. A person who dies in the prime of life is always believed to be a victim of the magical practices of some *umdani* or other. The relations between the local groups are dominated by distrust based to a large extent on the fear of magic. This may be noted in the relations between the *paburu*, but it is even more evident in the relations between the various villages. In most cases a death will be attributed to an *umdani* in some other village. The greater the distance and the less, therefore, the mutual contacts, the greater is, proportionately, their mutual distrust and fear. Their greatest fears are for the *gamu* (magic) of the Marind-Anim, whose methods these people believe to be far superior to their own. They speak in this connection of 'sekolah *gamu*' (sekolah in Indonesian means 'school'), meaning the course of training that may be taken with magicians from the Marind-Anim region. Those who have been taught by such a magician are held in high regard and have great influence, far beyond the boundaries of their own villages. Their

\* Both Thieman and Verhage mention a few cases in which girls of less than ten years of age were used for sexual intercourse. Verhage, p. 64, Thieman, diary-notes.

position is usually quite a profitable one. People will travel for days in order to consult these *undani*. Their number is limited, however, for which reason most villages have one or two *undani* who have succeeded in winning a similar position for themselves, using the traditional methods. The esteem in which they are held depends largely on the apparent effectiveness of their methods, but also on the way they succeed in suggesting such effectiveness on various occasions. If a death has once been attributed to a particular *undani*, suspicions will fall on him the more readily on following occasions. This is all to his profit, provided he lives in a different village, for in the village where the death took place the fear of his power only grows, while his prestige in his own village is enhanced correspondingly.

The *undani* all work according to a more or less fixed pattern. The differences in success are believed to be due to the effectiveness of the mixture of plants and herbs, which is different for each *undani*.

It is necessary for the *undani* to get hold of something that has been in close contact with the victim. Suitable for this purpose are: hair, nails, betel-spittle, food remnants or faeces. The *undani* mixes this with his special medicine, the main components of which are usually pungent herbs, such as finely chopped pepper-roots. This mixture is then wrapped in leaves or reeds, after which the *undani* pronounces his spell over it. The wrapped mixture represents the victim. The climax of the whole procedure comes when the *undani* throws it into the water or pierces it, which inevitably brings about the victim's death. All this takes place in the utmost secrecy, as the *undani* does not wish to run the risk of premature discovery. My informants knew the procedure only from hearsay. The only *undani* in Bamol who admitted to having killed several persons would not tell me the ingredients of his mixture, nor give me the formulas he used. For that reason it was not possible to check whether the procedure as described above actually takes place. When a person falls ill, no immediate steps are taken to find the *undani* who is responsible, for that would mean having to pay. Attempts are therefore made to cure the patient by other methods, the most usual ones being bleeding and burning away the illness. For the former method, incisions are made in the diseased spot with some sharp object to drain off the 'bad' blood. In order to make sure that the blood will continue to flow long enough, the spot in question is tightly bound with a string or a reed-stalk. Thus

it is sometimes possible to see at a glance that a village is, for instance, suffering from an epidemic of dysentery, for a large part of the population will be walking about with such bands around their abdomens. The incisions are usually quite deep and they are not infrequently infected, so that most people have scars. This is even more so with the second method, which consists of pressing a piece of burning wood against the diseased spot, or placing live embers on it. If neither of these methods has the desired effect, the time has come to consult an *umdani*. A man is sought out who is a specialist in the treatment of the particular illness. Some are famous for curing abdominal ailments, others for headaches, pains in the limbs, etcetera. These *umdani*, too, each have their own medicine of which only they themselves have the recipe. The *umdani* places this medicine on the diseased spot and sitting down beside the patient he begins to sing slowly and monotonously, interrupting his chant to mutter the same formulas over and over again. I failed to discover the meaning of the words of either the chant or the formulas. None of those present understood them and it is doubtful whether the *umdani* himself knew the meaning. Now and again he interrupts his chanting and muttering to blow a spray of saliva over the medicine, after which the *umdani* rubs his hands under his armpits and begins to knead the medicine. In doing this he rolls it over the diseased spot in a downward direction and back again. He then immediately takes up his chanting and muttering again, for if he were to cease prematurely the patient might die. The forces that are now active in the patient's body are so powerful that the *umdani* needs to keep them under constant control. After an hour or more of this, the *umdani* stops his chanting and begins to knead the diseased spot in order to 'kill' the illness. The patient now sits up. The *umdani* strikes a few hard blows on the ground, takes one or two coconuts and begins to move these in a circle around the patient's head. The aim is to make the illness, or whatever has caused the illness, go into the coconut by way of the patient's head. The patient himself makes similar movements, but without the coconut. These series of movements end with throwing gestures. Now the *umdani* rubs the patient's body with his hands, having first rubbed these under his armpits. He then makes the patient drink from a coconut or from a bottle that has also first been rubbed with armpit sweat. This finishes the treatment, but if one treatment is not enough, it may be repeated once or even more often on the following days. For his services

the *undani* receives some, mostly small, payment in food. Often, though, he is a kinsman who is only too pleased to render this service free of charge.

If the *undani's* repeated treatments remain without success, it is clear that the only one who can help is the *undani* who has caused the illness, if he can be persuaded to undo his spell. In order to identify him, another *undani* may be consulted, preferably one with a reputation of success in such matters, who may often live in another village. Circular movements are made around the patient's head with a coconut in order to catch some of the illness in it, and this coconut is taken to the *undani*. On arriving at the *undani's*, the patient's representatives first give him some *wati* to drink and then, when he is half intoxicated, the coconut. In his sleep the *undani* will be able to see who or what has caused the illness of the person in question. When he wakes up in the morning he will name the guilty *undani*.

No extra help from an *undani* is needed with another, and therefore cheaper, method. This method is called *ibunnè*. Sometime towards evening the older men gather in the patient's house. The patient is made to sit up opposite the men, who in a chanting tone start to name one by one all the magicians they know, at the same time regularly beating on the ground with a coconut-frond. This is continued until the patient begins to shiver and tremble, which means that the name of the guilty person has been called. The men then go to the *undani* in question and ask him why and at whose request he has worked his spell. Denying is of no use to him for the men will reply that they know through *ibunnè*. The *undani* will undo his spell if the victim or his kinsmen will pay him the same price that he was paid to work the magic in the first place.

The *undani* cuts a few strands off his own hair, rubs these under his armpits and gives them to the patient or to the latter's kinsmen. This signifies a sort of guarantee that the magician will really undo his spell and he gives these things only after he has received his payment. The *undani* masturbates in a coconut and the patient has to drink the coconut milk mixed with sperm. The same method is not infrequently used as a 'natural' treatment, when there is no question of undoing a spell. In some villages a wife or betrothed is provided to stimulate the sperm production.

Obviously the *undani* have plenty of opportunities to enrich themselves through blackmail, of which opportunity they often avail themselves. On the other

hand, the *undani* is really expected to cure the patient. If this does not happen and if he cannot plead the excuse that there are more *undani* involved in the case, he is held responsible for his victim's death and counter-magic may be used against him. The *undani* is, moreover, always asked why and at whose request he has acted, especially if he has himself disclosed that he is responsible for the illness. If the reason does not sound very credible, the matter is pursued no further unless the victim is afraid and does not want to wait a while and see what happens.

Such a case, for instance, was that of Wagé in Bamol. A friend who had been in the village of Suam brought him word that he must bring *wati* and food to the dance that was soon to be held there, to give to an *undani* who was going to work a spell on him. Wagé, however, who was not conscious of having done anything wrong, replied: "Why should I bring food? The people of Suam are hungry and now they want me to give them to eat." So he went dancing without thinking any more about the threat. Some time later, when out hunting, he was bitten by a poisonous snake and died the same day. Bearing in mind the threat, the people of his village reconstructed the case as follows. An *undani* from Teri asked Wagé to procure him some betel spittle of a certain man, so that he might kill this person. When Wagé was talking to this man in Suam, he gave him some areca nuts to chew and when the man went away for a moment, Wagé picked up his spittle, spitting in the same place himself so that the man should not notice that his spittle had disappeared. Some time later this man was bitten by a poisonous snake. The people of Suam now invoked the aid of an *undani* to find out who was responsible for this death. Wagé was named as the man who had taken the betel spittle. When Wagé was visiting Suam again on the occasion of a dance, his spittle was picked up by an *undani* and so he died in the same way shortly afterwards.

Epidemics are also attributed to *undani*. This was so in Bamol, for instance, where an epidemic reduced the population of some *paburu* to only a fraction of their former number. This was attributed to the work of *undani* from Jeobi, in revenge for the death of a man from Jeobi who was killed unawares while on a visit to kinsmen in one of these *paburu*. If the other *paburu* lost far fewer people, this was probably due to the fact that the whole village fled into the bush when the illness began to spread quickly. The forest bivouacs of the different *paburu* are situated at considerable distances from each other. For the people of Bamol, however, this proved that it was a question of revenge for the murder of the man from Jeobi.

The fight against an epidemic was another occasion on which sperm was used.

*Undani* and other influential men selected the women and girls who had to offer themselves for sexual intercourse. The sperm was gathered and smeared on bamboo poles or on the ribs of sago-leaves. The bamboo poles were placed in the fire until they split open with a loud bang. The sago-leaf ribs and bamboo poles were subsequently placed at all entrances to the village in order to frighten away the forces that caused the illness and to prevent them from entering the village. As many people as possible were smeared with the collected sperm, sometimes diluted with coconut-milk.

Apart from illness caused by the active agency of an *undani*, a person may fall ill and even die if he should carelessly disregard magical prohibitory signs. Such signs are to be found especially in gardens with ripening crops, as a protection against the very frequently occurring food-thefts. This is so particularly in *wati*-gardens, which is not surprising in view of the fact that there is a great demand for this intoxicant, while it is very hard to grow. Many people who cannot themselves protect their crops in this way will appeal to an *undani* to place the same signs also in their gardens.

In such gardens there is usually a small table on which are placed ginger-roots and areca nuts. Long poles, to which are tied sheaves of dry grass or other plants, are placed at small distances one from the other. In this way one can see from far away that these islands are dangerous and no one will dare go near them. When I was measuring the garden-islands, none of my informants would set foot even on the islands next to those on which such signs were placed. Any trespasser is automatically punished without distinction. A person knows he has been touched by magic if suddenly the sun begins to prick his skin or if the sky grows dark and there is a sudden thunderstorm. Such magic can be undone only by the *undani* who has erected the signs.

During my stay in Bamol a trespass of this sort was held to have caused the death of a girl of about sixteen who died of tetanus in Kimaam. The girl was living in this village in the Roman Catholic mission's senior school. During the holidays she had gone to her father's coconut gardens and had picked a few coconuts there, not knowing that her father had closed these gardens by magic to all except himself. When he heard of the trespass, it was too late to do anything about it, because she was living at the mission boardingschool.

## 11 *Death*

Loss of consciousness is an indication of approaching death. The vital essence, *rimètje*, is about to leave the body. The patient's condition is now most serious, for the Kimam believe that it is very difficult to recall the fleeing essence to the body. The patient must not lie down, for a prostrate attitude might hasten the loss of consciousness. Most rigorous measures are therefore taken to make the patient regain consciousness: punches and blows, moving his limbs up and down and touching his body with smouldering pieces of wood, sometimes in the most sensitive spots. Otherwise healthy persons who have a sudden fainting fit are treated in the same way.

If all attempts fail to restore the patient to consciousness, a few women will begin the mourning lament, singing softly and monotonously. The whole mourning procedure is best illustrated by an example of a woman who died in childbed.

As soon as rumour spread that the delivery was a difficult one, a large number of women gathered in and around the house. Water was continually poured over the woman, even after the child was born, because the afterbirth did not come. The child itself was healthy and was taken to the house next door by one of the women.

The woman was supported in a sitting position by a few women helpers, but each time she lost consciousness a few women would start lamenting while others moved her limbs and massaged her belly and breasts. Her husband, who had also arrived in the meantime, placed his mouth against hers and talked to her as if he wanted to put the words into her mouth.\*

When the woman died some moments later, all those present got up, left the house and jumped into the water, loudly lamenting all the while. With their hands they brought up mud, with which they covered themselves from head to toe. Weeping and crying loudly they returned to the dead woman and began to move all the various parts of her body in succession, in imitation of the movements made by a living person. The woman's mother-in-law, who had been sitting between her legs all this time (she was helping at the confinement) now got up and threw smouldering wood and hot ashes over herself and all those present.

The body was taken outside as soon as possible, which brought on a new outburst of grief. More and more women arrived and sat down near the dead woman, their heads covered with short mourning hoods. They tried to touch the body, to stroke or massage it, those at the back leaning right across those in front in order to see as much as possible of the beloved dead one. Some other women embraced the bereaved husband as if to console him for his loss.

\* In case of imminent death the husband is allowed to see his wife.



The wailing and lamenting continued for a few hours, while nothing in particular happened. After this the body was dressed in the dead woman's best, used, clothes (clothes that have never been worn are kept). In front of the house the woman's punting pole was tied to a bamboo and placed upright in the ground. A cluster of areca nuts and a bag of coconuts were tied to the top. A back-rest was made of the ribs of sago-leaves and placed against the bamboo, after which the body was placed in a sitting position so as to rest against it (children and old people are laid down with their heads against the bamboo).

The body was handled only by men. The women again jumped into the water and covered their heads in mud so that it ran down on all sides. A few women already started scratching their foreheads open with their nails.

The woman's elder brother now decorated the body. Her breast was covered with nautilus shells, dancing ornaments were placed on her head and her face was painted with horizontal and vertical stripes of grey clay. The husband took no part in this. He was seated with a child on his knees, softly weeping, while one of the women supported him. Another woman sat softly knocking the nautilus-shells together with a rhythmical movement, imitating the sounds produced when the shells touch each other in the movements of the dance. One of the women softly touched the dead face with a branch, while others stretched out their hands and made gestures of stroking her face or imitating the scratching of the forehead. All this was interrupted now and again by rhythmic dancing around the body. During the monotonous chanting, each of the mourning women singing her own melody, ten to twelve women at a time would jump in the air and land on the ground with their feet making a thumping noise.

The men were considerably more restrained in their mourning. Only the father and the husband now and again loudly expressed their grief. The other men present were busy preparing food and *wati*, for in order to forget their grief they intoxicated themselves that same evening. The women, on the other hand, drank no *wati*, for it is their task to keep watch all night and lament by the body. Without a moment's break the monotonous singing was heard in the village, sometimes dying away to a faint murmur and then again breaking out in cries of lamentation.\*

The woman in this case had died in the prime of life. When an old man or woman dies, the mourning does not take so long and is less drawn out. In such cases, too, however, the dead one must be honoured by the women's lamentations. All his good qualities, and even more, are enumerated in the song of mourning. For a man, for instance, the song might go as follows:

"He had so many taro-gardens.

He had so many yam-gardens.

\* In some villages the husband or wife used to throw away his or her public covering and walk around completely naked for a while.

He never forgot his kinsmen.  
He often helped me when I was ill.  
So often he helped me when I was hungry.  
So often he gave a *ndambu*.  
So often he brought a pig.”

In such cases the number of mourners is considerably smaller, usually they comprise only the very close relatives. The burial takes place no more than a few hours after the death. One receives the strong impression that it is a routine affair that should be brought to an end as speedily as possible. Such people have had their time, they say, and especially if they were invalids for a long time, their death is felt rather as a release. In such cases attempts are usually made to hasten the person's death by cutting down a coconut-tree belonging to the man or woman in question. The coconut-tree represents its owner's life and by purposely felling it, it is thought that the owner's life-thread is also caused to break. In the western villages the bull-roarer is used for this purpose, with the intention that *Jet*, who swallows the boys that are to be initiated, should in the same way come and swallow the invalid man or woman and take their lives.\*

For children the situation is different again. For a newly born child there is usually no elaborate mourning. If on the other hand the child is already a few years old and if it is a first or only child, an only son or only daughter, it is mourned much as a grown person. Naturally a particular affection for a certain child may play a part too.

In Bamol I witnessed a case of a child about four years old for which the mourning was only very short. It was buried only a few hours after its death. In Kondjobando, on the other hand, an even younger child died during a dysentery epidemic. It was the only son of an older couple and it was mourned no less extravagantly than an adult. Its parents were distracted with grief and the number of mourners grew steadily each minute. “The sorcery that has threatened the village is now dissolved, for it has got a victim. But why should it be this little child that cannot be blamed for anything?” thus the father lamented. “I have always worked hard in my gardens and looked after my children and my wife. If one of my parents was ill I blew them (cured them by magic, see paragraph 10). If ever I did anything wrong I did my best to make amends for fear something might happen to my children and yet this child has had to die,

\* Among the Marind-Anim aged invalids might be buried alive (v. Baal, Dema).

so beautiful to look at when it walked on the island, all the way to the house of the *guru* (the village-teacher who lives right at the end of the village street)."

The mother walked around in a stupor of grief, jumping into the water and dancing around the little body. She beat the ground and the walls of the house with her hands and arms. She called out the child's name and weepingly complained: "Why aren't you with me any more? You know I'm not a woman who can soon have another child. You always sat near me when I was preparing food and now you'll never talk to me again."

A remarkable aspect of the father's lamentations, apart from his natural distress and emotional resistance to the death of an innocent child, was his doubt with regard to his own guilt in this matter. The fear of sorcery and the use of sorcery as a means of revenge are so common that a death such as this one gives rise to feelings of guilt in the closest relatives, for whom the child's death might mean a punishment.

These feelings of guilt result in attempts at self-justification or find their projection in accusations of sorcery directed at other people.

This was clearly illustrated by a case in Bamol. One of my informants had for a long time been on bad terms with his wife. When they were quarreling again one day she said: "I want to eat alone from now on, you can go and eat somewhere else." Shortly afterwards she announced that she was going to Kondjobando, which meant she intended to commit suicide by magic. So she gathered some clothes, got into her canoe and went off.

Her husband went after her and half an hour later the two of them returned, the man being quite upset because his wife kept fainting. While the usual remedies were being applied to restore her to consciousness, the man told how he followed his wife and suddenly saw a big white man coming towards her. This man started chewing betel with the woman, but when he saw her husband approaching he fled. When the husband reached his wife she was almost unconscious already. While telling his story he kept saying that people must not think that he had wanted to kill his wife or that he himself had caused magic to be practised on her.

Later on her fainting proved to have a very prosaic cause indeed. When the man tried to take his wife back home by force a struggle resulted, during which he dealt her some blows that came home a little too hard. Nevertheless he did actually seem to believe in his version of the case at the time he was telling his story. In explanation he added that his father-in-law had told him at the time of his marriage not to pay a bride-price to his kinsmen, with whom he was on bad terms. But when his father-in-law died he had paid after all, because his affinal kin, who belonged to a different part of the village, kept pressing him to do so. Since it is believed that the dead are white, he thought that his father-in-law had come to take his daughter back to punish his son-in-law for doing what he had expressly told him not to do.

This again illustrates the latent hostility between affines. It is by no means exceptional for affinal kinsmen to accuse each other of causing a death.

## 12 *The burial*

Various elements in the burial rites are due to an intense fear of the dead. The ritual must be carried out very strictly on pain of causing more deaths. A dead person is a potential danger for his environment, for he has forces at his disposal which nobody can control. It is believed that the dead want to return to those with whom they had closest contact during their lives, usually the people of their house, their *kwanda* and their *paburu*, respectively. They have a 'natural' tendency to take their kinsmen with them into death. That is why the latter have most to fear from them.

*Wewe* is the immaterial element in a person which is capable, after his death, of bringing illness or death to other persons. It is sometimes thought of in the shape of a fire-fly. *Wewe* must be prevented from staying in the house, so the dead person must be taken outside as soon as possible after his death. If this is not done, all the walls of the house must be pulled down to make it easy for *wewe* to leave it. After the burial, the house of the deceased is avoided by his kinsmen during the whole period of mourning. They return only after the last feast has been celebrated.

The dead may be buried only by men from the ceremonially opposite part of the village. The reasons for this, according to the people themselves, lie in the power and intentions of the deceased. All people belonging to his own *paburu* are actually or traditionnally related to him and it was with them that he associated most closely during his lifetime. For the same reason any kinsmen of the deceased in the opposite *paburu* would not be prepared, nor indeed allowed, to bury him. In such critical circumstances, when the dead person already has special designs on his relatives, all possible provocation must be avoided. If his kinsmen or the men of his own *paburu* were to bury him, he might suppose that they had wanted or even caused his death. The ever-present distrust harboured by the relatives is thought to be equally entertained by the deceased.

The obligation of burying each other's dead is actually one of the foundations

of the ceremonial opposition of the *paburu*. It is a reciprocal obligation not limited to the burial, but continuing until and including the final mortuary feast. Since, however, before that time new deaths will have occurred in either or both of the *paburu*, the latter are placed in a continuous, never-ending ceremonial relationship to one another, of which the *ndambu* relations, too, form a part. (see chapter 6)

In theory a *kwanda* which has received such burial assistance undertakes the obligation to furnish men in its turn to any one of the *kwanda* in the opposite *paburu* when a death occurs there. A number of possible relationships are given in diagram 12.

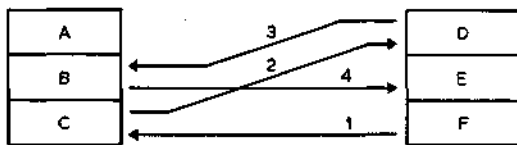


Diagram 12. Burial relations between the *paburu*.

*Kwanda* F furnishes men for a burial in *kwanda* C, which in its turn gives similar assistance to *kwanda* D. This *kwanda* then renders the same service to *kwanda* B, for instance when a death occurs there, and so on.

Men who are asked for a particular burial may sometimes refuse to give their assistance out of fear of the deceased, for instance if the latter was a notorious *undani*. Their place is then taken by others from the same *kwanda*. Only men of middle age or thereabouts may take part. If none are to be found in the *kwanda* concerned, other *kwanda* of the opposite *paburu* may be approached. It is worth noting that the central position of the *paburu* Bomerau in Bamol, which we described above (ct. chapter III par. 3d) finds expression also in the mourning ritual. The people of Sabudom-Borandjidam preferably seek burial assistance from Wendu-Karaudu and vice versa, but both groups also derive such assistance from Bomerau.

Apart from the fear of the dead, the burial rites contain other aspects of Kimam religion. Various elements go back to the myth of *Kuruamma*, which I shall therefore recount in full.

*Kuruamma* is a culture hero to whom many institutions and traditions, such as the dance, the ritual of the dead and the *ndambu* festival are ascribed.

He was exceptionally tall man. He had two wives, one of whom he had abducted. During a fight with her family on account of this abduction he received a leg wound, the scar of which remained visible all his life.

*Kuruamma* often deceived his wives. Once the whole village went to a dance. *Kuruamma* told his wives they had better go alone, as he did not feel like dancing and would rather sleep. He had the power, however, to take his skin off and put it on again, on the analogy of a snake. When he went to sleep, he used to take it off and he put it on when he got up in the morning. When his wives had left to go to the dancing-place he took off his skin and went to sleep, but after a while he got up and put his skin on again. He put on his dancing-ornaments and also went to the dancing-place. He had to be careful, however, not to be recognised by his wives. For that reason he turned his face the other way each time he had to stretch his drum-skin by the fire, so that the light would not shine in his face. In spite of these precautions, however, one of his wives thought she recognised him. She sent her son back home to see whether *Kuruamma* was still there. He felt with his hand on the sleeping-mat and reported to his mother that *Kuruamma* was not at home. Now she knew that *Kuruamma* had deceived her.

*Kuruamma* returned home before it got light, to avoid being recognised. He took off his skin and went to sleep. When his wives came home they saw his skin hanging there. According to one version they thought he was dead, but according to another they decided to take vengeance on *Kuruamma*. In any case they took the skin, tore it up and buried it. When *Kuruamma* woke up and saw what had happened he got angry and said: '*tjinte burau tjuz nowarre*'. This pronouncement has a double meaning, which may be considered revealing for the religion of the Kimam. *Tjinte burau* is literally 'the man is dead', *tjuz nowarre* means 'the snake's skin' but also 'the man lives again'.

From this moment onwards men had to die and to work hard during their lives to obtain sufficient food. *Kuruamma*, who was now without a skin, felt most ashamed and from now on he covered himself in a mantle of plaited reeds so that no one could see that he had no skin. He decided also to take vengeance on his wives. Once when they were out fishing for shrimps he sent one of his sons up into a high tree to see if there was a pleasant place to dwell. When he came down again he said that it was very cold up there. When the women went fishing for shrimps another time he sent his son *Maringiwa* down a hole in the ground to look for a suitable abode. But when he had gone halfway down he became afraid and went back. *Kuruamma* then sent his son *Sumbudu* or *Gurka* down and he descended along a bamboo. When he arrived down below he saw a place where many plants and flowers were softly swaying in the wind. There was food in plenty and there were also two people who told him how beautiful the place was, but that unfortunately there were no other people there. When *Sumbudu* went back up he took with him a banana as thick as his arm to show to his father. The latter now made a very deep hole with a bamboo. He very carefully hid the earth that came out of it as well as the bamboo. He covered the hole with grass and a sitting mat. When his wives returned from their fishing he said to them: "You don't need to prepare a meal now, you can eat this" and he gave them the banana, which his son had brought with him. To get the banana, however, the women had to sit down on the mat. They fell down and *Kuruamma* heard them calling

out: '*Kuruamma, Kuruamma, Kuruamma,*' their voices becoming less and less distinct as they fell deeper and deeper. When he heard them no longer he knew they had arrived in the place *wētewutu*.

A short while afterwards, *Kuruamma* decided that one of his sons must go down again to see how his mother was getting on. He had twelve sons but eleven of them returned without having reached the place because *wētewutu* was closed in by high grass and reeds. The twelfth son, who was still very small, now asked his father if he might make an attempt. His elder brothers laughed at him because he wanted to do something, which they had not succeeded in accomplishing. When he kept insisting they finally pushed him down the hole. When he arrived at the barrier of grass and reeds he saw that a stalk was bent so that he could see between the reeds. He then saw the place *wētewutu*. He followed the bent reed and found his mother who had given him this sign. She gave him much and good food to take with him and said to tell his father that next new moon he and the rest of the village must come down and dance the *watjip*.

In the meantime the men of *Kuruamma's* village went out hunting, leaving behind meat and other food in their day-shelters. *Kuruamma* did not go with them and while the others were hunting he stole their food and prepared it for himself. When the men returned they took counsel together and decided to leave some children behind next time to see who was stealing the food. When they went hunting again the children saw that *Kuruamma* was the thief. When the men heard this they decided to kill him. Six men grabbed him but he shook them off and walked away. Then another six took hold of him with the same result until finally the whole village was holding him. While fighting they had arrived near the hole down which the women had fallen. With a great heave of his shoulders, *Kuruamma* threw all those who were holding on to him down the hole.

When the time had come for the dance in *wētewutu*, *Kuruamma* went down the hole. His wives beckoned to him and together with all the others there he danced till morning. He then sat down, tired with dancing, and asked one of his wives to delouse him. She consented to do so, but when he was sitting with his back towards her, she drove a piece of wood through his shoulder into the ground. This piece of wood immediately grew into a tree with widely spreading roots that wound all around his body so that he was for ever imprisoned. From that moment on everyone must go to *wētewutu*.

In connection with this myth two spots on Frederik-Hendrik Island are of special importance: in the first place the spot called *Tjigi* where *Kuruamma's* skin was buried. In this place there now stands a tall tree. This spot belongs to the people of Jeobi, who have forbidden those of the other villages to tell any part of the myth to strangers on penalty of magic. The second place is somewhere between the villages of Wanggambi and Kaba. Here is the hole down which *Kuruamma* descended. Nowadays it is a deep lake.

When the body is still lying inside or near the house, arrangements are made to make it possible to find out later who was responsible for this death. The husband, father, or son keeps a tuft of the dead person's hair or something peculiar to his body. Once in the case of a woman, the maggots that came out of her nose and mouth were caught and preserved. This is preferably done

without anyone else noticing. Often, too, a coconut is placed against the dead person's feet. *Wëve*, which resides in the head sinks down after death and leaves the body through the feet. It is then absorbed into the coconut where it remains trapped. The coconut and the excrescences are handed to an expert-*indani* at a later feast.

Shortly after the death a coconut-tree is felled next to or near the house of the deceased. This symbolises the breaking of his life-thread, for a man's life is very closely associated with the coconut-tree: they both begin as small seeds, grow up tall and produce many seeds themselves until suddenly they are felled down.\* Before the tree is cut, however, some men climb up to pick six young coconuts, which are peeled and put by the dead person's head to be eaten afterwards by the men who bury him.

The number of men who perform the burial varies with the age of the dead person: for an old man or woman two or three are generally enough, but for a person in the prime of life six is the usual number. Originally it was customary everywhere to bury people in the mats on which they died. In most villages this is nowadays only done for very old man or women. For children a casket is made of ribs of sago-leaves, in imitation of the European custom. Adults are buried in their canoes, which are usually cut in half.

The casket or the canoe is prepared in the house of the deceased by a few of the men while the others are digging the grave on the dead person's *patha*. Because of the high water-level in the ground the grave is made no deeper than about fifty centimetres. White clay is dug up out of the water and placed beside the grave ready for use. When these preparations have been completed the men notify the others in the house and the burial procession starts. The casket is placed in a canoe and the body is laid on a sort of platform that is built across two canoes lying side by side. All the mourners follow the procession in their own canoes uttering their lamentations all the while. When they arrive at the burial *patha*, they all jump into the water and once more smear themselves with mud. The women scratch their foreheads till the blood runs down their faces.

\* The Marind-Anim too, used to cut down a coconut-tree after a person's death. Already in his first publication on the Marind-Anim, van Baal rightly asked himself the question whether this custom might not have a more profound significance than a mere expression of mourning or sorrow (van Baal, 1934, p. 218).



In some villages the men formerly used to scratch the tips of their noses in this way. Even nowadays the close relatives purposely injure themselves in all sorts of ways: they beat the tops of their heads with the back of a hatchet until the blood runs down their faces. In Kalilam a man stuck an arrow into his arm, which went so deep that it broke and the head had to be cut out. The women in particular are expected to injure themselves, for if they had no blood on their foreheads they would be thought lacking in their mourning. If a kinsman leaves on a long journey, to Kimaam for instance or to Merauke, they show their grief in the same way. Except during the actual interment, each of these women is always attended by a small child, who sits by her with a piece of coconut-shell to wipe the blood away. At the various feasts for the dead these women are paid for their services.

In the meantime two men are sitting each at one end of the open grave continuously knocking on the edge of the pit with a piece of sago-rib. This frightens off the dangerous forces that emanate from the body and prevents *wewe* from taking with him one or more of the people present.\* The casket or canoe is now placed in the grave, after which the body with the sleeping-mat is laid in it by the women. Sometimes this is also done by the men. The shells and the strings of dog's teeth that had been put around the dead person's neck are now taken away again. The clothes go with the body.

When the corpse is lying in the casket the women throw themselves across it screaming and yelling their loudest. In the end the men have to drive them off, for it is an unfavourable omen for the burial to take too long. Ribs of sago-leaves are stuck into the sides of the grave, close together, and these are covered with a layer of white clay. The grave is closed starting from the feet and working towards the head so that the kinsmen may see the face as long as possible. Once the whole opening is closed the work proceeds more quickly because the men are no longer hindered by the women. The black earth that came out of the grave is sprinkled over the white clay. Any plant roots are removed and the lumps are carefully pulverised. The earth is thrown on the grave starting from the outside, for the dead person might be offended if the earth were

\* According to Verhage these leaf-ribs are previously smeared with sperm. I could, however, find no confirmation for this statement. (Verhage, p. 47).

immediately thrown in the spot directly above the body. The space above the head is left open, for the forces and influences must be able to leave the body by this way. The drying of the white clay, moreover, is thought to be an indication of the degree of decomposition of the body, which is important for determining the times of the successive mourning feasts.

Again one or more coconut-trees are cut down on the burial *patha* for the reason explained above. The way back to the kinsmen is thus cut off.

The men who carried out the interment now go to the end of the *patha*. There they make a bundle of the green part of a coconut-frond, which they rub against a coconut-tree. The *Dung*, that is the dangerous influence which is in those who have touched the body, is thus rubbed into the coconut-tree. If they did not do so they would risk the failure of their tuber harvest because this crop, being so closely associated with human beings, might also die.

Two other bundles are subsequently placed at the head and foot of the grave. The grave is thus "closed" to prevent *wéwe*, when it leaves the grave, from finding the way back to the kinsmen. These bundles represent the reeds in the myth of *Kuruamma* that enclose the place *Wétewutu*.

Most important of all is the bamboo which is placed, together with the punting-pole, at the head of the grave. The bamboo is the road by which the shadow, *numba-numba*, will descend like *Kuruamma* to the place *wétewutu*. For the long journey the dead person needs his punting-pole and food to be used on the way is hung on the bamboo. How important *Kuruamma* still is in the religious life of these people is shown by the fact that even nowadays the bamboo is placed at every grave.

When the wife of an assistant-catechist died in Bamol, the bamboo was placed at the head and an improvised cross at the foot of the grave. This may be regarded as symbolic of the syncretism of the most strongly professing Christians.

The grave is next covered with a mat and with coconut-fronds. From that moment onwards the primary relatives must cover their heads with a short mourning-hood. They must not see any persons of the same age as the dead person, so as not to be reminded of him. The age-mate (*naburine*) plays a very important part in mortuary feasts (see paragraph 13).

In some villages this already marks the beginning of the total isolation of the

closest relatives from the village community. It is also forbidden to make any unnecessary noise in the village. Until the final feast has been celebrated the *paburu* of the deceased is not allowed to take part in a dance or to beat the drum.\* In some villages fishing is also prohibited on the day of the burial and a few days afterwards. For that matter, it is believed, that the fish would not bite anyway on those days. This taboo is lifted at the second feast (three days after the burial) in the case of child and at the third one (four days after the burial) in the case of an adult. Everyone who goes out fishing then must give some part of his catch to that one of the dead person's relatives who lifted the taboo.

After the grave has been closed the relatives stay on the *patha* for a while to continue their lamentations, for the men who executed the burial must first return to the house of the deceased where one of them has remained behind to guard the coconuts. It would be most dangerous if these were to be touched by anyone who touched the corpse. The coconuts come from the tree that was cut down. The man who stayed in the house, first drains one coconut on the ground, this being the dead person's portion. The fleshy part of this coconut is thrown into the water. The other five coconuts are eaten jointly by the men. In the western villages they may not even touch the coconuts to eat them. Either they use sticks or else they are fed by the man who stayed behind in the house during the burial. The significance of this meal is that the men who buried the dead person must eat with him so that he will not be angry and stay kindly disposed towards them during the remainder of the mourning period.

In Bamol two coconuts are taken to the grave by the men. After the interment one of them is opened and the juice is allowed to run over the grave. The fleshy part, too, is spread over the grave. Then the other coconut is opened and the men drink from it in turns and divide the flesh among them "so that we eat as one man with the deceased."

\* Among the Marind-Anim too, all unnecessary noise is prohibited in the village-sector of the deceased (van Baal, Dema).

13 *Mortuary feasts*

Although the number and even the names of the various feasts given for the dead vary greatly from one village to another they all have similar backgrounds and significance. They constitute a series in which each feast is more important than the preceding one, both with respect to the ritual and to the amount of food brought in to it and culminating in the final feast, which is a *ndambu* as well and which concludes the period of mourning.

The first series of feasts are given on the days following the burial. In Kondjobando there are five such feasts for the various parts of the body, respectively the right arm, the right leg, the left arm, the left leg and finally back and abdomen. At the first feast, *Dörouwe*, the dead man's bow and arrow are placed on the grave or in the case of a woman her fishing-net. As well as these a betel-bag with areca-nuts and lime is placed beside the grave. The next day, *marremarre*, the men who are responsible for the burial make a seat on the grave from the ribs of sago-leaves, on which the relatives may sit when they come to mourn at the grave. The day after, *boudiwa*, they build a roof of sago-leaves over the grave, to shelter the grave and the mourning relatives from the rain and to make it possible for the latter to spend the night at the grave. On the fourth day, *tamouwa*, dry sago-leaves are placed upright in the ground beside the island to close it to people who have no business there. All the food growing on the island is now exclusively for the dead person. Nobody may pick fruit there until after the final feast. Another reason is the fear that an *undani* may try to get hold of some of the fruit growing beside the grave or even of some part of the body in order to acquire power over the dead person's relatives. The *undani* particularly wants to obtain some cadaveric fluid. For this purpose he inserts a cane or a stick in the grave right into the corpse and sucks up the liquid or licks it off the stick. At the last of this series of feasts, *tjètjèbörö*, the women go out gathering reeds to plait the mourning bands and hoods that are to be worn by the relatives. The quantities of food needed for these feasts are still quite small, but even so, this food already constitutes their most important aspect. A remarkable thing about this food is, next to its quantity, its nature, for it is almost solely stewed food. It is the daily meal of which the dead person must not be deprived. It is eaten by the men who take

care of the burial and who through their close contact with the body have in a way become one with the dead person, as is expressed by the meals they have together with the latter. The food is put in the stewing-oven and when it is cooked one of the men calls out the name of the dead person and says: "Today we have brought your bow and arrow so that you may hunt and your betel-bag so that you may chew betel. Now come and have the meal that has been prepared for you, but if you leave anything give it to us." Then the men eat the food together. It would be an insult to the dead person if only raw food were to be offered to him. In Bamol the food is piled up in a heap on the day following the burial, after which one of the dead person's relatives strikes it with a piece of burning wood: "so that you don't have to eat it raw." On the third day some food and fire are taken halfway to the high land in case the dead man wants to go to his hunting grounds. In the waterways, along which the dead person was accustomed to travel during his lifetime, small tables are placed everywhere with cooked food, areca nuts and lime. It was noted that this cooked food consists almost exclusively of bananas. Perhaps this is a reminiscence of the bananas that were prepared by *Kuruamma* for his wives to make them fall down to *wètewutu*. The dead person, after all, is now on his way to *wètewutu*. These bananas continue to play an important part right up to the final feast.

Another feature of all the above-mentioned feasts, besides the bananas, are the *aramu*, sprouts of the coconut-trees that are cut down in these days. The *aramu* symbolises the vital principle of man: "The tree will grow no further and it will produce no more fruit." In connection with this custom the people of Bamol also call this first series of feasts *aramu-muje* (*muje* = eat).

One important food that is missing at these feasts is the coconuts. These may not be given to the men who performed the interment nor to anyone else before the immaterial part of man which is called *wadi*, and which is thought of as smoke, heat or vibration, has left the corpse and gone into the coconuts, thus taking possession of them. The coconuts that are eaten by the men on the day of the burial together with the dead person were picked before the tree was felled, that is before the person in question was ritually dead. By picking coconuts on one of the days following the burial, one would be stealing from the dead person what by rights belonged to him. It is true that in Bamol the

other coconuts from the tree that was cut down are eaten on the day of the burial, but special precautions are taken to make sure the *wadi* has already taken possession of the nuts. They are heaped on top of each other so that the *wadi* is enclosed in the heap. One of the dead person's relatives carries some fire and a few coconuts a little distance away from the heap of food and then the heap of coconuts is quickly broken up so that not too much of the *wadi* stays in the food, as it might have a bad influence on those who eat it.

Apart from the nature and quantity of the food brought to these feasts, its distribution forms an important aspect of the feasts for the dead. For this food is not solely and not even in the first place meant for those who took care of the burial and those who made the casket. An important part of it goes to someone of the same age as the dead person, the so-called *naburine*. This function may be fulfilled by someone belonging to the opposite *paburu*, who was born on the same day or thereabouts as the dead person and who is not related to the latter. Although such relationships play a part during their lifetime too, they become highly important when one or other of the pair dies. Like the men who inter the corpse, the *naburine* is closely associated with the deceased. Because he is of the same age he more or less represents the dead person. Unlike the men who performed the burial, however, who receive the food partly as a payment for their services, the *naburine* must return exactly the same amount of food. The relations between a dead man and his *naburine* therefore consist of a mutual exchange of food during the period of mourning. The *naburine* is a representative of the opposite *paburu*, and the living counterpart of the deceased, with whom the latter has to exchange food.

Exchanges of food take place not only on the occasion of the feast for the dead person in question but at every feast given in the *paburu*, for the dead may not be forgotten at such feasts. The food exchanged on these occasions consists chiefly of stewed bananas. Especially at the later feasts this food-exchange (*jemmö*) is easily distinguished from the food for the actual feast, for it differs considerably from it, both in nature and in quantity. The principal food is for the men who have buried the deceased for whom the feast is given and especially for the latter's *naburine*. For the *jemmö*-exchanges every dead person has a special basket decorated with young coconut-fronds and croton-leaves. A secondary or tertiary relative fills the basket with bananas and hangs it over

his shoulder if the dead person is a man or over his forehead if it is a woman (this is the way in which men and women respectively carry loads). The *naburine* is usually seated on the other side of the feast site. The dead person's relative now takes the basket to the *naburine* and without a word places it in front of the latter. The *naburine* empties the basket and takes it back to the person who gave it to him. A few moments later the same thing happens the other way around. Instead of a basket the *naburine* uses a short mourning-hood. If he were to use a basket the dead person might 'fetch' him.

At every feast given in a village consisting of two *paburu*, a large number of reciprocal gifts of food take place in the way just described (cf. diagram 13).

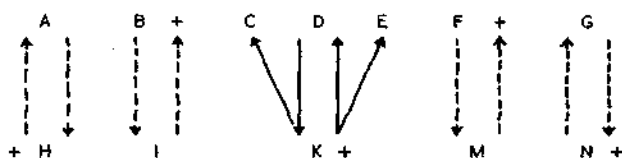


Diagram 13.  
Food-exchanges at mortuary feasts.

The feast is given for K who has died. The principal food is for K's *naburine*, D, and for the two men who buried him, C and E. The other gifts of food constitute the *jemmö*-exchanges between the relatives of the other people who have recently died in *paburu* II and their respective *naburine* in *paburu* I and the other way around.

This food-exchange becomes more complicated in a village like Bamol, which consists of six *paburu*. The *naburine* does not necessarily have to belong to the opposite *paburu*-group. Thus a great number of types of *jemmö*-relationships between various *paburu* are possible at one and the same feast. As there is a decided preference for combining the celebrations of a number of such feasts, most of the people who have recently died and for whom the final feast has not yet been given, with their respective *naburine*, are involved in the *jemmö*-exchange. Their number may run into dozens, so it is not surprising to find that particularly the younger people of Bamol can often no longer follow all this walking backwards and forwards with food. If a large number of *jemmö*-exchanges are taking place it is customary, moreover, for all the givers of one

*paburu* to empty their baskets on a common heap, after which this food is again distributed over as many small heaps as there were baskets or mourning-hoods, so that everyone takes the same quantity to the *naburine* or relative of the dead person. Since all the *paburu* concerned do the same thing, there is a continual distribution and redistribution taking place, the significance of which for a long time eludes the observer. The unity of the *paburu* in its relations with the outside is thus again accentuated.\*

By the time the feast called *tjijida* is celebrated, about two months after the burial, the decomposition of the body has proceeded to the point where the skin has decayed away. This feast marks the beginning of the almost total isolation of the primary relatives of the deceased from the village-community. They very rarely appear in the village, especially now that all the houses are concentrated on one large dwelling-island. They do their work in the gardens practically without any assistance and they may not take part in hunting expeditions or any other collective activities. Feasts, naturally, are forbidden to them, since there are always large numbers of people present at these. This applies also to the feasts that are given for their own deceased relative.

After the example of *Kuruamma* they cover themselves with plaited mats that conceal the whole body for they would be ashamed if anyone were to see any part of their bodies. The long hood called *bapanda* reaches from the head down to the ankles and is tied together below the knees. To make sure their body shows as little as possible, they may only use a punting-pole as the use of a paddle might cause the mantle to move and thus show some small section of the body. Even at home with other mourning relatives it is customary to keep turned away from the others under the mantle, which is placed on a frame. Beneath the *bapanda* the women wear another, shorter, hood called *bapandabörö*, which reaches halfway down their backs and which is mostly worn at home. The *bapanda* is disappearing. At present both men and women often wear only the *bapandabörö* outside as well as at home.\*\*

\* Both Wirz (p. 131, vol. III) and van Baal (Dema) have noted that mutual exchanges of food are customary among the Marind-Anim for participants in mourning-ceremonies. Sago is here given in exchange for tubers and bananas. No further particulars, however, are known concerning such food-exchanges. It is not unlikely that they have a background similar to that of the *jemmö* on F. H. Island.

\*\* Mourning-hoods and bands were formerly also in use among the Marind-Anim, the Yee-Anim and the Upper Bian people (van Baal, Dema).



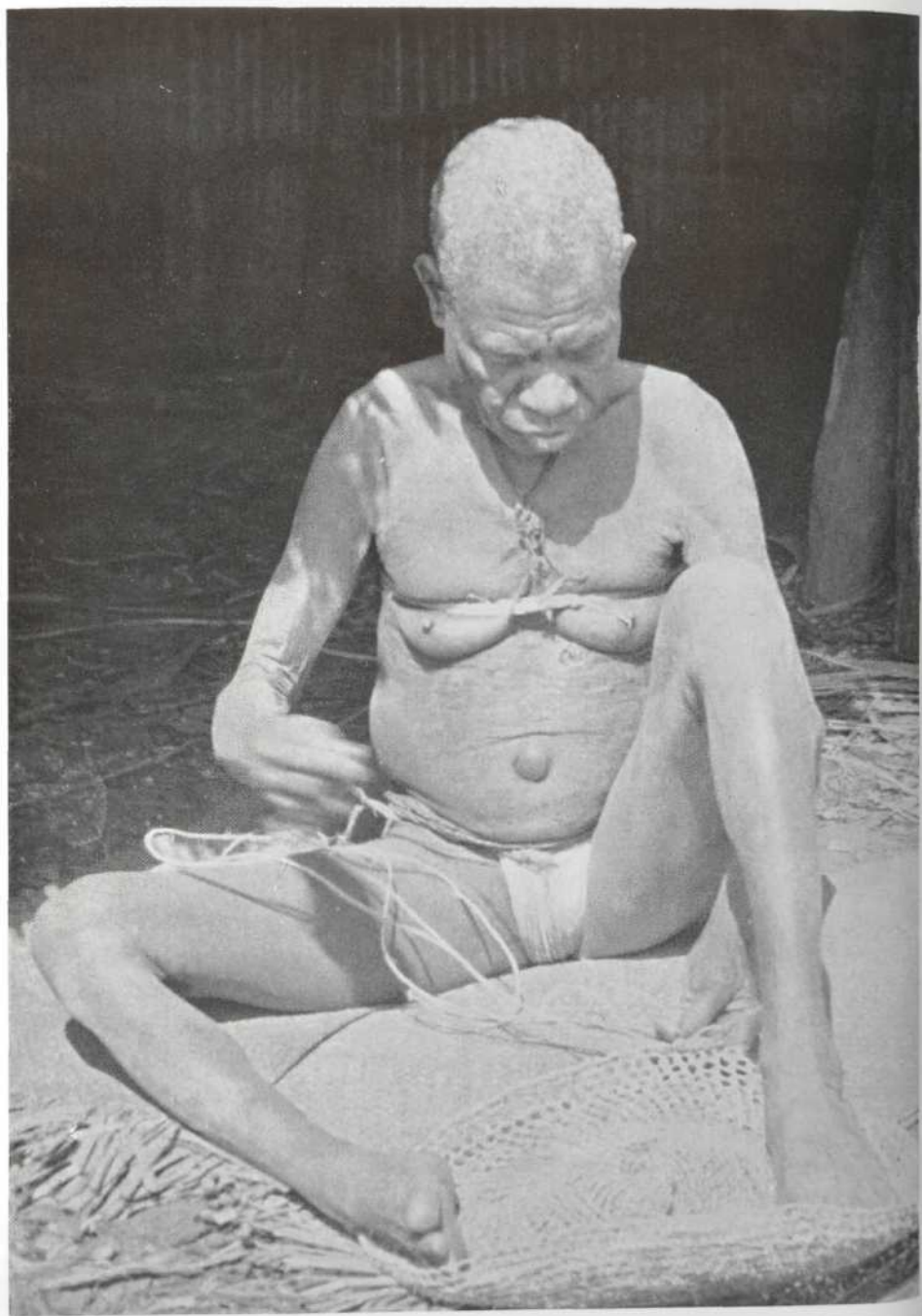
Across the chest, plaited bands (*tauanda*) are worn crosswise. The number of such bands varies with the degree of relationship and the age of the deceased. For a dead adult son or daughter, a man or woman may wear as many as six *tauanda* on top of each other. A tertiary relative, on the other hand, usually wears only one *tauanda* and is not obliged to keep away from the village-community. These relatives play an important part at the mourning-feasts, since they may act as representatives of the dead person's primary relatives. Broad plaited bands are worn on the arms and legs: on the lower arm the *tèwapije*, on the upper arm the *dòrouwije*, on the upper leg the *tjambukuwije* and on the ankles the *tèmbörönda*. The long bands worn in the ears and reaching down to the shoulders are called *mijjèkura*. The back is covered with a horizontal band, from which hang down a large number of narrow bands, the *ikutja*. The genitals are covered by a band around the waist, from which a number of narrow bands hang down in front reaching to the ankles. This is called the *tjiranganta*. The women also wear on their heads a small cap of plaited coconut-fibre, called *wèredoba*, the ends of which hang down over their faces so that these have another extra-covering beneath the *bapanda*(*börö*). All the hoods and bands are covered with a thick layer of charcoal or clay, as is the body (see par. 12), and this may not be removed before the final feast.\*

The missionaries have attempted to put a stop to the long isolation of mourning relatives (sometimes more than eighteen months) partly because even the baptised do not attend church services during this time. For this reason the wearing of mourning-garments has been prohibited, but this measure did not have the desired effect since the mourners tended to keep away from the community more than ever, their bodies being uncovered. Many people now even spend the nights in the old village and are thus absent from normal life for a period of months. For the dead person's primary relatives who, in view of the above-mentioned customs, may be considered as being dead too, in a sense there is a

\* Behind the wearing of mourning-apparel there also may be a certain amount of identification with the deceased. One reason often given by the people for the wearing of mourning-garments is that this makes them better able to discover who is responsible for the death. Other customs also indicate that this is easiest to discover through as close as possible an association with the deceased who, after all, is supposed to know who killed him.



Woman stewing  
cassava roots on  
heated stones



Woman making a  
fishing-net

very strict name-taboo which has produced a special terminology for a dead person's most important relatives:

*nantji* - wife

*mantji* - husband

*wèji* - father

*wèjindaka* - mother

*indikawu* - daughter of a dead man

*wowaraka* - son of a dead man

*mamukawu* - daughter and son of a dead woman

*purinawu* - elder brother and elder sister

*mumdjaka* - younger brother and younger sister.

These terms are usually bilaterally extended to include classificatory relatives of the dead person. For them, however, the taboo is not so strict.

The name of the dead person himself may not be pronounced for a long time either. It is customary, however, for this name to be given to one of his descendants born during or after the mourning period, in order that his name and memory may continue to live. Most people are named after one of their grandparents.

For the primary relatives there are a number of taboos concerning those kinds of food that were particularly associated with the dead person, for instance for the tubers he used to plant or the sort of fish a woman was particularly good at catching. For this reason, for instance, the husband of a woman who had died in Bamol did not eat *mapiè*, ikan kakap, ikan sembilan and turtles. In another case the wife of a man who had recently died did not eat sweet potatoes, yams, pig's meat or cassava.

By the time the feast called *tjijida* is held, the body has decomposed so far that *wèwe* has altogether left the body and has gone into the coconut that was placed at the dead person's feet on the day of the burial. This coconut is now given to an *undani* who first drinks *wati* and subsequently, when he is half intoxicated, eats the coconut, so that *wèwe* which is now inside him can reveal to him the name of the person who caused this death. When he wakes up next morning he will be able to name the *undani* he saw in his dream. The father, son or elder brother of the deceased will not be able to take vengeance, however, until after the final feast, as he cannot before then appear in public and obtain the assistance of an

*undani* from another village. He will take food and a tuft of the dead person's hair and ask the *undani* to kill with this the man who killed his relative. He leaves in the morning and returns to his village the same day so that no one will know what he has been doing. The *undani* places the hair in a bamboo tube, adding some quills of feathers cut lengthwise and some ginger-roots together with some other medicine. This mixture is pulverised and finally some water is added. At that moment the *undani* lets go of the tube and never goes near it again for it has now become very dangerous even for him. The victim will be drowned or his heart will be cleft through.

It is at *tjijida* and the following feasts that the insinuations and accusations of sorcery begin, which are chiefly directed at the opposite *paburu*. After the distribution of food a man of authority in the *paburu* concerned, usually an *undani* himself, gets up and asks for silence. When everyone is silent he says, for instance: "I know who has killed X, but I shall see to it that he dies himself, too. He has killed X because he did not pay his bride-price." The man at whom these insinuations are directed will get up in his turn and ask for silence: "Why am I accused? You know I know nothing about sorcery." He will then spit into his hands and say: "Look at my saliva, it is quite clear. How could I do anything?" There is always only one man speaking at a time, for they do not interrupt each other. Everyone is given the opportunity to say what he wants to say. This does not, however, prevent the discussions from becoming at times very heated so that they only end when darkness falls and the people from other *paburu* prefer to go home for fear of sorcery. It is possible that this system, which gives the accused an opportunity to defend himself in public, may to some extent mitigate bad feelings.

At such feasts one must be very careful of the details of one's behaviour. During a *jemmö*-exchange, for instance, it happened once that a basket was decorated with leaves of a certain plant, the roots of which are known to be an important ingredient for the medicine used in magical practices. The *naburine* interpreted this as a threat and accused the *paburu* of the deceased of planning to practise sorcery. The people of this *paburu* replied, probably truthfully, that the leaves were merely meant as decoration.

As the decomposition of the body proceeds, more and more of its *wadi* is leaving the body. After the fourth day it is still chiefly in the coconuts of the

burial island, but after the fifth day it begins to spread over the whole environment. After *tjètjebörö*, therefore, the islands in the immediate vicinity of the burial island are also closed and may not be used. At the feast called *tjijida* all coconut-islands in the *kwanda* of the deceased are closed and at the next one, *karamura*, those of the whole *paburu*.

In the closed gardens the coconuts are allowed to drop, after which they are gathered and spread out on large slabs of drift-grass at the edge of the island to germinate. The drift-grass used for this purpose is brought in from elsewhere.

The coconuts from the closed gardens may never be used by the dead person's relatives. Anyone who were to eat fruit from his own closed gardens would be made to feel ashamed by remarks such as: "Look at him, he is not ashamed to eat from his own gardens" or "He wears mourning-bands but his grief is not real for he eats from his own gardens." It is believed, for that matter, that the fruit would have lost its flavor because the *wadi* has taken possession of it. They say that someone who is offered a coconut that has no flavor will ask from which garden it comes. Children too are instructed so that they will not thoughtlessly eat the forbidden fruit.

The water around the island falls under the same prohibition as the island itself. The stem of an areca-palm is placed in it as a sign that fishing is prohibited there for the time being.\*

The fallen coconuts, except those from the burial-island, are collected for the next feast and are handed over to the men who performed the burial and to the *naburine*. As more and more islands are closed, more and more coconuts become available for each successive feast.

The first feast to which coconuts are brought is *tjijida*, but a larger quantity goes to the feast called *karamura*, which literally means 'banana-eating'. It derives its name from the bananas of the burial-island which are now ripe. First a number of these are allowed to rot for the dead person's portion. The others are gathered and taken to the feast together with the coconuts. The next feast, *koathötha* takes place at the beginning of the planting-season. The reason for this is again to be found in the close association of people, in this case the deceased, with their food. So far we have only mentioned the signifi-

\* An areca-palm stem is similarly placed in front of the house of the deceased or else in the centre of the village-sector in question as a sign that dancing and singing are prohibited (see p. 202).

cance of the coconut in this respect but the yam is even more important. On the day of the burial and on the first few days following it, in fact, not only are the coconut-trees cut down but also any growing crops of yams or failing these, taro are partly pulled out and destroyed. In the next chapter we shall go into more detail concerning the association of yams and taro with man.

At the time of *koathöta* the process of decomposition has reached the stage at which the journey of *numba-numba* to *wètewutu* is about to begin; the transition from one life to the other is taking place.\* For this reason six coconuts from the burial-island that have germinated by now are planted by the grave on the occasion of *koathötha*. They take the place of the coconut-trees that were felled on the first few days after the burial. At the same time the dead man's yam-beds are once more planted. Taro may take the place of yams if waiting till the beginning of the dry season presents too many difficulties. The growth of these crops must be regarded, in my opinion, as the growth of the new life. The total decomposition of the body and the rebirth manifests itself in the ripening of the yams and in the coconuts by the grave that are now nearly three foot high. This is the time to conclude the mourning period with a big feast.

Verhage in his report mentions a myth which tells how the coconut-tree originally grew out of a dead man's head. (Verhage p. 7). It is not clear to what extent the Kimam have in this case borrowed from Marind-Anim mythology. We must note, however, that conceptions of this type are by no means restricted to the Marind-Anim. There can hardly be any doubt that the symbolism of the coconut (and, on Frederik-Hendrik Island also of the yam) is essentially the same here as among the Marind-Anim.

Dr. van Baal was kind enough to let me read the manuscript of his new study on the Marind-Anim. I may be permitted to draw attention to the analogy with Marind-Anim concepts of life and death. With dr. van Baal's permission I quote from his book, which has not yet been published, a passage which refers particularly to the Imo-Marind, to which in general the most westerly Marind villages may be said to belong: "... it is highly significant for the knowledge of the Marind-Anim concepts of life and death that the powers connected with birth are present at the open grave in which the deceased lies adorned with an ewati's headdress, but painted red like a miakim. There is an inter-connection between life and death, which is really baffling.

Life sprouts from death, The coconut is a cut-off head and the symbol of human life. It is certainly

\* *Numba-numba* is that part of a man which continues to exist after death. It is thought to have human form but to be completely white. It is a sort of shadow of man.

not be chance that in the more elaborate western ritual, the coconut has a leading part to play. The taboo of the nuts has only one aim, viz. that they shall sprout again. Thus a death causes new life and when the taboo is lifted, many will in their own garden plant the fresh sprouts originating from the garden of the deceased" (van Baal, Dema).

*Koathötha* literally means 'picking coconuts'. Coconuts are picked in all the closed gardens to be left to germinate before the final feast. When the time has come for this feast, which is called *Jiwendiwo*, the grave is cleaned by the men who performed the burial rites and the temporary shelter is pulled down. Timber is fetched from the forest and sago-leaves are plaited for a new day-shelter on top of the grave. When the house is ready it is decorated with young coconut-fronds and all sorts of food as well as *wati* and arecanuts.\*

When all is ready for the feast the sprouted coconuts are collected from the closed gardens and the sago-leaves and other prohibitory signs are removed. On one of these days, too, the yams are harvested while at the same time the coconut-trees that were planted at the feast *Koathötha* are pulled out of the ground. This procedure forms a remarkable parallel to what happens at that moment to the dead person, for at the same time the grave is opened. (see chapter VI)

Opening the grave is the last and most important task that has to be fulfilled by those who performed the burial. First the head of the dead person is, very carefully, lifted out of the ground, for the head is the most important part of the body. It is cleaned and then covered with coconut oil. The rest of the skeleton is given a similar treatment. The lower jaw is tied to the skull with rattan fibre. In some villages both the skull and the rest of the skeleton are painted red. After this treatment the whole skeleton is put back into the grave with a new mat underneath it and another one to cover it. It would be a great insult to say to anyone that "his dead relative was lying in the earth like a dog" (i.e. not cleaned and without a mat). The grave-opening is now closed again and carefully levelled so that it is no longer visible.

Opening a grave is a job that not many people care to undertake. Usually they are still afraid of the dead person. One informant told me how he had once

\* According to Verhage the coconut-fronds are smeared with sperm. (Verhage, p. 9).



opened a grave and the body proved to be not nearly wholly decomposed. He was so terrified that he left the grave as it was and fled to his house. Nowadays this custom is strictly forbidden by both mission and government. Offenders are punished with prison sentences. For this reason the grave is nowadays usually only made level with the ground. At present exhumation and re-interment take place only in incidental cases and in the greatest secrecy.

The moment the grave has been made level, the drums are sounded for the first time since the period of mourning started. In this manner the other *paburu* are informed that a grave has been levelled and that there will be dancing that same evening. It is an invitation to the other *paburu* to come and dance and receive the food that has been collected. In the evening the dead person's *naburine* or the men who buried him will cut the mourning-bands of the mourners who are relieved of all further mourning obligations from now on, which means they may join in the dancing.

From the ritual significance of the feasts for the dead it will now be clear why most children's feasts are celebrated simultaneously with a final mortuary feast, as are for instance *munawarre*, *wokéterarre*, the entry into the *burawa* and the promotion feasts in the *burawa* with the customary sperm-smearing ceremonies.\* In all these cases too, the customs point markedly to a ritual death and rebirth. All the important feasts are manifestations of a religious thought, in which the cyclical conception of life is predominant and in which death and birth and, therefore, fertility are important elements. The close association between man and food becomes quite comprehensible when seen in this light.

We must not forget, however, that the religious background of these feasts is never systematically explained by the people concerned. Only the very philosophical minded among them seemed to realize more or less that the various rituals were in some way connected. For most people the rituals are merely routine procedure for which they can scarcely give a satisfactory explanation. The fear inspired by the dead is the most important factor for them. As at previous feasts, the food that has been collected is meant principally for the men who performed the burial ritual and for the *naburine*. The latter's

\* Promiscuous sexual intercourse therefore took place particularly on the occasion of the final mortuary feast.

significance is clear. From the point of view of these people the food cannot be eaten, so it can only be given to the opposite part of the village while the obligatory return-gift of an equal amount ensures the people of the dead person's *paburu* nevertheless of a sufficient supply of food.

At the first few feasts, where the amount of food is relatively small, the *naburine* may fulfil his obligations without much difficulty with the proceeds of his own gardens. Later on, when the dead person's relatives obtain food also from the closed gardens of the other people of the *paburu*, there is so much that the *naburine* is obliged to turn to others for help. He now becomes more or less a representative of his own *paburu* in that the food which constitutes his return gift is derived for a large part or even exclusively from the closed gardens of a dead person or this person's relatives in his own *paburu*. As the period of mourning proceeds he will have to close his own gardens too. The *naburine* does not keep the food he receives from the other *paburu* for himself but distributes it among those who will have to help him with his return-gift, these persons being those who are mourning in his own *paburu*. The reciprocal gifts of food therefore constitute, in fact, an exchange of food between two mourning groups who may not eat their own food, while the *naburine* act as go-betweens and representatives.

As the mourning groups increase in size with each successive feast, more and more members of the *paburu* are included until eventually at the final feast the whole *paburu* is involved in the exchange. This exchange of food between *paburu* is called *ndambu*, an institution of major importance, as may be inferred from the fact that it has several times been referred to in the preceding chapters. The large amounts of food exchanged at such feasts are the reason why a number of feasts are preferably celebrated in combination and in such a way that several *paburu* are involved. The period of time between the various feasts for a dead person is therefore only rarely strictly fixed, with the exception of the time between the last-but-one and the final feast. By thus combining feasts a simultaneous exchange is made possible. This makes it easier to compare quantities (see chapter 6) and it prevents one or other of the parties getting into difficulties for any length of time. Nevertheless it happens fairly often that the final feasts for two dead people are not celebrated simultaneously so that the giving party has to wait a while for the return-gift.

In Bamol, where exchange relations between six different *paburu* are possible, there is a marked tendency for the exchange to take place between the two *paburu*-groups. At one time during my stay there five mortuary feasts were celebrated together for dead persons in, respectively, Borandjidam, Sabudom, Kantjimbe, Wendu and Karaudu. After each *paburu* had brought together its pile of food, the piles of Wendu and Karaudu were made into one and the same was done with the piles of the other three *paburu* before the exchange took place.

With the exception of the exhumation of the body the whole mourning-ritual is still very much alive at the present day. Burial according to the Roman Catholic ritual is the rule only in Kimaam. In the other villages this takes place only very occasionally, that is when a priest happens to be visiting the village in question. Even in that case, however, it does by no means always take place for on the whole the people set no store by a Christian burial. The deceased is then buried according to the old ritual without the priest's knowledge. The feasts and taboos are moreover strictly celebrated and observed everywhere, clearly a sign of the important part the ritual for the dead played in the original religion.

*1 The ceremonial significance of the yam*

*Ndambu* is, in the first place, the ceremonial exchange of food between the *paburu*, which takes place on the occasion of a final mortuary feast. The ritual background of the feast is expressed in the nature of the food exchanged. A *ndambu* cannot be held when there are no yams or taro-roots available. The ritual significance of the coconut was treated in detail in the previous chapter. In this chapter we shall be chiefly concerned with the part played by yams in this connection.

The following myth about the origin and significance of the yam is told in all the villages with only slight variations.

*Ibijemma* had two wives, the first of whom came from the environs of the village of Jaumuka. When he took his second wife the first one smeared herself with mud as if she were mourning. The second wife asked her whether she was grieving for her husband but she replied that she was longing for her own village and for her relatives, for she was pregnant and wished her child to be born in a dry place (sic). "Soon I'll make a canoe and then you'll never see me again." This she did and left for the place called *Wawuda* near the present village of Jaumuka, a very high spot and always dry. After some time her child was born there, but it only had one arm and one leg. She put the child a little way from her and decided to bury it the next day (deformed children were killed shortly after birth). She went to sleep, but in a dream the child appeared before her and said: "Why must I be buried? Am I not a human being?" The woman decided not to bury the child as yet, but the following

night it appeared again in a dream and said to her: "*Namamu*, don't bury me horizontally but make a hole in the earth and stand me up in it." The next day the woman did as the child had requested but some time later it appeared again and asked its mother to plant a stick on the grave the next day so that it might climb. The mother carried out these instructions and when she went to the grave the day after that, she saw the stems of the *kumi*-plant twined around the stick she had planted there. She waited until the plant had grown very tall and then she opened the grave. She saw that the *kumi* was in the grave.\*

The news spread quickly over the island and during the night people came from various villages to steal some part of the *kumi*, for the woman and her relatives had eaten of it and found it very tasty. Each village now took a layer of the skin of the *kumi*, successively *katji*, *bora*, *wèma*, *pauna*, *makonè*, *adonwa*, *edèmi*, *kantjawa*, *kerèti*, until finally only the white inside of the *kumi* remained. (*bada*) This was taken by the people of Wanggambi. The names given here are also the names of the different types of *kumi* distinguished by the natives. It is no mere coincidence that *bada*, the inner and most essential part should go to *Wanggambi*, for this is also the village where a person goes, after shedding his skin into the grave, to join the dead in *wètewutu*.

The relations between the *kumi* and the dead scarcely need any further explanation: the opening of the grave is associated with the opening of the plant-mound of the *kumi* at harvest-time, for which reason these operations have to take place simultaneously. (see chapter 5)

The nature of the magic which is practised during the period of the yam's growth, however, shows clearly that the *kumi* is not only connected with death but also with fertility and birth.

The planting of yams is attended by numerous taboos. For the crop to do well it is necessary not only to know the agricultural techniques but also to carry out correctly the prescribed ritual. This ritual is known to every cultivator of yams but it is conducted by a man who possesses, besides the ritual knowledge,

\* Van Baal rightly remarks that the notion of crops etc. originating from the buried remains of some mythical figure is quite widespread along the south coast. Of this he gives a number of examples (van Baal, Dema). Especially remarkable is the parallel between the origin of the coconut-tree (from the head of a dead man) and that of the yam (from a dead child).

a powerful medicine, the effectiveness of which has been proved by his success in the cultivation of yams. In Bamol such *undani*-cultivators are usually called *warrewundu*.

By no means all cultivators of yams are *warrewundu*, so most of them depend on others for the necessary medicine. The great esteem in which the *warrewundu* is held by those who are dependent on him is to some extent brought out by the difficulties attending the acquisition of this status. Even if one places oneself under the charge of an old *warrewundu* to learn the secrets, one's success continues to depend more or less on chance.

For his pupil the *warrewundu* prepares a mixture consisting of scrapings of a coconut-shell, bananas and other ingredients. Among these, finely pounded and extremely pungent pepper-roots are of particular importance. A frog is then cut in pieces and its blood and entrails are stirred into the mixture. The aspirant *warrewundu* has to eat this mixture, leaving a little for the teacher himself. The eating of frog's entrails is perhaps only pretended by the *warrewundu* to make the course of learning seem even more terrifying in the eyes of laymen. The pupil is said to eat with his eyes closed, for if he were to vomit he would die within two days. For the Kimam the mere thought of eating frogs is sufficient to make them retch.

After this mixture the aspirant *warrewundu* has to eat pure pepper-roots. From that moment on he is not allowed to eat any meat or fish until the new moon. On that day he may eat it, but the next day already he must abstain from this much valued food. The whole period of abstention lasts for about six months, during which time all sexual intercourse with his wife or any other woman is also strictly forbidden. The eating of the mixture and of the pepper-roots is repeated three or four times during this period. At the end of this time he is supposed to be in a condition that enables him to have a vision of an *aga*, a supernatural being which may take all sorts of shapes or figures, both personal and impersonal. It is by no means certain, however, that this will occur. There are men who have spent several such periods learning from a *warrewundu* and who have still never seen an *aga* in their dreams. In practice it may be said, rather, that success in agriculture precedes the vision and the acquisition of the medicine.

An essential part of the dream is a vision of the place where the materialisation

of the *aga* may be found. Directly on awakening the man goes to the place where, according to his dream, the *aga* should be. He goes there without eating and searches until he has found something unusual. This may be anything at all, ranging from an oddly shaped piece of wood to a fragment of glass. This is regarded as the source of a magical power of growth. He takes it to his garden in the greatest secrecy and buries it where no one can see it. Henceforth he will know in his dreams what plants and herbs he should use for the yam-ritual. Those who do not have the necessary knowledge may get the medicine from a *warrewundu* of their own choice. The number of people that depend on a certain *warrewundu* varies with the latter's agricultural success, which is shown by the number and the size of the yams or taro-roots he manages to grow each year. It is not possible, however, to obtain medicine from a *warrewundu* in a different *paburu*. The tubers, being usually destined for the *ndambu*, are handed over to the other *paburu*, partly with the intention of surpassing its contribution. The other *paburu* can therefore not be expected to give its medicine for this purpose.

The medicine may be so powerful that it becomes dangerous for any person other than the *warrewundu* himself. The number of people who will ask such a *warrewundu* for his medicine is small – in this case not because of any lack of success but rather because of too much of it. Thus it is said that Kundemuje, a very important *warrewundu*, used to help large numbers of people with his medicine. Many of these people, however, fell ill or were the victims of accidents. During my stay in Bamol only one man could find the courage to use Kundemuje's medicine. Kundemuje had decreed, moreover, that those who used his mixture were like himself not allowed to eat pig's meat during the whole of the planting period. For many people this condition was too hard to fulfil.

Often such reasons are actually rationalisations, the true reason being that the *warrewundu* cannot keep up his reputation and that of his medicine on account of a number of crop failures.

The number of successful *warrewundu* is not very great. The *paburu* Wendu (Bamol) had only three and Borandjidam only one. Sometimes they exercise great authority in their *paburu*. They are also the ones who determine when planting should begin.

The planting of the *kumi*, which symbolises the burial of a human being, is not in itself an occasion for ritual. Nor is there any great feast held on the occasion of a burial. At the time of planting some small pungent tubers are placed next to or in the plant-mounds. The planter bites a piece off these and blows a spray of saliva over the plant-mound. It is thought that the pungent taste will make the crop grow more quickly. The same kind of medicine is used in the planting of other root-crops.

The first ritual is held on the occasion of placing stakes beside the plant-mounds (*damendörö*). The stakes are fetched from the forest by some men who depend on a certain *warrewundu* for getting their medicine. The *warrewundu* himself and other participants gather coconuts which are meant for the feast at the end of the ritual and also for the ritual itself, one coconut for each garden that is treated.

When the men arrive in the garden, the *warrewundu* walks to the centre of the island, with both hands holding the coconut in front of him. The coconut contains the magical power of all the *aga* which are important for the growth of the *kumi*. His followers, each carrying a stake on their shoulders, go to both ends of the island and take up positions beside the plant-mounds. The *warrewundu* sings:

*Do nëwe renti*  
*dumbu tra tinda*  
*nëtjamè diguna bada*

“See, my arm and my leg go into the earth  
*Bada* is buried”

The *warrewundu* now plants the coconut and at the same time the men place the stakes upright beside the plant-mounds. In this way all islands belonging to the *warrewundu* or his followers are treated in succession (*Kwamendörö*).

For a few days the gardens are not entered. After that time the *warrewundu* goes around, chewing pepper-stalks, and blows a spray of saliva over the gardens (*Uwarouwa*).

The rules and taboos do not become really stringent until the time when the shoot is separated from the mother-tuber. (see chapter 2, paragraph 2a). This moment is compared to the delivery of a child from the womb. The mother-tuber and the shoot are in fact designated respectively by the terms for mother and child. Just like a newly born the *kumi* is still in great danger. It is not



strong and in order that it may thrive all sexual intercourse is prohibited. "The child's road must not be used." During the rituals performed at this time and shortly afterwards the men sing:

"*Namamu*, I am not very strong yet  
I have only just gone into the earth  
Do not approach father too closely  
Or else I shall die"

The prohibition of sexual intercourse applies to all those who have planted *kumi* and it is most rigorously adhered to. During this time a man may not accept food from any woman other than his wife as 'her hands might be soiled' that is to say she may have had sexual intercourse.

For the same reason he does not chew betel together with men who have not planted *kumi* and any food he may receive, for instance at a feast, he will pass on to his children.

Any trespass is automatically punished by a failure of the crops, not only of the trespasser himself, but of all those who use the same medicine. The *warrewundu* and his followers thus participate in a community of interests each being responsible for the other's success. During the whole of the planting period, the *warrewundu* keeps in contact with the supernatural beings who exercise an influence on the growth of the crop. Thus he may dream that one of his followers has had intercourse with a woman. The next day the men will be questioned and if the suspicion turns out to be true the trespasser is often given a sound beating. He is given to understand that any repetition will entail being cast off, that is, he will receive no more medicine. Sexual intercourse is not only harmful to the crops, but also to the trespasser himself who runs the risk of becoming short-winded, getting pains in his chest or sores on his penis. The woman who takes part in the intercourse is also in danger.

The prohibition of sexual intercourse in some ways acquires the character of a general avoidance of women. The woman may not, for instance, sit in the man's place and at night she must sleep in a different part of the house. Formerly special houses were built where the women stayed day and night until the prohibition was lifted. Especially during menstruation women are very dangerous for the planters and their crops. In former times they had to spend

the whole day outside the village, not returning there till night fall. Even nowadays a menstruating woman often stays in another house during the planting-period of the *kuni*. Every evening the younger planters are warned by the *warrewundu*: "Don't think of your wife, only of your work on the *möthö*. You can't eat of your wife's *ba* (vagina), so don't think of it." In uttering this warning they do not address any person in particular, but the younger planters know quite well for whom it is meant. Resentment at past glory is behind the contention of many very old *warrewundu* that formerly far more and far larger *kuni* were grown because the planters kept more strictly to the rule of abstinence. At the present time, they say, too many newly married young men shrink from the long period of abstinence and for that reason prefer to plant other crops.

From the 'birth' of the *kuni* onwards the whole *paburu* is *bangaura*, that is in a state of latent danger. The children are kept at home and are instructed to keep away from the plant-beds while playing their games. The women too receive injunctions to stay well away, for their presence might have an unfavourable influence on the growth of the crops while the *möthö*, charged with magic as they are, represent a real danger to their own persons. Even for men the situation is dangerous enough. They will not dare go near the *kuni*-beds after dark nor approach any but their own and those belonging to other members of the same *warrewundu* group even in the daytime. Once when the same Kundemuje of whom I spoke above came past a garden-island where another *warrewundu* was busy carrying out the prescribed ritual together with his followers, he only just managed to escape a beating through precipitate flight.

About this time the important fertility-rites are carried out for the first time. On a dwelling-island the planters gather a number of coconuts for the ritual and for the feast that will follow it.\* Here again, as on most festive occasions, *wati* is an indispensable ingredient. The time chosen to carry out the ritual depends largely on the availability of a sufficient quantity of this intoxicant. In a big cooking-oven the men themselves prepare a large meal of cassava,

\* The important part played by coconuts in the yams-ritual again points in the direction of a similarity in symbolic significance for the two crops.

sweet potatoes, sago and bananas. The women are not allowed to touch this food. They stay on a nearby island where a quantity of food has been gathered especially for them. The *warrewundu* places his medicine on the heap of coconuts, for theoretically the whole store of food is meant for the supernatural beings, the *aga* who are important for the growing *kuni*. Apart from the *warrewundu* and his followers there are usually a number of spectators present on the island who, being followers of another *warrewundu* with whom the first one is on friendly terms, take part in the feast though not in the ritual. While the actual participants carry out the ritual these men chew the *wati*, peel the coconuts and see to it that the women get their share.

Usually the ceremony begins about ten in the morning and ends around four in the afternoon. The *warrewundu* and his followers put a number of coconuts in their canoes and in pairs they leave for the *möthö*. If the plant-beds of the *warrewundu* and those of his followers are situated together in a group, they go to a *möthö* that lies more or less in the middle. If, on the other hand, the beds of the various participants are scattered over a larger area they usually go to the *warrewundu's möthö*. At one end of this island a shallow pit is made around which grass is spread out for the men to sit on. They now all begin to peel coconuts while the *warrewundu* cuts the various plants and herbs (the *tjada*) into small pieces. All these ingredients are placed in the pit and are mixed with soil. The same small tubers as were used on previous occasions are bitten through and a spray of saliva is blown over the mixture. The juice of the coconuts is poured over the mixture and the pulp is scraped out with a seashell and stirred in with the rest. Another participant cuts a banana lengthwise (which is the way yams are cut for consumption) and scrapes the contents out with a shell. Finely ground roots of plants and various kinds of leaves (*purijodde, wijië*) and the mud used for compost (*ndë*) are added and the *warrewundu* stirs them into the mixture with his hands while spitting on it.

Now the mixture is ready and all the men must smear their heads, chests and arms with yellow and grey clay in order that the supernatural beings will recognise them as performers of the ritual. They need have no fear, but anyone who is not recognisable in this way is automatically regarded as an unauthorised intruder and runs the risk of being punished by the *aga*. The *warrewundu* begins a song in which the others join him:

Burial of a child



Counting and measuring Taro-tubers



*Namamu, jeramowarra  
runi muja muja rètja  
na patha tiarètji  
paittura tiaretji*

Mother I am in the earth  
You will not see me again  
but soon I shall come out  
of the earth and then you will eat me.

*Namamu tekum lati jijörawa  
najowanda tjowanda guna awanum  
nantjidije nöjewetjetti menti föwije*

Mother, I do not come out  
of the earth, but presently all  
the *kwanda*-friends will  
measure me with a stick  
and you will see how big I am.

These songs are continually interrupted by invocations of female *aga* while the participants keep their eyes concentrated on the mixture:

*Budji Budji puri puri  
tjatodobbe puri puri  
Boma puri puri*

*Wariareppa puri puri  
Tjarandjidam puri puri  
Nerabu puri puri*

*Puri* means belly and pregnant. The beings whose names are invoked must be fecundated in this way so that they may give birth to the *kuni*. The *warrewundu* models the mixture into the shape of a plant-mound (which is similarly made in a previously made hole). The mixture which is called *puri* too, also represents the belly of a pregnant woman.

One of the men has a bunch of red leaves (*tjirije*) in his hand, which he keeps moving to and fro above the mixture during the singing. The men sing of *marawi*, the poisonous snake that was lying near the *kuni*, about *Karamu* the crocodile, that the *kuni* may grow as big as he, about the coconuts growing in *tjerre* which will call the *aga* to make the *kuni* big and of the wind, *war*, which makes the leaves go up and down. Now and again during the singing one of the men scatters a few areca nuts around him to entice the *aga*. On one of these occasions the men drew one another's attention, during the singing, to some birds that were flying around and which they regarded as representatives of the *aga*.

During the afternoon the ceremony gradually comes to a climax. This is clear from the contents of the songs that are sung. After the invocations of pregnant women, the songs now tell of the child called *witjau* that is growing in the womb. They sing about the female pubic apron, a metaphoric way of speaking about sexual intercourse, and finally they sing of the young women who will come and dance on the *möthö*.

The mixture is kneaded once more and with continuous spitting it is again made into a mound on top of which a long rod-shaped object is moulded which represents the *kuni*. The *tjirije* is placed upright on top of this. Then the hole and the mixture in it are carefully covered with coconut-shells. All the men now stand up and make circular gestures around their heads followed by gestures of throwing in the direction of the hole in order to return any magic that has attached itself to them to the hole with the magical mixture. They all have a chew of betel and after a short time the hole is opened again. The *warrewundu* starts his singing once more and the others join him. They now sing of the cutting of the *kuni*:

*Nuanda karama nuagumeren bangijnije  
na kumu kawu tjiku*

Why am I being split  
Am I not a human being?

One of the men takes a hatchet and cuts the mound in the way large yams are cut, that is first lengthwise and then a number of times crosswise. Each follower receives a part of it and a number of coconut-shells as well. Each goes to his own *möthö* where he buries the medicine covering it with the coconut-shells. The covering is necessary because otherwise the virtue of the medicine which is thought of as a scent, might dissipate into the air. A small amount of the medicine is also placed near each plant so that its roots may absorb the "scent", but not too close or they might die from the power of the medicine and the tuber would shrivel up. It is very important to apply the correct dose. Beside the medicine a coconut is also placed on each plant-bed, containing the spiritual substance of all the beings that have been invoked. Another coconut is hung down the side of the *möthö*, half under water to encourage the beings that dwell in the water to nestle in the plant-bed and stimulate the growth of the crop.

All the men who took part in the ceremony are now filled with the magical influence and therefore they are dangerous to those who were not present. When they return with the *warrewundu* in front, they stop halfway and make throwing gestures to make the dangerous influence return to the *möthö*. On arriving at the dwelling-island all those who took part in the ritual must touch with one finger the various kinds of food that have been collected here and then sniff at the finger. A small bowl of water has been placed in readiness for them and in this too they each put a finger and lick it. The significance of all this is that all the participants must have at least formally partaken of the food before others may eat of it. In this way the food is made fit for consumption.

The men and women, each group on its own *patha*, now have their feast which consists mainly of drinking *wati*. The ritual is repeated when the yam has grown so big that the top of the tuber shows in the mound (*dumbumunga*). Only the *warrewundu* crouches over the plant-mound and blows his saliva over the yam. His followers sit behind him and sing the customary songs. At the end of the ceremony the yam is covered with medicine.

When all the leaves have withered the important moment has come for the largest yams to be measured while still in the ground. This *kumi-karrende* must be carried out with the greatest care for the roots must not be damaged. It is always dangerous to loosen the *kumi* from the surrounding soil as the 'child' may not be strong enough yet to undergo this operation. The *warrewundu* therefore continually inspects the crops to see whether the time for measuring has come. When it is time, the *warrewundu* carefully loosens the soil all around the yam. He then takes the rib of a sago-leaf or a measuring-stick especially made for this purpose and puts it alongside the yam. Incisions are made on the stick recording the length and thickness of the tuber. The soil and the roots are then carefully returned to their original position.

The measuring of the yams is a matter of the greatest importance, for it is especially the exceptionally large ones on which the competitive factor of the *ndambu* is based. It takes place in the profoundest secrecy and the measuring stick is kept carefully hidden. When the *warrewundu* has measured an exceptionally large yam he says: "To whom does this *kumi* belong? Is it yours, my son? go to the village and adorn yourself." The planters decorate themselves with yellow paint and put flowers through their armlets. In the village they gather



around their *warrewundu*. They count their large yams and discuss the possibilities of winning a competition against another *warrewundu*.

The *warrewundu* also decides when the time has come to harvest the *kumi* (*wèbè*). Before then, however, the planter must approach either his wife's canoe or the place where his wife usually sits and put his foot on it. He then goes to his garden and with the same foot touches a plant-mound or the soil near one. This is done to let the *kumi* know that the planter has had contact with his wife so that the resumption of sexual intercourse which will soon take place shall not be too sudden for the *kumi*. Sexual intercourse may be resumed only after *karijaddè*, that is, the throwing away of the coconut-shells that were used for the magical ritual. The "child" has now passed the critical period and is strong enough not to be harmed by sexual intercourse. The same day the planter's wife will sit down opposite her husband with her legs apart, which means that he must have sexual intercourse with her.

In the village of Kondjobando it is permitted to have sexual intercourse with one's wife once or a few times even before this if the *kumi* does not grow satisfactorily in spite of the carefully executed ritual and other precautions that have been taken. The planter has intercourse with his wife once and afterwards bathes in the water beside the garden-island, so that the 'scent' of sexual intercourse may permeate the plant-bed. It is also possible to have sexual intercourse somewhere near the plant-bed in such a way that the wind will bring the 'scent' to the crops. The planter may not enter his garden for six days afterwards.

From this custom and from the significance of the magical ritual it may be inferred that sexuality is in itself a condition for the flourishing of the crop. Here again it is of the utmost importance to know the correct amount. Normally actual intercourse is too much of a good thing. That is why symbolical sexuality has to take its place. Even in the case of the exception recorded in Kondjobando it is strictly prohibited for the intercourse to take place on the garden-island itself.

For other crops too, for instance *wati*, a symbolical coitus is performed to promote fertility. A stick is planted in the middle of the island with two shells on it, the penis-shell worn by the boys in the *burawa* and below it the nautilus-shell, which the women wear.

A few days after *karijaddé* the largest yams are harvested by the *warrewundu* from his own gardens and from those of his followers. First smearing his hands with medicine he loosens the soil around the tuber. This is very carefully lifted out of the soil to make sure it does not break and placed on some medicine that has been laid out in readiness. It is covered with some more medicine and over this mud and grass are spread, to keep the size of the harvested tubers secret for possible snoopers from the other party. The smaller yams are harvested by the planters themselves and piled up in the gardens.

One is involuntarily led to compare this with the harvest-ritual of the Kiwai-Papuans as described by Landtman. There too the first yam is thought to have originated by birth out of a mythical female. This birth is imitated by an old woman when the first tuber is harvested. In spite of the similarity in backgrounds the rules for planting and harvesting are in some respects completely different in the two regions. Among the Kiwai, for instance, women are indispensable for the growth of the crops. Before planting, sexual intercourse takes place between an older couple.

After this, the bull-roarer is smeared with fluid from the woman's vulva and whirled around to spread the "medicine" over the planting area. The first tuber that is planted is smeared with sperm by the man and the woman smears the growing tuber with fluid from the vulva. In the eyes of the Kimam such practices would certainly cause a crop failure if not bring even greater disasters on the village. It should be noted, however, that on Frederik-Hendrik Island too, the taboo becomes considerably less strict once a woman has passed the menopause (Landtman, p. 79f).

For ceremonial purposes, as we have said before, taro-roots may take the place of yams. Since the ritual performed for this crop differs only in a few details from the one for yams described above, its description has been included in the appendices (see appendix 5).

The largest yams and taros, which have received such careful treatment, may never be eaten by the planter himself or by his close relatives. The idea of a man eating his own yams or taros is quite disgusting to the Kimam while moreover it is thought that to do so would bring one sickness or accidents.\* For this reason such tubers are given to a planter who is not a close relative, preferably one from another *paburu*, in exchange for his own yams or taros. The tubers are so filled with magic, however, that the receiver will never dare cut them with his own hands. The giver himself has to come and cut the

\* cf. the attitude with respect to incest.<sup>1</sup>

tuber, first lengthwise and then a few times crosswise. The same is done by the other man for the tubers he has given in exchange. Although they are now fit for consumption, the tubers continue to be very dangerous for women. Even grown men will preferably not eat them. The largest specimens are preferably given to older children.

A similar attitude as prevails with regard to large yams and taros may be noted with regard to fattened pigs. The pigs are looked after exclusively by the women and, as in many other regions of New Guinea, they are often pampered like children. In contrast to dogs they are always fed well so that some specimens grow to an really gigantic size. Everywhere they are kept in well-sheltered pigsties but in daytime they walk around freely in the village. In the western part of the island, pigs are even kept in the houses. It is certainly no coincidence that a man who wanted to punish his neighbour's child killed its father's pig in order to vent his rage without hurting the child.

If a pig has to be killed this must be done by the men when the women are away. As soon as the latter hear of the killing they jump into the water, smear themselves with mud and scratch their foreheads open as a sign of mourning. A pig is never eaten by the owner himself. Usually it is offered to someone who needs it for a feast. In return he will give a string of dog's teeth for the man and one or more nautilus-shells for the woman. (These articles are the fixed part of the bride-price while also constituting the compensation for the killing of a man or woman).<sup>\*</sup> This payment, however, does not relieve the 'buyer' of all further obligations. In time he must offer his own pig when the former giver asks him for it. In return for it he receives the same payment. In this system of exchange, therefore, pigs and head-money or bride-price articles always go in opposite directions. There is a strong resemblance to marriage-exchange in that here too direct exchange is possible if two groups kill their pigs at the same time. In that case no payment of shells and dog's teeth takes place.

The exchange of pigs also forms a notable aspect of the *ndambu* between *paburu*. Whenever this is held in combination with children's feasts and promotions of

<sup>\*</sup> The pig must be killed and cut up by the giver, just as in the exchange of tubers the giver has to cut the yams he has grown.

boys in the bachelors' house, pigs are an indispensable attribute. It is probably no mere coincidence that the child or the young man has to be seated on a pig, this animal being so closely associated with human beings.

The significance of pigs is important in yet another respect. In contrast to the cultivation of yams and taros, the raising of pigs demands the active participation of women. In this way women also play an important part in *ndambu*. What tubers are for the men, pigs are, in a way, for the women.

In the preceding chapters attention has been given to several aspects of *ndambu* which may be summarised as follows:

a *The nature of the food*

In *ndambu* yams or taro-roots are an indispensable element. This means that *ndambu* is restricted to the period immediately following the harvest of either of these crops. If the exchange of food does not take place simultaneously on both sides, therefore, it may happen that the return-gift has to be postponed until the next harvest or that a gift of yams is returned with a gift of taro-roots. Other tuber or root yielding crops, such as cassava or kumbili cannot serve as *ndambu* food. It would be shameful to offer such 'inferior' foods. They may, however, be added as extras to a *ndambu* of yams or taros. As a matter of fact a *ndambu* seldom consists solely of the most important types of tubers. Another, less essential, food is always added, the quantities depending on what is available at the particular moment: sago, bananas, sugar-cane, tobacco, etc.

In considering the minor rôle played by cassava and kumbili in the *ndambu*-ceremony we must take into account that it has proved impossible to produce the exceptionally large specimens which are of such great importance for the gaining of prestige. In this connection it is interesting to note that sweet potatoes have become the *ndambu* food par excellence in the villages on the southern sandy beach where the soil is much better suited to the cultivation of this crop than of yams and taro. The sweet potatoes grown here may reach a circumference of more than one metre.

One element that is scarcely ever absent is the much coveted intoxicant, *wati*.

We have already described the part played by *wati* in all types of feasts. In *ndambu* too, the significance of *wati* consists in the first place in its function as a means of payment. In the second place it plays a part in the prestige contest, like the other foods and any other narcotics or stimulants. Only in the western villages, where very little *wati* is grown, it plays no more than a very minor part in *ndambu*. The significance of pigs in *ndambu* has already been discussed. The pig is essential only when the *ndambu* is combined with children's feasts. The exchange of fattened pigs may in itself acquire a competitive aspect. Coconuts are present at every *ndambu*, partly because they are available all the year around, partly too on account of their ritual significance in connection with mortuary-feasts.

#### b *The mechanism of exchange*

The exchange of food is closely connected with the food-taboos that apply during the period of mourning and with the obligation of handing certain foods over to the opposite *paburu*. In the majority of cases, in fact, it is between two component parts of a village that the *ndambu* takes place. The two sectors are each other's traditional *ndambu*-partners. Speaking of *ndambu* implies an automatic association with the opposition between the *paburu*. The food-exchange between two oppositional village-sectors is the most original form of *ndambu*.

Even when there is no question of a final mortuary-feast the planter is not allowed to eat his own products, at least as far as the exceptionally large specimens are concerned, to the growing of which special care has been devoted. *Ndambu* in its simplest form, therefore, consists of two cultivators who, seated opposite one another, exchange their tubers.

#### c *The competitive element*

In assessing the importance of this element, we must not fail to take into consideration that the mechanism of reciprocity does not by any means cause people to lose sight of their own interests. Return-gifts are closely examined to make sure they are fully equivalent to one's own gifts. This is true not only of *ndambu* but of all sorts of other exchange deals. A person who receives less

than he gave himself will not fail to press the other to supply whatever was missing. What method, in this culture, could be more effective than public ridicule? However important the competitive element and the gaining of prestige may be, *ndambu* differs in one important aspect from the potlatch. The person who takes the initiative tries to give his opponent so much food that the latter is unable to return an equal amount. The challenged party does not attempt to surpass the challenger. He merely tries to return exactly the same amount so that the *ndambu* is 'dead', that is a balance has been reached and the contest is closed. If the challenged party cannot meet this requirement, the challenger has gained a victory and has enhanced his prestige. On the other hand he has to go without a certain amount of food, which he will try to get back by continuous mockery of his defeated opponent. If the loser does supply the missing food on a later occasion it does not mean a loss of prestige for the initial winner. The mere fact of having taken the initiative means prestige for him in the eyes of the villagers. Hence the ambivalent nature of the challenger's attitude in the contest; on the one hand he hopes that the challenged party will be unable to return an equivalent amount of food, on the other hand he does not forget his own material interests.

It is scarcely possible to divorce the competitive element in this feast from the exceptional interest displayed by the Kimam in agriculture and consequently in its products. More than anywhere else the conditions for agriculture on Frederik-Hendrik Island require a thorough knowledge of agronomy and magic. It is therefore not surprising to find that in this community agriculture is a means of the first order for gaining distinction and prestige. In this respect agriculture is even more important than head-hunting, which used to be of such great importance with most south coast peoples and which was also practised on Frederik-Hendrik Island.

Just as *ndambu* is not the only occasion for exchange, it is not the only form of competition practised in this society. In previous chapters the competitive element existing in other aspects of this culture has repeatedly been mentioned, particularly in our discussion of the antagonism found in the various bipartite structures. In view of this it is not surprising to find a competitive element in the exchange of food between two opposed groups.

2 *The motives for holding ndambu*

The immediate motives for holding *ndambu* may be greatly diverse in nature.

*a* In the first place every village has the traditional *ndambu* which is a part of the mortuary-rites. Such a *ndambu* always takes place between the component sectors of the village in question. This does not mean, however, that a *ndambu* between these parties cannot be held for other reasons.

*b* The most frequent motive for holding *ndambu*, apart from the mortuary ritual, is disparagement of someone's ability as a cultivator. Derogatory remarks of this nature wound the Kimam in their dearest ambition, which is to be respected and appreciated as producers of food. To say that someone is too lazy to produce sufficient food for himself and for his family, that he is unable to make a proper contribution to the feasts held by his relatives or by his local group, that he fails to give the prescribed feasts for his children or that he is sponging on others: all these are insults so gross that one cannot let them pass without loss of face. The important position occupied by agriculture and food in general in the world of the Kimam, moreover, causes conflicts of the most diverse nature to end up always in remarks of this kind.

A person strongly suspected of food thefts can rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the villagers only by challenging to a *ndambu* the man who accuses him openly of such a theft. Any conflict concerning rights of ownership or use of certain trees or plant-beds can be solved by a *ndambu* between the two parties if a friendly settlement proves to be impossible. In some villages a mother's brother who has, under the guise of a joking relationship, a corrective function with regard to his sister's child may challenge the latter to a *ndambu* thus forcing him to greater industry in food-production if repeated exhortations to this effect have proved unsuccessful.

Other frequently occurring conflicts that may be solved by means of *ndambu* are those which result from adultery or running off someone else's wife. As a means of solving conflicts, *ndambu* has gained in importance in recent years although the missionaries regard it with disfavour. This development is understandable in view of the fact that the use of force in any form whatsoever

to solve conflicts has become very rare since government was established on the island. Formerly it used to be customary in many villages to punish a man who seduced a married woman by destroying his crops and cutting down a number of his fruit-trees. At present only *ndambu* remains as a permitted means of punishment. Both government and mission severely punish any threat of sorcery or the carrying out of such a threat. In such cases the victim may, as sometimes actually happens, appeal to the local government functionary. For this reason recourse is had to sorcery only if no peaceful solution can be reached.

The government officer will arbitrate in conflicts when there has been a transgression of government regulations and if a complaint is submitted by one of the parties. That this has so far by no means become a general practice on Frederik-Hendrik Island will not be surprising. For government decisions are binding and are sanctioned by the authorities. No further discussion or compromise is possible in such cases and these are just what the Kimam are always striving for.

c A final factor of great importance is the pure struggle for power and prestige. The derogatory remarks addressed to the opponent in such cases do not in the first place arise from any conflict between the two men in question, but rather from one *warrewundu's* ambition to outdo his rivals and thus raise himself a further step on the ladder of social prestige. Such prestige entails influence and power. Not only on subjects directly or indirectly connected with agriculture, but in the most diverse matters, the opinion of the *warrewundu* carries great weight. Less important persons will not readily contradict him or ignore his express wishes, for it is in his power at any time to 'defeat' a refractory member of his *kwanda* or *paburu* at *ndambu*, which would mean public humiliation for the man in question. It is true the *warrewundu's* power has its limitations but he certainly has a great influence on all sorts of decisions taken by his local group. In any matter where there is, or might easily arise, a difference of opinion, the decision is preferably left to the *warrewundu*. To avoid criticism when food and *wati* have to be distributed, at all sorts of feasts, the distribution is put into a *warrewundu's* hands. He is the one who fixes the times for planting, for magical rituals and for the harvesting of the various crops. The *warrewundu*



takes the initiative for a *ndambu* against other local groups. Through the *ndambu*-contest against *warrewundu* from other local groups he gains prestige and influence not only for himself but also for the whole group who helped him. In any conflicts with other local groups the *warrewundu* act as spokesmen and representatives of their own groups.

When a conflict arose between the two villages of Kalwa and Bamol, for instance, on a matter of proprietary rights in certain areas of high ground the agreement reached by the village headmen together with the government officer proved to be not in accordance with the wishes of a few influential *warrewundu* in Bamol. They eventually succeeded in bringing about a revision of the boundaries in favour of their own village. They felt strong in their opposition, knowing that with its much bigger population Bamol would undoubtedly defeat Kalwa if a *ndambu* should be held.

Not everyone, by any means, can take the initiative for a *ndambu*. The challenger must have a certain status in the community. Thus *ndambu* can win prestige for a person but at the same time it requires prestige.

Excluded from taking the initiative for *ndambu* are in the first place women. To the Kimam this is no more than a logical corollary to the danger women represent for the typical *ndambu* crops. This does not mean, however, that they are altogether excluded from *ndambu*. They support it through their own specific contributions of food and they are very much interested in the course of the contest.

In a way the same is true of those young men who have not yet reached full social status while moreover they lack the necessary knowledge of magic and agricultural techniques. A *ndambu* initiative coming from a young man would be thought ridiculous as well as presumptuous.

Very old men mostly live on their glorious past, which gives them the right to give advice and assistance to, and encourage, the younger men. They are given a respectful hearing, but their relatively inactive role in agricultural production makes it impossible to expect a *ndambu* initiative from them.

From the significance of the various age-groups it follows, therefore, that activities in the struggle for prestige are expected mainly from the generation of married men with one or more children. Within this generation, again, only those who have proved their skill in the cultivation of yams and taro and who, evidently, have a powerful medicine at their disposal, have the right to undertake the food-contest.

3 *The organisation of the parties in ndambu*

The parties that oppose each other in *ndambu* are composed according to three closely connected principles.

a *Local factors.* In the case of a *ndambu* held on the occasion of a final mortuary feast, the sides must be formed by the respective *paburu*. In all other cases this is not necessary. If the *ndambu* is merely an exchange of yams between individuals without the addition of other foods, or if two sides have been formed consisting solely of people of the one *kwanda*, the organisation of the village in various local groups and the bipartite divisions of those groups play no part. Things become different, however, when the opposing sides belong to different local groups. In that case the parties are organised in the manner discussed in chapter 3. At the lowest level we find two *kwanda* opposing each other whereas at the highest level the opponents are from different villages, which means that the two villages as a whole compose the sides in the contest. The proportions of a *ndambu*, therefore are determined to a large extent by the type of local groups to which the respective opponents belong.

b *Kinship.* Consanguineal and affinal relatives are morally obliged to assist one another on all sorts of occasions, including of course a *ndambu* given by one of them. This means that relatives from other local groups are also involved in the *ndambu*. The number of relatives called upon depends largely on the scale of the *ndambu* in question, that is on the strength of the opponents. Apart from the members of the *jaentjewe*, other members of the *tjipente* may, if necessary, be called upon. The demands made on these relatives also vary according to the size of the *ndambu*. If the contribution expected from such a relative is greater than he himself can supply he appeals to the people of his own *kwanda*, who by helping him acquire a right to compensation. They usually receive a reward in *wati* at the *ndambu* from the *kwanda*-member in question or from the *ndambu*-giver himself. In this way other *kwanda*, apart from those directly involved in the contest, may play a part in *ndambu*.

c *Magic.* The third principle lies in the significance of magic in the cultivation of

yams. We have already noted that the *warrewundu* and all those who get their medicine from him are closely bound together by a community of interests. For the success of their harvest, the followers depend on the *warrewundu*. In return, however, they are obliged to contribute their large tubers and sometimes the smaller ones as well to any *ndambu* given by their leader. The prestige gained by the latter is reflected on his followers.

This is a factor of particular importance since the number of helpers is not, as in the case of the other two principles, more or less fixed by factors outside the actual domain of agriculture but depends directly on the personal achievements of the *warrewundu* in question. Thus a person's success in the prestige contest depends in an indirect as well as in a direct way on his success in agriculture, for the greater his success the greater faith is placed in his medicine and the more people become his followers.

On the whole the sides in *ndambu* are composed through a combination of all three principles named above. The *warrewundu* and his helpers usually belong to the same local group and are related to one another as well, while the latter have also received their medicine from this *warrewundu*. Sometimes, however, these principles conflict and a compromise has to be found.

The large number of kinship ties which a man has in other local groups often unavoidably result in situations where the relatives become opponents when a *ndambu* is held between these local groups. In the case of distant relatives this usually does not matter. If they are *jaentjewe*-members, however, or affines, there is a general rule in all villages that at the public collection of food and the official *ndambu* a man helps the party to which he belongs on account of his *kwanda* membership. Secretly, however, and preferably during the night, he will help his kinsmen in the opponent's group. Although everyone knows this, it must never take place in public, or he would bring down on himself the hostility of the *kwanda* or *paburu*. At the *ndambu* such persons stay in the background during discussions. They often attempt to mediate between the parties to restore peace. Sometimes ties of kinship linking opponents in *ndambu* are used on purpose to prevent a breach between the two parties. This takes place, for instance, when a conflict between two men of the same *kwanda* ends in a *ndambu* in spite of all attempts at mediation. In such cases the brothers

of the respective opponents change sides. That means that they do not help their own brother but his opponent, so that in the *ndambu* the brothers are on different sides. Brothers may not insult one another nor exchange reproaches which is otherwise a common feature of *ndambu*. In this way it is attempted to prevent too much hostility and a possible breach within the *kwanda*.\* *Ndambu* within a *kwanda*, however, occurs very rarely indeed.

During my stay in Bamol an occasion occurred where all three principles threatened to come into conflict.

As we saw above, the followers of a *warrewundu* usually come only from the latter's *paburu* on account of the latent animosity between *paburu* and the consequent frequent occurrence of *ndambu* between these groups. Bamol is somewhat of an exception in this respect, however, as the traditional opposition in this village is mainly concentrated on the division into *paburu*-groups. For this reason it may happen here that a man receives medicine from a *warrewundu* of a different *paburu* as long as it does belong to the same group.

That particular year Wagé, a man from Wendu, had a medicine of his own for the first time. This achievement filled him with pride and self-confidence to such a degree that he boasted in front of the people of Karaudu and told everyone that he would produce the largest yams that year. He would show the people of Karaudu how yams should be grown.

Marcellus, a *warrewundu* from Karaudu, grew angry at this. He invited Wagé to place the measuring stick of his yams next to his own. Wagé did so and it turned out that Wagé's yams were in fact smaller. Nevertheless Wagé lost none of his confidence and said: "All right, you challenge me to *ndambu*. You are sure to lose, for I have a lot of people behind me." It was true that Wagé had given his medicine to a great many people and his challenge, after comparing the measuring-sticks, was based mainly on the knowledge that Marcellus had no more than five followers.

Marcellus hesitated until Januarius, another *warrewundu* from Wendu, whispered to him: "Don't be afraid to speak." This meant that Januarius' group would support Marcellus although the latter belonged to the opposing local group. The reason for this support was the fact that Marcellus was the elder brother of Januarius' wife, his *nabarre*. Moreover they were neighbours and Januarius had also adopted two of Marcellus' children. All the same Januarius could not openly support him as he belonged to a different *paburu*.

The parties quickly grew until they comprised the two *paburu* as a whole. Still the *ndambu* did not take place eventually, thanks to the mediation of a number of followers of the two opposing *warrewundu*. Some of them were in difficulties because belonging to one *paburu*, they had received medicine from a *warrewundu* in the other one. Thus Wagé's followers included men from Karaudu and Marcellus' some from Wendu. These men eventually brought about a reconciliation through the argument that Wendu and Karaudu were one after all and had better combine in a *ndambu* against Sabudom, Borandjidam and Kantjimbe.

\* More or less comparable is the custom of solving conflicts between a man's co-wives by making them adopt each other's children.

4 *The warrewundu Kundemuje*

The following description of a *ndambu* clearly shows the struggle for power between the *warrewundu*. This case occurred during my stay in Bamol in 1962. The central personage is Kundemuje, who had gained great fame as a cultivator in course of time. He owed this fame largely to his numerous *ndambu* against *warrewundu* of his own and other *paburu*-groups and to his initiatives for *ndambu* against other villages. His great authority was not limited to his own *paburu*-group, Wendu-Karaidu, but was respected in the whole village. He was feared for his touchiness since he would threaten with *ndambu* on the least provocation. In the village of Jeobi a young man told me how once when he was in Bamol with some friends they were called to order by Kundemuje because they were making too much noise for the latter's liking. The young men of Bamol immediately obeyed him, which rather surprised those from Jeobi. It was soon explained to them, however, what they risked if they were to ignore Kundemuje's commands.

In Wendu-Karaidu people gradually got tired of Kundemuje's quibbling and of the way he abused his authority. If children came past his house noisily playing when he lay resting after drinking *wati*, he would threaten their fathers with *ndambu* the following day unless they taught their children to behave. "Who does he think he is? He is a man just like us and we talk during the day and in the evenings if we want to." Gradually people began to detach themselves from Kundemuje, as became apparent from his small number of followers in the cultivation of tubers. Although this brought about a considerable decrease of his power with respect to *ndambu*, no one was prepared as yet to take the initiative for a *ndambu* against him.

The controversy reached a climax during a hunting party. Antonius, a *warrewundu* from the same *paburu* but much younger than Kundemuje, killed a pig which Kundemuje claimed because his dogs had been the first to bite it. At a *ndambu* given against Bamol by the village of Suam, Kundemuje turned out to have joined those from Suam. This was a most extraordinary situation which gave rise to a great deal of bad feeling in spite of the fact that Kundemuje had many relations in Suam together with whom he cultivated gardens on the high grounds.

Antonius, who was sure of the secret support of the whole *paburu*, took the initiative and said: "your medicine isn't worth much. The tubers I can grow make yours look quite insignificant." Kundemuje replied: "You're no more than a child. How do you get it into your head to think you can surpass me? I'll give *ndambu* against you to teach you your place."

A few days later Antonius brought his tubers, bananas, sugar-cane, *wati*, and other foods into the village. Although the actual number of his helpers was only ten, the general sympathy was clearly on Antonius' side. It was known for certain, what is more, that Kundemuje had no more than two helpers, one being a relative from a different *paburu*-group.

While everyone was waiting for Kundemuje to arrive, a start was made with measuring the food. The method used for this is the same on all *ndambu* occasions and everyone present follows it with the greatest interest. The measuring and counting is always done by some *warrewundu* or elderly men who are not directly concerned in the particular *ndambu* in question. Two reed-stalks are twisted into a kind of rope on one's buttocks and with this a loop is made around the thickest banana of a bunch. The number of such loops shows the number of bunches and the size of the loops the thickness of the various specimens. For the clusters of areca nuts sticks of *gaba-gaba* are used, the number and length of these corresponding with the number and size of the clusters. The *wati*-plants are similarly measured with long *gaba-gaba* sticks, one stick for each plant, with a bundle of smaller sticks tied to it to indicate the number of stalks in each plant. The longest stalk of each *wati*-plant is measured from the roots to the point where the stalk becomes soft and unfit for consumption.

The tubers are the most important part. Any lumps and protuberances are carefully removed from the taro, so that they will not hinder exact measurement of the girth of the tubers. A measuring-tape is then carefully placed around the thickest part of the tuber, leaving a space of about a quarter of an inch for the part that is lost for consumption when the tuber is cut and which must therefore not be counted. This measuring-tape, the longest one, is called *kapa-pie* (*pie* = measure, *kapa* = long). The length of the tuber is indicated by another tape and is measured from the bottom tip to the spot where the stalks of the foliage are attached. This shorter tape is called *tutu-pie* (*tutu* =

short). For each tuber *kapa-pie* and *tutu-pie* are tied together and these are kept, together with all other measuring-and counting-sticks.

Although Kundemuje had announced that he would be present that afternoon, he did not appear. Antonius fetched from his house the masterpiece of his skill as a cultivator, an exceptionally large taro decorated with coconut-leaves, which he placed demonstratively on top of all the other food. With pride he said that his late father had not been a great cultivator for nothing and he placed the tuber in the hands of an old blind man, a *naiio* (friend) of his father's, who weighed it in his hands approvingly.

Only one friend and follower of Kundemuje's was present and said nothing, looking rather shame-faced. The absence of Kundemuje himself loosened the tongues of his fellow villagers. The remark was made that Kundemuje was indeed a great cultivator, that he had many and large plant-beds, but that in the long run he would be outdone by Antonius who had many more followers.

Another grievance which found expression was the fact that Kundemuje had no children of his own and had not even adopted any of his relatives' or anyone else's children. "He works and works. He is never any longer than one or two days in the village, then he goes to his gardens again or to Suam. He grudges himself the time to bring up children."

Antonius himself also joined in the conversation. He took a *wati*-plant in one hand and with the other hand made a throwing gesture. "This is only one of the many *wati*-plants in my garden, which is as long as I can throw. Soon the *wati* there will reach as high as my neck." He took a stalk of sugar-cane and told his audience how many of those he still had in his gardens. Finally he took the taro again. He placed it on his shoulder and said: "Kundemuje says his medicine is better than mine. Let him show a taro like this one. My bones are still young and Kundemuje will be dead long before he has returned everything I am going to give him."

When it became clear that Kundemuje was not going to come that day, *wati* and cooked food were given to his relatives and to his friend. The *ndambu* was to be continued the next day.

That day Kundemuje did in fact arrive with a large load of *wati*. In front of his house he planted some sticks and his paddle to indicate that he had laid out

extra gardens on the high grounds and would soon have an even larger amount of food to show. (These sticks symbolise the fence that is made around a forest-garden).

Both *warrewundu* now piled up their food in front of their respective houses. They stood opposite one another and reproaches and accusations were passing back and forth. When Kundemuje was reproached with not having brought up any children, he replied that he could not help it since his wives all turned out to be barren. (He was married three times).

Antonius challenged him to show a taro as big as the specimen he had brought and Kundemuje replied that this was only a thin affair compared to the ones he had given at the *ndambu* in Suam. To prove this he tied the *kapa-pie* and *tutu-pie* of those tubers to a post. Antonius now placed all his tubers in a row and Kundemuje was expected to put his tubers down opposite these, the largest ones in the middle, for the tubers have to be exchanged and compared with the measuring-tapes of one's own tubers. One look at Kundemuje's pile of food, however, showed that he had brought mainly *wati*. His taros were smaller and far less numerous. Kundemuje therefore left his tubers on the pile and placed his *wati*-plants opposite Antonius' tubers because he was in the majority as far as *wati* was concerned.

Antonius took his loops and measuring-sticks and placed them around Kundemuje's bananas and along his clusters of areca nuts. These proved to be more or less equal in size and number. When Antonius made another remark about his large taros, Kundemuje took his largest *wati*-plant and put it opposite Antonius' largest taro. "Let this *wati* take the place of the taro", he said. This, of course, gave rise to a heated discussion in which bystanders joined in. This went on for a while until suddenly a somewhat older man, a classificatory brother of Antonius', got up and called out that this dispute between two men of the same *paburu* must stop now. With a hatchet he cut to pieces the measuring-tapes which Kundemuje had tied to the post and shouted: "*Kwi, kwi kwiwatti perre muje*" ("Stop it, finished - make peace") *Perre muje* now sounded on all sides.

The two *warrewundu* gave in to the urging of the bystanders. They proceeded to exchange the food, after first ceremonially exchanging a coconut. Through an intermediary Antonius gave a sprouted coconut to Kundemuje, who split it in



two, ate one half himself and gave the other half to his helpers. Then he in his turn gave a similar coconut to Antonius.

Before the food was finally handed over, Kundemuje spoke to the men of the *paburu*, for he did not want to make peace with them yet. "Always when I pass your houses in the village people look away. Your wives never offer me any of the fish they have prepared. Nobody ever offers to chew betel with me. I am your father-*warrewundu*, I always help you with *wati*, yet you treat me like this! I'll hold *ndambu* against you every time you put something in my way and be careful, for I get angry easily."

A remarkable aspect of the exchange was the fact that not all the food on the piles was handed over. Antonius gave to Kundemuje only as many taros as the latter had brought himself, keeping the remainder. Kundemuje in his turn gave Antonius only as much *wati* as Antonius had collected. Since the two *warrewundu* had decided to make peace, the quantities of food exchanged had to be exactly equal. If they were not, one of the parties would feel he owed it to his prestige to supply whatever was missing on another occasion and thus continue the *ndambu*. Through the exchange of equal quantities the *ndambu* is 'dead'.

Kundemuje took up one of his own *wati*-plants and warned all those present that it was filled with magic and could therefore be used only by himself, for which reason he put it aside. His other *wati*-plants also contained so much magic that he first had to place a special medicine on each plant to neutralise the dangerous influence and make the *wati* fit for consumption.

On both sides the *wati* and food were distributed among those who had helped the two *warrewundu*. Kundemuje had brought so much *wati* that there was enough for everyone present. In order to drive back to the gardens whatever magic was still in the *wati* all the men got up, made a circular movement around their heads with their hands and called out: "*Nankua, nankua wook*", after which they made a gesture of throwing in the direction of the gardens.

The participants as well as the spectators now went home to have the *wati*-stalks chewed, for it was getting dark.

A couple of days later it became obvious that the conflict between Kundemuje and the rest of the *paburu* was by no means settled yet. Kundemuje boasted of

the large amount of *wati* he had brought to the *ndambu* and which Antonius had not been able to reciprocate. Tjamèmuje, the man who had taken the initiative to make peace, now said to Kundemuje that it was true he had given a lot of *wati*, but that taro was really more important, for "*wati* does not fill your belly". Kundemuje replied that he would revenge himself on the people of Wendu and Karaudu, for he intended to go to Suam to die. This made such an impression that everyone was silent. Some weeks later Kundemuje again started telling everyone how he had defeated Antonius. Tjamèmuje then decided to challenge Kundemuje to *ndambu*.

Early in the afternoon of the appointed day Tjamèmuje made a pile of a large number of taros. Antonius brought *wati*. The day before this he had already walked through the village proudly showing the measuring-stick on which a number of incisions showed the number of stalks. Other men of the *paburu* and kinsmen from other village-sectors contributed sago, areca nuts, bananas and coconuts.

The *ndambu* was much bigger now than last time and everyone was convinced that Kundemuje would be defeated on this occasion. To everyone's surprise, however, Kundemuje arrived later in the afternoon with an amount of food at least as great as the other side had collected: yams, taro, cassava and *wati*.

In front of his house Kundemuje made a platform on which the food was carefully piled up, with the *wati* on top in the shape of a small tower. He had brought less *wati* than last time, but he had added a lot of stalks that were not fit for use to show the number of unripe plants he still had in his gardens.

Another pile of food was made in front of Tjamèmuje's house, with a construction of *wati* stalks many feet tall. It was obvious that the positions were reversed this time, for Tjamèmuje and Antonius had brought more *wati* and less food and Kundemuje less *wati* and more tubers.

For some reason the people of Bamol had received permission from the government officer for the first time since quite a while to hold a dance again. It was therefore decided to combine the *ndambu* with the dance and exchange the food the next morning. Many people came to this feast, not only those who belonged to either of the two *ndambu* parties, but people from the whole village and even from other villages, to join in the dance. For this reason the two sides in the dance were not formed by the respective *ndambu* opponents, but by the

traditional *paburu*-groups of Bamol. After the dance food and *wati* were offered, as usual, to the guests from other village-sectors. For this purpose the women of Wendu-Karaidu had made a cooking-oven containing a sago-cake six by nine feet in size.

Apart from the piles of food belonging to the *ndambu* partners, there was a third pile in the village, for a child's *munawarre* feast. Although such a feast should really be celebrated on the occasion of a final mortuary feast, the parents had taken the opportunity to combine it with this *ndambu*. The food for this feast was piled up on top of a pigsty, for the pig was to be killed towards daybreak to be used in the child's feast.

Towards daybreak, when the bamboo-strip separating the two groups of dancers was removed, the moment had come for the *ndambu*. Together the two groups danced to and fro between the *ndambu*-piles, stopping now at one then at the other pile, so that everyone could have a good look at the collected food. The cooking-oven was opened and the sago was distributed among the guests, while the *ndambu*-givers were facing each other with their tubers. Now the drums were silent, but there was a great bustle of activity. Some people were distributing food and *wati*, others surrounded the child, which was sitting on top of the dead pig, decorated with sea-shells and dog's teeth, and was having its hair shaved. Others again were busy carefully counting and measuring the *ndambu*-food. Discussion on this subject continued for at least two hours. By the time all the food had been distributed and the *wati* had been chewed it was late in the morning. The tired dancers drank their *wati* and went to sleep. Once more no decision had been reached in the conflict between Kundemuje and the other *warrewundu* of his *paburu*-group. It would not be long before the discussions started again, resulting in new *ndambu*-feasts until finally one of them should be defeated either because he could not bring sufficient food or because he himself asked to stop the *ndambu*.

Kundemuje was facing the problem of a steadily decreasing number of followers while the *warrewundu* who opposed him had a large number of supporters. Craftily he tried to escape this dilemma by challenging the men of his *paburu* to individual *ndambu* in which both sides would do without the help of followers or relatives. It did not, however, appear as if the persons so challenged were going to accept his proposal.

5 *Bamol versus Kalwa in ndambu*

The people of Kalwa complained that those of Bamol were continually taking advantage of their hospitality by stopping in Kalwa on their way to Kimaam. For this reason the *warrewundu* of Bamol decided in 1960 to challenge the other village to a large-scale *ndambu*. Envoys, recognisable by a special kind of leaves worn through their armlets, were sent to Kalwa. The people of Kalwa accepted the invitation to come to Bamol, on the condition that the return-gift should be postponed because they had not expected this initiative and had therefore not had time to prepare for it. Since this *ndambu* was planned on such a large scale the men of Bamol had decided to plant extra gardens on the high grounds. A suitable piece of land was fenced in and on it the men laid out their individual plant-beds. Work in such a special *ndambu*-garden takes place in a spirit of mutual competition. He who first has his plot ready for planting, is suitably proud of this proof of his industry. The others of course reply that this is all very well, but only time will show who will eventually have the most and largest tubers. At harvest-time each planter therefore piles up his tubers on his plot, so that everyone can see who has achieved the best results.

After a few days the harvest is taken to the village where the tubers are again piled up in front of the planters' houses, so that the whole village may see what each man is contributing to the *ndambu*. Every man keeps a careful record of the number and size of the items he contributes. Tubers and other food are measured with counting-sticks and measuring-loops.

The day before the *ndambu* the *warrewundu* make the various piles of food, especially the yams, into one large pile for each *paburu*. Only the *warrewundu* are allowed to do this. This work takes a lot of time, since the right way of building up the pile determines the impression made on the other *paburu*. The smallest tubers are placed at the very bottom of the pile, but in such a way that as few tubers as possible make a sufficient foundation for the remainder. They are carefully sorted out according to size in order that the largest specimens may be given a sufficiently prominent position and the very largest may be placed on top.

The various *paburu* compete in stacking their yams as high as possible and vie

with each other as to who has the largest specimens. They boast of their own contributions and make disparaging remarks about those of other *paburu*.

The day the guests were to arrive, all the yams as well as all the other *ndambu* food were taken to the central *ndambu*-site, which was a more or less neutral spot for all the *paburu*: the school playground.

The guests were not expected till nightfall, but at noon already a dozen men were building a frame many feet high to hang the *wati* on. A number of poles of bamboo and gaba-gaba were placed in a circle with their tops touching. A yell sounded every time one of these sticks was pushed into the ground with combined effort. People brought coconut-fronds which were split lengthwise so that the green part hung down to one side. This was then wound around the leaf-rib to make a strong rope to keep the tops of the poles together. With alang-alang grass other coconut-fronds were tied into rings and these were tied to the frame at intervals of about three feet.

From time to time the men joined in a chorus to inform the people in the village of the developments and to urge them to make haste and load their canoes with food. More and more people were appearing at the site, both to help and to look on. When the first flotilla of canoes arrived, loaded with *wati*, the news was made known to the other villagers by loud shouting, urging them to follow the example. The roots of the *wati*-plants were bound together with grass to make a sort of ring which was subsequently hung on the frame. A coconut-shell was placed on top. According to my informants this was formerly a captured head. A kind of crown of coconut-leaves and a large bunch of bananas were also hung in the top. Food was now brought from all sides, sprouted coconuts from the closed gardens, yams, bunches of areca nuts and bananas.

From the other side of the lake in the centre of the village now came the sound of a number of women singing: they were singing the *mapiè*-song while they rolled big plaited bags of *mapiè*-flour to the water's edge. This was their contribution to the *ndambu* and the song describes their great zeal in collecting this food. The women pushed the bags through the water to the *ndambu*-site where they decorated them with strings of jambu apples, areca nuts, sweet potatoes and tobacco-and croton-leaves. From the *paburu* Bomerau a pig was brought for which a temporary pen was made, next to the *wati*-structure, of a

number of short poles pushed into the ground one next to the other. The pig must be kept alive, for it may only be killed when the food is handed over. It goes without saying that the piling up of the yams again took very long indeed. Everything, the pile of yams, the *wati*-structure and the way the large bunches of bananas had been placed was carefully calculated to produce a maximum of effect. The first impression had to be overwhelming.

About twenty very large yams were taken off the pile again back to the houses, where they were hidden until the dance came to an end in the early hours of the morning. Meanwhile the people of Kalwa had arrived but they waited outside until they were given the sign to proceed into the village, which they may not enter till all the food has been stacked up as the *warrewundu* wish it. When this was done, all the men and women left the *ndambu*-site and those of Kalwa, who had in the meantime put on their ornaments, entered the village. They went straight to the *ndambu* site, where they immediately started sounding their drums without apparently deigning to take one look at the food. Of course they had seen quite well how much had been collected by the people of Bamol.

At first the people of Kalwa danced alone, for those of Bamol were at home preparing their drums and their ornaments. The guests were fantastically arrayed, with on their backs structures of coconut-leaves many feet tall, with feather collars, head-dresses of casuary-feathers and with, of course, their hair appendages. No two people were dressed the same. Each has his own dancing array, which is his personal property.

About eight o'clock in the evening the first people of Bamol arrived on the site and hastily the strip marking the division between the two groups was set out. The dance then continued as usual, till dawn.

Just before sunrise the *warrewundu* left the site to fetch the largest *ndambu* tubers, which had been taken off the pile the day before. When these had been brought to a place a little to one side and not immediately visible to the dancers, one of the *warrewundu* gave the sign and they all lifted the yams to their shoulders. In a long procession they walked towards the dancing-site, where only those of Kalwa were still dancing. Slowly and solemnly the men walked around the dancers, singing:

“See how big this man  
See how big this woman  
See how big this yam”

*Wanawo tjipiwuta*  
*Wanawo tjatepiwuta*  
*Kunimpiwuta wanawo*

In front of the men walked the children, for whom various feasts were being given in combination with this *ndambu*. During the singing they were sprinkled with sago.

When the procession had circled the dancing-site a few times and the guests had had plenty of time to admire the yams, a halt was made and the men placed their yams in a row before the guests, sprinkling them with sago.

In the meantime the women of Bamol and Kalwa were dancing on different sides of the bags of *mapié*, each group singing its own *mapié*-song. The flour was handed over to the women of Kalwa in the bags (when the gift is returned the same bags must be used).

A *warrewundu* from Bamol now killed the pig with an axe. It is important to kill it at one stroke, for more strokes would be a bad omen. The pig was now placed beside the large yams and the children for whom a feast was being celebrated were put on top of it. The food which the hosts had prepared for their guests was distributed, as well as the meat of the pig and the *wati*. The large yams were also handed over. The remainder of the food was distributed among the guests later on in the afternoon, when everyone had slept off the effects of the spree, by the *warrewundu* from Kalwa.

Right up to the moment the *warrewundu* of Bamol lifted the largest yams to their shoulders, these tubers had been covered with the medicine that is used in the gardens. Directly afterwards the medicine was taken away and hidden, for the opponents must not discover the secret of the large yams.

When all the large specimens had been handed over to the guests, one was taken back again. Giving away all the yams would mean giving away all of the special power of growth which is still contained in these tubers and which has made them grow so large. The specimen that was taken back was planted in the garden again immediately following the feast.

All the people who have received food from the *ndambu* keep a careful record of the amount, so that they will know exactly how much they must contribute to the return-gift which Kalwa is to offer to Bamol.

During the eighteen months I spent in Bamol after this *ndambu* no return-gift had as yet been made. The people of Kalwa kept asking for permission to postpone it. Obviously they were not able to collect a sufficient amount of food. This was due partly to the smaller number of inhabitants of Kalwa. Another reason, however, is the low standard of root-crop cultivation in Kalwa on account of the importance of sago in the food-supply there. The people of Kalwa have not the skill to grow yams as large as those they received in Bamol, which were as much as seven or eight feet long.

#### 6 *Ndambu in the Ndom group*

The *ndambu*-feast of these villages, called *ndaf*, differs from that customary elsewhere in one important respect, namely in the fact that the food is not actually handed over, except at final mortuary-feasts. The *ndambu* is here no more than a contest during which the tubers are only shown and measured. A few days before the *ndambu* the members of both sides pile up the food and display it in front of their houses. The individual piles are not combined, as in the other villages.

On the day itself the dancing starts about noon. The two sides dance facing each other and now and again one of the men fetches one or more yams from his own pile and takes them, while dancing, to the dividing line to show to the opponents. This is accompanied by all sorts of disparaging remarks in which each side tries to shout the other down. The smallest tubers are shown first, but gradually the specimens displayed grow bigger. The very largest ones, however, remain carefully concealed in the houses, just as in the other villages, until the moment the dancing stops and the counting and measuring starts. The method used is the opposite of that followed in the other villages. Not the actual tubers, but the measuring-loops and counting-sticks are handed over to the opponents, who compare them with the number and size of their own tubers.

The contestants are always two individuals. The initial comparison is not between the total amount collected on both sides, but the men taking part face each other in two rows and at first compare only the tubers they have brought themselves. Only when someone is in danger of losing because his opponent



gives a larger measuring-loop than his largest tuber, another member of his party will help him out with a bigger one. If nobody in his group can show an equally large or larger specimen, his party loses the competition. The first loser keeps the measuring-loop and/or counting-sticks, for he is the one who will take the initiative for the return-match. Thus different people each time may take the initiative for the next *ndambu*, but it is always the same group which helps him, for his defeat is the defeat of the whole group.

Although the individual contestants in the *ndambu* are more important here than elsewhere, the group still forms a firm unit. This is obvious at the end of the actual contest when the piles of food of the individual cultivators of the same party are combined after all to be subsequently equally distributed over all the participants in the group (Here, too, a planter may not eat his own exceptionally large yams or taros).

During recent years the system of *ndambu* as it existed here has been changed by the local village teacher. He was afraid the *ndambu* would give rise to too many differences and fights between the village-sectors. Therefore he directed that at the end of the contest the food of both parties should be combined and equally distributed over all participants.

This custom of not handing over the food displayed in a *ndambu* to the opponents is for the other villages a source of all sorts of mockery such as: "It is easy to give *ndambu* if you eat it yourself." If at *ndambu* someone boasts of the food and *wati* he still has in his gardens, showing counting-sticks or measuring-loops to prove this, he is told he "gives *ndambu* like the people of Kalilam." "If you have so much, give it".\*

\* The two methods employed in the prestige contest confirm the thesis of van Emst, who holds that it is not correct to regard prodigality as the only means of acquiring distinction and power in Melanesia. He supplies a number of cases from the Solomon and Santa Cruz Islands and from Gazelle Island where a mere display of riches is sufficient for gaining prestige. (van Emst, p. 96)

As a matter of fact, the two methods are not so very different in this respect. In giving away the giver may be reasonably certain of having his gift returned in time.

In the foregoing chapters we saw that exchange forms an important element in the culture of Frederik-Hendrik Island. In view of the significance attributed to exchange in the theoretical works of Marcel Mauss and Lévi-Strauss it may be useful to have a closer look at the consequences their work might have for a study of the situation on Frederik-Hendrik Island.

Marcel Mauss regards the exchange transaction as a 'prestation totale'.<sup>1</sup> This totality has a number of different aspects which are also clearly to be discerned in the case of Frederik-Hendrik Island.

*a* Exchange is total in the sense that not one object but objects of the most diverse nature play a part in it. On Frederik-Hendrik Island not only food and services, but women, too, are exchanged. The right of sexual access to a woman may sometimes also be an object of exchange, as is demonstrated for instance by the practice of two men exchanging wives for a few hours. Through the system of adoption, children, too, have a place in the pattern. Adoption is to a high degree associated with the exchange of women, but two friends may also exchange children in order to reinforce and continue their friendship, or the same may be done by former enemies to seal the peace between them.

Even in those cases where a simple payment of services rendered seems to take place, the reciprocity of the exchange-pattern proves to be not altogether superfluous. The *wati*-gift, for instance should be regarded in the first place as a seal to a contract or a sign of establishing a proprietary right. It may also serve as a

token of friendship or for appeasement of rivalry. The giver of *wati* is and remains obliged, when asked, to render the same services to those who helped him.

*b* A second aspect of its totality is the synthetic nature of the exchange, i.e. the fact that different aspects of the culture find expression in the gift. It is not difficult to demonstrate the synthetic nature of the gift, for instance in *ndambu*:

1 Although the goods exchanged at the *ndambu* are mainly of the same kind, the economic aspect must not be disregarded. In the sphere of food-production the *ndambu* indubitably exercises a positive influence. The prestige that may be acquired through this institute is a stimulus for everyone to wish to become a good cultivator and to devote his best energies to producing as large an amount of food as possible. Schoorl, in the report of his tour of inspection, also points out this function and even wonders whether the introduction of rice-cultivation on Frederik-Hendrik Island might not be stimulated by means of *ndambu*.<sup>2</sup>

In 1961 and '62 the Agricultural Information Service developed a transmigration-project which envisaged the move of the population of Frederik-Hendrik Island to a district along the Upper Digul (Asike). During conversations with responsible authorities in the agricultural sector I found that their plans relied to some extent on being able to make the food competition instrumental in bringing about a modern economic development.

It is my opinion that attempts to link up with the original culture in this manner are rather naive. As we saw, *ndambu* is inextricably bound up with the social structure and with the significance of yams and taro. In the struggle for prestige, root-crops play a dominant rôle. Other foods are of secondary importance and are really no more than embellishments. The exchange of food, moreover, is an aspect of the system of reciprocity and dualism. Property is not used for conspicuous consumption, for which reason it is hard to see how the rivalry of the conspicuous food-giving could be favourable for the development of a modern "Wirtschaftsgesinnung".<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless it must be stated that on the production of native crops, *ndambu* does have a stimulating effect.

The people themselves also realise the economic importance of *ndambu*. A few missionaries are very much opposed to it, but the natives always argue "If there is no *ndambu* we are lazy and have to go hungry. If there is much *ndambu* we

are happy and eat well". Although it is in the first place the specific *ndambu*-crops for which this influence is important, it must be noted here that *ndambu* has an influence also on the other native foods that are brought to this feast. In a distributive respect *ndambu* has particular significance, for the food that has been collected is always divided among a large number of people. I never saw a large quantity of food given to one man alone. The quantity received by each participant, even at the largest *ndambu*-feasts, is rarely sufficient for more than three or four days' meals for a whole family. There is, therefore, no waste, in sharp contrast to the true potlatch. It is more a question, in a sense, of a redistribution of food, which is extremely important especially with respect to root-crops as these cannot be preserved for long. It would be far from right to think that all men, or even *kwanda* or *paburu* always grow equal quantities of yams or taro.

If everyone were to keep his harvest of root-crops for himself, it would not be possible to take more from the garden than was needed each time. The tubers cannot, however, be indefinitely left in the ground, as there is a grave danger of part of the harvest being lost, should it rain. From this point of view *ndambu* might be regarded as the most efficient way to attain optimal consumptive utilisation of the harvest. In such cases *ndambu*, as opposed to the potlatch, does not lead to waste, but might even be said in a sense to prevent it.

2 *Ndambu* has a legal aspect, at least, if the term 'legal' is conceived in a wider sense. Hoebel, however, takes a stricter view, as may appear from his definition: "A social norm is legal if its neglect or infraction is regularly met, in threat or in fact, by the application of physical force by an individual or group possessing the socially recognized privilege of so acting".<sup>4</sup> When applying this definition we find that an important element is missing in *ndambu*, namely that of physical force. It seems doubtful, however, whether *ndambu* should be denied a legal aspect on these grounds. Everywhere on the island *ndambu* is a recognised procedure for solving conflicts and differences of opinion. Recently this function of *ndambu* has gained more and more in importance in spite of missionary disapproval, for the very reason that every form of physical coercion as a means of punishment for any offence has been forbidden by the government authorities.

3 The religious aspect requires no further explanation. The people themselves regard it as the whole *raison-d'être* of this institution. On the other hand, if the food-exchange is interpreted according to the ideas of Lévi-Strauss, the religious aspect is not a primary one. Like prohibition of incest and marriage-exchange, exchange of food may be regarded as a form of communication between the participating groups. In that case any religious foundation must be regarded as a sort of rationalisation. This means that in fact the tubers, coconuts and other types of food are not exchanged because the owners may not eat them, but rather that these foods may not be eaten because they have to be exchanged.<sup>5</sup>

4 The political aspect, finding expression in the power-seeking of certain *warrewundu* and the groups around these *ndambu*-givers was treated in detail in Chapter 6.

5 An aesthetic and educative function may also be detected in *ndambu*.

c For Marcel Strauss the totality of the gift is also reflected in the fact that the exchange takes place not between individuals but between groups. In *ndambu* the opponents are in fact always groups and often the whole village community is involved in the exchange.

The most remarkable element in the organisational aspect of *ndambu* is its dualism. Since, however, many exchange transactions take place outside and independently of existing bipartite divisions, one may tend towards Lévi-Strauss' view that dualism is only one of many forms by way of which the principle of reciprocity may find expression.<sup>6</sup>

In this connection a somewhat closer examination of the custom of marriage-exchange may be useful, for in many societies with decidedly dualistic organisations the exchange of women is very closely bound up with the dualistic system. On Frederik-Hendrik Island, however, where marriage-exchange is such a pronounced feature of culture, this exchange does not, in the first instance, take place between the most obviously oppositional parties, the *pabnru*. The exchange of women is accomplished in the form of a direct

exchange of sisters. The strong ties of kinship within the *kwanda* make it possible, in practice, for every female member of the *kwanda* to act as exchange-sister. It is therefore between the *kwanda* that the exchange takes place.

If we agree with Lévi-Strauss in regarding marriage as a means of communication, we might wonder why the different *kwanda* have direct mutual exchange relations instead of being included in a circulating connubial system. To this the answer can be quite simple: since the *kwanda*, as we saw, are very unstable groups, they are compelled to effect the transaction with the least possible risk, that is, by direct exchange. The extinction of one or more *kwanda*, for instance through some epidemic, would otherwise upset the whole connubial system.

It should be noted, what is more, that there is also a mechanism of indirect exchange operative on Frederik-Hendrik Island, in the form of the bride-price marriage. The difference between the two exchange-systems lies in the fact that women do not circulate according to a fixed system. Indirect exchange, by bride-price is diffuse, which, in view of the instability of the local groups, is less hazardous than a circulating connubial system, while on the other hand it affords an opportunity of establishing affinal relationships with more groups; than is possible with the system of direct exchange between *kwanda*.\*

Despite the advantages of marriage by bride-price there exists a preference everywhere for a direct exchange of sisters. A closer examination of the exchange relationships between *kwanda* and *paburu* shows that marriage-exchange is not, after all, quite independent of the dualistic organisation. In Chapter 3 it was stated that the *kwanda* is exogamous, in contrast to the *paburu*. It is true that the *paburu* is not exogamous in principle, but in practice it sometimes is, depending on the demographic situation of the village. Let us take the example of a relatively small village such as Woner, Kiworo or Wanggambi. Here we find that the *paburu* do have the function of exchange-units. Marriages within the *paburu* are extremely rare. The population of a *paburu* in one of these villages is hardly or not at all more numerous than that of a *kwanda* in a large village such as Bamol. In actual fact there is no such thing in these villages as a subdivision of each *paburu* into a number of *kwanda*. The *kwanda* here are

\* That exchange is an integral element in bride-price marriages is clearly demonstrated by, inter alia, J. Pouver in "New Guinea as a field for ethnological study," 1961

identical with the *paburu*. The relationship between the members of a *paburu* is considered to be as close as between the members of a *kwanda* in a larger village. A similar situation is also found in Bamol. Nowadays the *paburu* Borandjidam has scarcely more people than a *kwanda* and in fact I do not know of any marriages within this *paburu*. There are, however, exchange-relations with the equally far from populous complementary *paburu* Sabudom. If we regard dualism as the expression of a principle acting independently of the specific organisation of the village, for which view the numerous forms of bipartite division (cf. Chapter 3 par. 3) seem to afford sufficient foundation, then we would not be far from the truth in considering the materialisation of this principle in the *paburu-kavé* of the larger villages to have developed from an initial opposition of *kwanda*, as a result of the increase in population.

Within the *paburu* new bipartite divisions develop (cf. Sibenda and Bamol) between which new exchange-relations may be established. A development in the opposite direction, as a result of the extinction of a large number of *kwanda* is also quite conceivable. Thus it is possible to make a diachronous as well as a synchronous study of the dualistic system of Frederik-Hendrik Island.

With the development of new oppositions within the *paburu* exchange-relations with other *paburu* continue to exist, although their frequency diminishes as the possibilities of effecting exchange-transactions within a smaller dualistic unit increase. In that case, however, the exchange-units are no longer the *paburu* but the same groups as carry out exchange-transactions within the *paburu*. The question of which group acts as exchange-unit therefore depends largely on relative numbers. The size of an exchange-group is fairly constant. An important factor here is the requirement that the transaction must retain the character of an exchange of sisters. This character would be lost if the exchange took place between the populous village moieties (cf. the notions regarding the relationship of the members of a *paburu*, Chapter 3, par. 2c). On the other hand a *kwanda* which is too small cannot function as an exchange-unit because of a shortage of exchange-sisters.

If exchange-marriages between *kwanda* of different *paburu* also take place in the larger villages, we must remember that the rules of *kwanda* exogamy may from time to time bring about the necessity of finding a mate outside one's own *paburu*. For the same reason it often happens that those smaller villages in

which *paburu* and *kwanda* coincide, are forced to find exchange-partners in other villages.

In spite of these observations, however, there remains one notable difference between the organisation of marriage-exchange and ceremonial food-exchange, which according to Lévi-Strauss are two aspects of one principle. Even in the largest villages the exchange of food takes place mainly between *paburu* (although *ndambu* within a *paburu* is not altogether an impossibility), whereas such villages show a strong preference for marriages within the *paburu*. This preference was actually stated by the people themselves on numerous occasions. However much exchange of food and marriage-exchange may be formally analogous, there is one substantial difference: food is an article of consumption and as such not durable. It is replaceable, moreover, within a fairly short space of time. In the case of women, the situation is totally different. They are producers of food and of children. In contrast to food one might even call them capital goods, in the hope that such a statement will not be misinterpreted. The element of risk connected with every exchange-transaction, that of the obligations not being met, carries much greater implications with respect to women. The greater the distance, whether social or territorial, between the groups involved in the transaction, the greater the risk that the obligations of exchange will not be fulfilled. This is clearly apparent from the custom of demanding some security whenever a case of deferred exchange occurs between two *kwanda* belonging to different *paburu*. No analogous rule is found in food-exchanges.

It may not be superfluous to consider the *paburu* organisation of Bamol anew in the light of what we have just seen. In Chapter 3 the six *paburu* of this village were interpreted as possibly resulting from a fusion of three villages. For the present-day situation of the bipartite system the specific historical developments have only secondary importance. In various ways the *paburu*-group of Bomerau-Kantjimbe occupies a middle position between the two flanking *paburu*-groups of Sabudom-Borandjidam and Wendu-Karaudu. This middle-position manifests itself in geographic location, in dance, burial, *ndambu* and marriage-exchange. Bomerau-Kantjimbe exchanges women with both other groups, always on the basis of direct exchange of sisters. The



number of exchange-transactions between the two peripheral groups is, on the other hand, remarkably small. The middle group thus fulfils the function of a connecting link between the two flanking groups.

In view of this it is quite striking to find that burial- and *ndambu*-relations are most numerous between the peripheral groups, that is, between those groups which maintain the fewest connubial relations. It would be imprudent to generalise on the basis of a specific case such as Bamol. Further research would be needed to show whether in other villages, too, the ceremonial exchange of food takes place preferably between units which have relatively few connubial relations. We may, however, point out some aspects which might explain the differences in organisation between food-exchange and marriage-exchange.

*Ndambu* is closely associated with the mortuary rites, in which the persons who perform the burial and the age-mate of the deceased play important rôles. These persons must be neither consanguine nor affinal relatives of the deceased. Food is handed over to the *naburine*, in the capacity of representative of his group. In this connection we must keep in mind one significant difference between the two exchange-transactions: the aspect of conspicuous giving which plays an important part in food-exchange but is quite absent in the exchange of women. The giver of food acquires power and prestige by making his gift as large as possible – so large that he will not receive the same amount in return. He aims at occupying a creditor's position. In the exchange of women, on the other hand, the aim is to be creditor and debtor preferably at the same time. It happens repeatedly that *ndambu* is held against another village, while there is no question of a simultaneous exchange of food, a case of deferred exchange. That would be quite impossible in marriage-exchange. The greater risk involved plays a part here, but another reason is the fact that if the obligation of returning the food is not met, a certain amount of compensation is received in the form of an increase of prestige.

The struggle for power and prestige in *ndambu* leads to great rivalry and not infrequently to a temporary breach of relations. *Ndambu* between affines is a perilous affair, since it would jeopardize the affinal relationship which is so greatly valued. The incompatibility of *ndambu* and affinal relations is most clearly apparent from the difference in the respective patterns of conduct. Affines avoid each other and ought to show respect for one another in every

way. They should help each other by word and deed on every occasion, including, and not in the last place, *ndambu*. The relations between affines are reciprocal. *Ndambu*-partners, on the other hand, abuse one another, accuse each other of practising magic and hurl the grossest insults at one another. They do their very best to make each other feel ashamed – one of the most important things affines must avoid. There is no question, moreover, of any temporary exemption from the obligation of avoidance between affines during *ndambu*. Unlike affines, *ndambu*-partners attempt to establish a relationship of sub- and super-ordination.

If this train of thought is correct, we need no longer wonder why exchange of food and exchange of women take place in two different dualistic systems. The development of the dualistic system from the smaller to the greater bipartite division is accompanied by a change in the content of the reciprocal relationship, from exchange of women to exchange of food.

The position of being debtor and creditor at the same time is manifested most clearly in the *naiokoné*-relationship. The *naiokoné* (exchange-partners), as we have seen, are under a mutual obligation to provide exchange-sisters to guarantee the marriage of each other's sons (see Chapter 4, par. 3). This obligation is incumbent on the position of mother's brother.

If we regard marriage, with Lévi-Strauss, in the first place as aimed at "alliance", the position of a mother's brother in the system immediately becomes clear. He is a priori present in every exchange-transaction, which explains his special position as manifested in the avunculate. In a direct sister-exchange marriage the *naiokoné* occupy this position with respect to one another's children. A mother's brother's relationship towards his sister's child is to be regarded, according to Lévi-Strauss, as part of a system which should be considered as a whole for its structure to be properly understood. This elementary structure of kinship is based on four elements, i.e. brother, sister, father, son. These elements are mutually united by two pairs of connected oppositions, in such a way that each of the two generations contains one positive and one negative relationship (Lévi-Strauss p. 56). In contrast to Radcliffe Brown, therefore, Lévi-Strauss does not regard the position of the mother's brother as being necessarily linked to a particular structuring principle, as for instance the patrilineal one.

The positive and negative relationships refer to the attitudes between husband and wife, brother and sister, father and son and between mother's brother and sister's child. Positive are what Lévi-Strauss calls "les relations libres et familières" (+) and negative "les relations marquées par l'hostilité, l'antagonisme ou la réserve" (—).<sup>7</sup>

Let us see now whether this pattern applies also to Frederik-Hendrik Island.

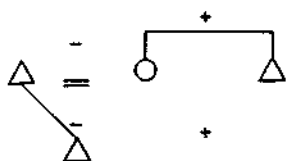
The relationship between mother's brother and sister's child is the most institutionalised and for that reason in a way the easiest one to characterise. In Chapter 4 we noted the joking character of this relationship and the general intimacy between these kinsmen, which is expressed in actual assistance on various occasions, as well as in other ways. Mother's brother's house is a place of refuge for any child which is on strained terms with its father.

The relationship between father and son is characterised in the first place by authority on the father's and obedience and respect on the son's part. A certain amount of reserve between father and son is unmistakably present. The pattern of conduct between father and son forms a strong contrast in this respect to that existing between mother and son or between mother's brother and sister's child.

The relationship of the marriage-partners must be called distinctly negative in the great majority of cases. Their mutual understanding is often poisoned by suspicions of adultery and by irritation at trifles. Quarrels between husband and wife occur daily and nobody gets worked up about them. It is nothing unusual for a man to beat his wife because she does not have the meal ready in time or merely because he suspects her of having connections with other men. Suicide on the part of either husband or wife is not at all unusual. Unions characterised by a certain degree of harmony and intimacy are usually those of elderly couples.

In Chapter 3 we already noted that there usually exists an intimate and good relationship between brother and sister, in contrast to that existing between elder and younger brother. A man may sometimes address a much older sister by the term for mother, while his attitude towards her is of a similar nature. In the course of my research I found little or no evidence of conflicts between brothers and sisters. Even after her marriage, a woman's relationship with her brother retains its positive character, manifesting itself in mutual aid among other things.

Our observations may then be summarised as follows; Lévi-Strauss' pattern appears to hold good for Frederik-Hendrik Island:



It seems to me, however, that this limitation of elementary kinship structure to the above-mentioned four types of relationship (*cette structure est la structure de parenté la plus simple qu'on puisse concevoir et qui puisse exister. C'est, à proprement parler, l'élément de parenté<sup>8</sup>*) cannot be the last word in kinship analysis. Lévi-Strauss makes no mention at all of other relationships, for instance, those between elder and younger brother and between mother and children or elder and younger sister, which are so very important on Frederik-Hendrik Island.

The reason for this is possibly contained in Lévi-Strauss' general theoretical conceptions. Kinship, for him, exists only as proceeding from the 'alliance'. According to him affinity and consanguinity should be regarded as a form of communication. This would place social anthropology on a level with economics and linguistics, for both of which branches of study a particular form of communication forms the subject-matter, these being commodities and services, and language, respectively.<sup>9</sup>

The study of group structure plays a relatively subordinate rôle in this train of thought. In my opinion it is obvious that genealogical and territorial groupings have other and no less important functions than that of communication alone. The rather one-sidedly formal construction set up by Lévi-Strauss leaves no room for kinship relations which are of relatively little significance for the exchange-pattern. Such are the relations between mother and child and between siblings of the same sex.

The strong emphasis placed on the element of exchange also has the consequence of too one-sidedly assigning to the man, in this case the brother, the rôle of active subject, whereas the woman becomes a relatively passive object. Lévi-

Strauss has this theoretical difficulty in view when he says that the woman as an object of exchange cannot be simply reduced to a sign because she herself is a producer of signs.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the object can only be exchanged with the object's assent and co-operation is a difficulty which, however, scarcely plays a part in the further development of his theory. With regard to Frederik-Hendrik Island this forms an important objection, since marriage by elopement here constitutes a generally recognised means for a woman to play an active part and thus break the exchange-relations.\*

The methods employed by Lévi-Strauss have an appearance of formalism. His work is based on only one clear principle of interpretation, namely the principle of reciprocity, which results in various forms of exchange and, therefore, of communication.

For certain regions, New-Guinea for instance, this method as one of a number of possible methods of approach, may be very useful.

The question whether Lévi-Strauss' structural approach may be accepted as an all-embracing, more or less exclusive method depends in my opinion to a large extent on further inquiries into the nature of interpretative principles and on the development of more of such principles than has been the case so far, while great importance should be attached especially to their mutual relationship and to the operational value.\*

\* See also de Josselin de Jong's criticism in: Lévi-Strauss's theory on kinship and marriage, 1952, p. 57f.

\* J. Pouwer in his mimeographed report "De structurele methode in punten", 1965, makes an interesting effort at elaborating Lévi-Strauss's structural approach by introducing a set of interpretative principles.

## *summary*

Frederik-Hendrik Island is a low-lying region on the south coast of West Irian. The island is saucer-shaped, low in the middle and higher around the edges, which means that the large quantities of water that fall during the rainy months from January until May drain away only very slowly. During this period the island resembles a vast inland sea and only a few small stretches of plain in the north-east, west and south of the island remain dry. Its vegetation is limited chiefly to innumerable varieties of reeds and rushes.

Since time immemorial this marsh has been inhabited, as is testified by many abandoned patches of agricultural land. At present the population numbers about 7000, distributed over twenty-five villages situated at sometimes quite large distances one from the other.

Five language-groups may be distinguished in this region, but the cultural diversity is not so great as to preclude its being viewed as a whole in this respect.

A particularly notable aspect is the uniformity displayed in the methods of food-production. This is due to a large extent to the very special demands of the environment. Agriculture is the chief means of subsistence and has developed to quite a high level. Its intensive nature is a practical necessity, since the environment would not allow of a system of shifting cultivation. All agricultural ground, as well as the ground needed for dwelling houses has to be artificially obtained, except in the villages on the sandy reef along the south coast. For this purpose long and narrow islands, made of clay, drift grass and

mud, are raised in the marsh. The level of these artificial islands varies according to the crops that are to be grown on them. Islands designed for the cultivation of sago and taro are fairly low, while yams and sweet potatoes are planted on relatively high islands. In fixing planting times the changes in water-level in the marsh are taken into account. The choice of seed-plants, the composting of the soil and the restoration of the level of the islands are all matters of constant concern. Each plant is separately planted and cared for.

In spite of the very rational methods used, the food situation in practically all the villages remains most precarious. In the southern villages famine ensues whenever tidal waves from the sea make their way through the narrow creeks inland, destroying the harvest. Such disasters occur regularly once every five to seven years.

For the other parts of the marsh the food-situation is continually threatened especially by an unexpected rising of the water-level due to a premature beginning of the rainy season. Typical symptoms of undernourishment are not hard to find on Frederik-Hendrik Island.

Agriculture in the narrow sense of the word therefore is only partially able to supply the necessary food for the population. The diet is supplemented with a great variety of edible plants, among which fern-roots are particularly important, as well as by fishing and hunting. In a few villages sago has recently become an important source of food, but there are no wild sago-forests on the island. It has to be grown on artificial islands in the same way as root-crops.

The dwelling-islands or *patha* are in a sense basic to the social organisation of the village. A *patha*-group consists sometimes of one nuclear family, but usually of a number of these. Generally these are the families of a father and those of one or more of his real or adopted sons, or the families of a number of brothers. The *patha* is a very important co-operative unit, although the domains of the constituent families are strictly separate and they certainly do not form a common household.

If the *patha*-group grows too large, or the families in question consider it undesirable for some reason to continue their joint-dwelling, one or more of them may split themselves off from the *patha*. In such a case a new island is made, usually in the immediate vicinity of the old one. From this new *patha*

others may be split off in course of time. Dwelling-islands historically and genealogically connected in this way form a territorial group of a higher order called *kwanda*. The genealogical unity of both *patba* and *kwanda* should not be viewed too strictly as there is a relatively great measure of mobility, while a person's membership of these territorial groups does not depend on genealogical relationship alone. Another important factor may be one's birth or adoption into such a group.

Two or more *kwanda* together form a territorial group on a higher level again. This is the *paburu*, which literally means 'village-sector'.

A remarkable feature of social organisation on the island is the fact that all villages, excepting only Bamol, consist of two sectors which oppose one another in a ceremonial and antagonistic relationship. This bipartite division is not only found in the structure of the village as a whole, but also exists on the level of the *paburu*, where the constituent *kwanda* form two, distinctly rival, groups.

When a conflict occurs, the two parties arrange themselves according to the local groups that are directly involved. Thus a conflict with a person from a different village-sector may end up in the two *paburu* opposing one another. If the persons concerned belong to the same *paburu* but to different *kwanda*, the latter will constitute the two sides, although both parties usually receive assistance from relatives in other *paburu* or from *kwanda* which are not directly involved.

*Paburu* and *kwanda* have an important function in defining property rights in the land. Every village is divided into areas of disposal for the various *paburu*. That part of the *paburu* which is especially used for the making of garden-islands is subdivided into smaller areas of disposal for the various *kwanda*. These sub-areas are called *paku*. Within the *paku* every member of the *kwanda* has the right to make islands wherever he chooses. The community right of disposal, however, is reduced to a minimum by the principle which gives a man an exclusive right in anything on which he had spent a large amount of personal energy. This is true, among other things, of the garden-islands, which means that in many cases the right of disposal of the *kwanda* applies not so much to the islands but rather to the section of the marsh on which these islands have been made. All a man's sons have a right of inheritance, but the



eldest son is in a privileged position. He manages the common property of garden-islands either alone or in collaboration with his younger brothers. This situation often gives rise to conflicts between the brothers if the younger ones, on reaching adulthood, insist that the eldest should divide the garden-islands among them.

The *kwanda* are also the groups between which marriage-exchange, in most cases direct exchange, takes place. This consists of an exchange of sisters, but it is not necessary that these should be real sisters of the exchange-partners. The unity of the *kwanda* is interpreted in so strictly genealogical a manner that any other available woman in the *kwanda* may take the place of a sister. In practice the *kwanda* is exogamous; cases of marriage inside the *kwanda* are extremely rare. As is to be expected in a system of direct exchange of sisters, marital residence is virilocal. In view of the strong economic ties connecting father and son, this is, in most cases, patrilocal as well. *Kwanda* genealogies therefore make the impression, on the whole, of being patrilineal, particularly if the practice of adoption is left out of account.

There are reasons, however, which make it undesirable to describe the kinship-structure of Frederik-Hendrik Island as patrilineal. The Kimam do not think of their society as patrilineal. Kinship is reckoned along both father's and mother's side. Groups constructed purely on a basis of kinship have a bilateral character. Such are the *jaentjewe*, groups of real and classificatory siblings, and the *tjipente*, the kindred constituted by the *jaentjewe* groups of different generations. Both the *jaentjewe* and the *tjipente*-groups are to a high degree operational in character. In the course of our research we noticed continually that the Kimam have great difficulty in conceiving a pure kindred group in the abstract. For this reason, too, neither small children nor elderly people or deceased may be reckoned as belonging to either of these groups. In practice these kinship categories are of great importance, since they form the connecting element between the various local groups. For this reason, collaboration and assistance at feasts and on other occasions is rarely confined to the members of a particular local group alone. Important affairs thus do not merely concern the local group in question but, in a way, the whole village.

The significance of local and kinship groups is seen most clearly in the feasts marking the different stages in the period of mourning. When a person dies, his

closest relatives, that is in the first place those who belong to his *patha*, are obliged to mourn for him. They are not allowed to appear in public except covered from head to toe in a plaited hood. The other members of the *kwanda* and the secondary and tertiary relatives in the other *kwanda*, respectively *paburu* are also under an obligation of mourning, but far less strictly so. At the mortuary feasts they represent the closer relatives.

The gardens of the deceased are from the moment of his death taboo for everyone in his *paburu*. The fruits from these gardens, especially the coconuts, are carefully preserved to be handed over at the next feast, partly to the men who carried out the burial and partly to the *naburine*, the age-mate of the deceased, all of whom must belong to the ceremonially opposite village-sector. The *naburine* is obliged to provide a return-gift of an equal amount, so that the reciprocal gifts of food assume the character of an exchange between the deceased (or his representatives) and his age-mate.

At each successive feast more gardens are closed. Not only the gardens belonging to the deceased but those of the whole *kwanda* and, as the period of mourning advances, of the whole *paburu*, fall under the taboo. Thus the exchanges of food grow larger with each successive feast.

From a ceremonial point of view coconuts are perhaps as important as taro-roots or yams. But unlike coconuts, the latter may be handed over on only one occasion, namely at the final and most important feast. When the dry season comes, following a person's death, as many islands as possible are planted with yams or taro. There is a very close connection between yams and men, which is expressed clearly in a myth associated with the origin of yams. In this myth the planting of yams is equated with the interment of a person whose rebirth, in the form of a yam, occurs at the time of the harvest. The opening of the plant-mounds at harvest-time marks the moment to bring the mourning-period to a close. The grave is opened, the bones are cleaned and reinterred, after which the grave is made level with the ground.

It is at the final mortuary feast that the greatest exchange of food takes place, yams now being the principal item. The *naburine* and the relatives of the deceased act as representatives for their respective *paburu*, which are now as a whole involved in the exchange of food.

This exchange of food between the two constituent sectors of a village on the

occasion of a final mortuary feast is called *ndambu* and has a strongly competitive character. The two sides try to outdo each other in bringing so much food and such large tubers to the feast that the other party cannot manage to give an equal quantity in return. Both the quantity and the size of the various kinds of food are carefully measured and recorded by means of counting-sticks and measuring-loops after which comparison takes place with the food received from the other party.

The competitive character of *ndambu* appears even more clearly from the procedure followed in the western villages, where the tubers and other foods are not even handed over, but merely shown to the opponents and carefully measured.

In some villages too, the ceremonial nature of *ndambu* is often subordinate to the competitive element. In most villages *ndambu* is no longer held exclusively on the occasion of a final mortuary feast. All sorts of conflicts may result in a *ndambu*. *Ndambu* is, moreover, an excellent means of gaining power and prestige in the community. A successful cultivator can acquire a lot of prestige by challenging another, also successful in this sphere, to *ndambu*. He will then receive support from all the men of his local group and from his relatives in other local groups as well. In such a case, however, a conflict may arise between a person's obligations as a member of a particular local group and his kinship obligations. The relatives may then act as mediators to bring about a reconciliation and to prevent the *ndambu* taking place. If they do not succeed they will publicly support the *ndambu*-partner in their own local group without, privately, neglecting their relatives in the other *kwanda* or *paburu*.

A *ndambu*-giver derives important assistance also from all those men who received magical medicine from him to promote the growth of their crops. Every man is free to choose the cultivator-magician with whom he wishes to associate himself, providing this magician belongs to the same *paburu* as himself. This means that whoever has most success with his root-crops usually also has the largest number of followers – men who wish to use his apparently very effective medicine. The most successful cultivators, therefore, usually have the largest number of people helping them in a *ndambu* competition.

That such glory is only transitory, however, is shown by the fact that a man's power and prestige decrease rapidly as he grows older and less able to produce

large quantities of food. Very old *warrewundu*, as these great *ndambu*-givers are called, have no real authority. Out of respect for their former high status people are willing to lend an ear to their advice, but their influence is slight.

## *samenvatting*

Het Frederik-Hendrikeiland is een laag gelegen gebied aan de zuidkust van westelijk Irian. Het gebied heeft een schotelvormige opbouw zodat het regenwater, dat in de maanden Januari tot Mei in grote hoeveelheden valt, slechts langzaam afvloeit. In deze tijd verandert het eiland in een grote binnensee. Slechts enkele kleinere vlakten in het noord-oosten, westen en zuiden blijven ook in deze tijd droog. De vegetatie is voornamelijk beperkt tot riet en biezten in talloze soorten.

Sinds onheugelijke tijden is het moeras bewoond, waarvan de vele verlaten landbouwgronden getuigen. Op het ogenblik bedraagt het bevolkingsaantal ca. 7000, verspreid over een vijf en twintigtal dorpen, die soms op grote afstand van elkaar gelegen zijn.

Er zijn een vijftal taalgroepen te onderscheiden maar de culturele verscheidenheid is niet zo groot dat het gebied niet als een eenheid in dit opzicht beschouwd zou kunnen worden.

Opmerkelijk is vooral de uniformiteit in de voedselproductie, voor een belangrijk deel een gevolg van de zeer bijzondere eisen die het milieu in dit opzicht stelt. Overal is de landbouw het hoofdmiddel van bestaan en tot een zeer grote hoogte ontwikkeld. Het intensieve karakter van de landbouw is een praktische noodzaak aangezien het milieu het toepassen van veldwisselbouw niet zou toestaan. Zowel de grond voor woonhuizen als voor de landbouw moet overal, met uitzondering van de dorpen aan de zuidelijke strandwal, kunstmatig gewonnen worden. Daartoe worden lange en smalle dijkes in het moeras opge-

worpen, bestaande uit klei, drijfgras en bagger. De hoogte van deze eilandjes varieert met het gewas dat men erop planten wil. Zo zijn de eilandjes bestemd voor de aanplant van sago en taro betrekkelijk laag terwijl de yams en bataten op relatief hoog gelegen eilanden worden aangeplant. Bij de bepaling van de planttijd wordt rekening gehouden met de veranderingen in de waterspiegel in het moeras. Keuze van het plantmateriaal, compostering en herstel van de bodemhoogte zijn voorwerp van aanhoudende zorg. Elke plant wordt afzonderlijk uitgeplant en verzorgd.

Ondanks de zeer rationele methoden blijft de voedselsituatie in vrijwel alle dorpen zeer labiel. In de zuidelijke dorpen treedt hongersnood op zodra vloedgolven vanuit zee de smalle geulen en kreken binnendringen en de oogst vernietigen. Dergelijke rampen doen zich met een frekwentie van eens in de vijf tot zeven jaar voor.

In de rest van het moeras is het vooral het onverwacht rijzen van de waterspiegel als gevolg van het te vroeg invallen van de regens, die de voedselsituatie zeer benard kan maken. Typische ondervoedingsverschijnselen zijn op Frederik-Hendrikeiland niet moeilijk waar te nemen.

De landbouw in engere zin is dan ook slechts gedeeltelijk in staat de voedselbehoeften van de bevolking te dekken. Het menu wordt op zeer gevarieerde wijze aangevuld met allerlei soorten eetbare planten, waarvan vooral de varenwortel zeer belangrijk is, door de visvangst en de jacht. In enkele dorpen is de sago van groot belang geworden maar deze komt nergens in wilde bossen voor. Ze moet op dezelfde wijze op eilandjes aangeplant worden als de knolgewassen.

Het wooneiland, de *patha*, is in zekere zin de basis van de sociale organisatie van het dorp. De *patha*-groep bestaat soms uit één maar meestal uit meerdere nuclear families. In de regel zijn dit de gezinnen van een vader met die van een of meer van zijn echte of geadopteerde zoons, of de gezinnen van enkele broers. De *patha* is een zeer belangrijke cooperatieve eenheid, ofschoon de domeinen van de samenstellende gezinnen strict gescheiden zijn en niet van een gemeenschappelijk huishouden gesproken kan worden.

Als de *patha*-groep te groot wordt of als het samenwonen van de betreffende gezinnen minder wenselijk wordt geacht door een van hen, heeft er soms een

afsplitsing van het betreffende wooneiland plaats. Er wordt dan een nieuw eiland gebouwd, meestal in de onmiddellijke omgeving van het oude. Vanuit dit nieuwe eiland kunnen zich na verloop van tijd weer nieuwe splitsingen voordoen. De op deze wijze historisch en genealogisch samenhangende wooneilanden vormen een territoriale groep van hogere orde, de *kwanda*. De verwantschappelijke samenhang van de *patba* en de *kwanda* moet niet te strak opgevat worden want er is een betrekkelijk grote mate van mobiliteit en niet alleen de genealogische verwantschap beslist over het feitelijk lidmaatschap van deze territoriale groepen. Belangrijk is ook de vraag of men in een dergelijke groep geboren is, of geadopteerd.

Twee of meer *kwanda* vormen samen een territoriale groep op weer hoger niveau, nl. de *paburu*, hetgeen letterlijk dorpsdeel betekent.

Het is opmerkelijk dat alle dorpen, met uitzondering van Bamol, bestaan uit twee delen, die in een ceremoniele en antagonistische relatie ten opzichte van elkaar staan. De tweedeling is evenwel niet beperkt tot de dorpsdelen want ook de *kwanda* van één *paburu* formeren zich tot een dualistisch systeem met een uitgesproken rivaliteit.

In een conflictsituatie regelen de partijen zich naar de lokale groepen die er rechtstreeks bij betrokken zijn. Zo kan een conflict met iemand uit een ander dorpsdeel ertoe leiden dat de beide *paburu* tegenover elkaar komen te staan. Betreft het echter mensen uit dezelfde *paburu*, maar uit verschillende *kwanda* dan zijn het de wijken die tegenover elkaar staan, ofschoon beide partijen meestal wel geholpen worden door verwanten uit een ander dorpsdeel of uit *kwanda* die niet rechtstreeks bij het conflict zijn betrokken.

*Paburu* en *kwanda* hebben een belangrijke functie in de definiering van het bezitsrecht op gronden. Elk dorp is verdeeld in beschikkingskringen van de *paburu*. Het deel van de *paburu* dat speciaal bestemd is voor de aanleg van tuineilanden, is weer onderverdeeld in beschikkingskringen voor de samenstellende *kwanda*. Deze subkringen worden *paku* genoemd. Binnen deze *paku* is ieder *kwanda*-lid gerechtigd eilanden aan te leggen waar hij dat verkiest. Het principe dat men een exclusief recht verwerft op alles waar men een grote mate van persoonlijke arbeid aan ten grondslag gelegd heeft dringt het beschikkingsrecht van de gemeenschap tot een minimum terug. Dit geldt onder meer voor de planteilanden zodat in vele gevallen het beschikkingsrecht van de *kwanda* niet

zozeer rust op de eilanden als wel op de grond, het moeras waar die eilanden zijn aangelegd. Bij vererving kunnen alle zoons rechten doen gelden maar de oudere broer heeft een bevoorrechte positie. Hij beheert het gemeenschappelijk plantbeddenbezit alleen of in samenwerking met zijn jongere broers. In vele gevallen geeft deze situatie aanleiding tot conflicten tussen de broers omdat de jongere broers er bij hun volwassenheid op staan dat de oudste broer het beddenbezit onder hen verdeeld.

De *kwanda* zijn ook de groepen waartussen de vrouwenruil, in de meerderheid der gevallen een rechtstreekse ruil, zich voltrekt. Deze ruil is een uitwisseling van zusters want het is niet noodzakelijk dat een echte zuster als ruilpartner fungeert. De samenhang van de *kwanda*-groep wordt zo sterk verwantschappelijk opgevat dat elke andere beschikbare vrouw uit die *kwanda* een zuster kan vervangen. In de praktijk is de *kwanda* exogaam; voorbeelden van huwelijken binnen de *kwanda* zijn zeer zeldzaam.

Zoals in een systeem van rechtstreekse zusterruil te verwachten is, is het huwelijk virilokaal, hetgeen gezien de sterke economische banden tussen vader en zoon, in de meerderheid der gevallen neerkomt op patrilokaliteit. Een genealogie van een *kwanda*, maakt dan ook, vooral als men geen rekening houdt met de adoptie, sterk de indruk van patrilinealiteit.

Er zijn echter toch bezwaren om de verwantschapsstructuur op Frederik-Hendrikeiland met deze term te karakteriseren. De Kimamers zien hun samenleving niet als patrilineaal. Verwantschap wordt zowel langs vaders- als langs moederszijde gerekend. Groepen op zuiver verwantschappelijke basis hebben een bilateraal karakter zoals de *jaentjewe*, de groep van echte en classificatorische siblings en de *tjipente*, de kindred opgebouwd uit de *jaentjewe*-groepen van verschillende generaties. Zowel *jaentjewe* als *tjipente* dragen in hoge mate het karakter van operationele groep. Tijdens het onderzoek bleek steeds weer dat de Kimamer zich een zuiver verwantschappelijke groep moeilijk in abstracto kan voorstellen. Het is ook om deze reden dat kleine kinderen en ouden van dagen en gestorvenen niet tot een van beide groepen gerekend werden. In de praktijk zijn deze verwantencategorieën van groot belang want zij vormen het samenbindende element tussen de verschillende lokale groepen. De samenwerking bij feesten en andere gelegenheden is daardoor zelden beperkt tot de leden van een lokale groep alleen. Belangrijke aangelegenheden zijn niet meer



een zaak van de betreffende lokale groep maar in zekere zin een aangelegenheid van het gehele dorp.

De betekenis van de lokale en verwantschappelijke groeperingen komt het duidelijkst tot uiting in de feesten die de verschillende fasen van de rouwtijd markeren. Als iemand sterft dan zijn zijn nauwere verwanten, waartoe op de eerste plaats weer zijn *patha*-genoten behoren, tot rouw verplicht. Zij mogen zich niet meer in het openbaar vertonen, tenzij gehuld in een gevlochten mantel die het gehele lichaam verhult. De andere *kwanda*-genoten en de secundaire en tertiaire verwanten in de andere *kwanda*, respectievelijk *paburu* hebben eveneens een rouwplicht doch veel minder stringent. Bij feesten treden zij als vertegenwoordigers van de nauwere verwanten op.

De tuinen van de dode zijn vanaf dit ogenblik tabu voor iedereen die tot het dorpsdeel van de dode behoort. De vruchten, voornamelijk cocosnoten, worden echter zorgvuldig bewaard en op het eerstvolgende feest voor een deel overgedragen aan de begravers en voor een ander deel aan de *naburine*, de leeftijdgenoot van de dode, die evenals de begravers uit het ceremonieel tegenovergestelde dorpsdeel moet komen. De *naburine* is verplicht een retoergift van gelijke grootte te maken zodat de wederzijdse voedselgiften het karakter krijgen van een voedselruil tussen de dode (of zijn vertegenwoordigers) en zijn leeftijdgenoot.

Op elk volgend feest worden meer tuinen voor eigen gebruik gesloten. Het betreft nu niet meer alleen de tuinen van de dode maar van diens gehele *kwanda* en naarmate de rouwtijd vordert van zijn gehele *paburu*. De voedseluitwisselingen worden dus op elk volgend feest groter.

In ceremonieel opzicht is de cocosnoot van minder belang dan de taro of de yam. In tegenstelling tot de cocosnoten kunnen de laatste slechts een maal overgedragen worden, hetgeen gebeurt op het laatste en tevens belangrijkste feest. Nadat iemand gestorven is worden bij de eerstvolgende droge tijd zoveel mogelijk eilanden met yams of taro beplant. Tussen de yam en de mens bestaat een zeer nauwe associatie, die vooral in de oorsprongsmythe duidelijk naar voren komt. In deze mythe wordt de aanplant van yams voorgesteld als de begrafenis van een mens die bij de oogst herboren wordt als yamswortel. Het openen van de plantheuvels bij de oogst is tevens het ogenblik om de rouwtijd af te sluiten. Het graf van de dode wordt geopend, zijn beenderen worden schoongemaakt en

opnieuw begraven, waarna het graf met de grond gelijk gemaakt wordt. Het laatste dodenfeest betekent tevens de grootste uitwisseling van voedsel, waarvan de yam de hoofdschotel vormt. De *naburine* en de verwanten van de dode treden als vertegenwoordigers voor hun gehele *paburu* op. De twee dorpsdelen zijn nu in hun geheel bij de voedselruil betrokken.

De voedseluitwisseling op het eindfeest voor de dode tussen de twee samenstellende delen van het dorp wordt *ndambu* genoemd en in heeft in hoge mate het karakter van een wedstrijd. Beide partijen trachten elkaar de loef af te steken. Het is de bedoeling zo veel voedsel en zo grote knollen op het feest in te brengen dat de tegenpartij niet in staat is een gelijke hoeveelheid te retourneren. De hoeveelheid en de omvang van het ingebrachte voedsel wordt zorgvuldig geteld en gemeten met behulp van telstokjes en meetlussen en daarna vergeleken met het voedsel dat men van de tegenpartij ontvangt.

Het wedstrijd karakter van de *ndambu* blijkt nog duidelijker in de westelijke dorpen waar de knollen en het andere voedsel niet overgedragen doch slechts aan de tegenstanders getoond en zorgvuldig gemeten wordt.

Ook is in de andere dorpen de ceremoniele achtergrond van het *ndambufeest* soms veel minder belangrijk dan het wedstrijdelement. *Ndambu* wordt in de meeste dorpen niet alleen meer gegeven ter gelegenheid van het eindfeest van een dode. Allerlei conflicten kunnen aanleiding zijn tot een *ndambu*, terwijl het voor velen een uitstekend middel is tot verwerving van macht en aanzien in de gemeenschap. Een man die veel succes heeft in de landbouw kan zich veel prestige verwerven door een ander succesvol tuinder tot een wedstrijd uit te dagen. Hij wordt daarbij gesteund door alle mannen die tot zijn lokale groep behoren en door zijn verwanten uit andere lokale groepen. In het laatste geval evenwel kan er een conflict ontstaan tussen iemand's plichten als lid van een bepaalde lokale groep en zijn verwantschapsverplichtingen. In een dergelijk geval zullen de verwanten als bemiddelaars optreden om het conflict bij te leggen en een *ndambu* te voorkomen en indien dit niet lukt zullen zij in het openbaar de *ndambu* partner uit hun eigen lokale groep steunen, maar in het verborgene hun verwanten in het andere dorpsdeel of *kwanda* niet vergeten.

De *ndambugever* ontvangt ook belangrijke steun van allen die van hem magische medicijn voor het goed gedijen van hun knollen hebben ontvangen. Ieder is vrij zich aan te sluiten ter verkrijging van deze medicijn bij elke tovenaer die

hij verkiest, vooropgesteld dat hij tot hetzelfde dorpsdeel behoort. Dit betekent dat de man die het meeste succes heeft in de aanplant van knollen in het algemeen ook de meeste volgelingen zal hebben, mensen die zijn, klaarblijkelijk zeer werkzame, medicijn willen gebruiken. De meest succesvolle tuinders worden daarom ook in het algemeen door de meeste mensen in een *ndambu*-wedstrijd gesteund.

Hier blijkt echter meer dan ooit hoe vergankelijk de roem is want macht en aanzien nemen snel af naarmate iemand ouder wordt en minder in staat is een grote hoeveelheid voedsel te produceren. Zeer oude *warrewundu*, zoals de grote *ndambugevers* worden genoemd, bezitten geen werkelijk gezag. Uit eerbied voor hun belangrijke status in het verleden wordt hun wijze raad nog wel aangehoord maar hun invloed is gering.

Pulau Frederik Hendrik itu merupakan suatu daerah rendah jang terletak pada tepi selatan Irian Barat. Daerah itu mempunjai bangunan jang berbentuk sebagai sebuah piring, sehingga air hudjan jang djatuh dengan lebatnja pada bulan januari sampai bulan mai, hanja dapat mengalir dengan perlahan-lahan. Dalam pada musim ini pulau itu berubah dalam suatu tasik jang besar. Hanja beberapa dataran ditimur laut, dibarat dan diselatan tetap kering dalam musim ini. Pertumbuhan jang terdapat disini terutama terbatas sehingga alang-alang dan kertjut.

Sedari dahulukala paja itu ternjata pernah didiami orang: terbukti adanja banjak tanah pertanian sunji. Pada masa ini penduduknja berdjumlah 7000 orang, tertabur didalam keduapuluh lima dusun jang djaraknja diantaranja kadang-kadang amat besar.

Disini terdapat kelima lingkungan bahasa jang berbeda satu dari lain, tetapi perbedaan budaja tidak menjebakkan bahwa daerah itu tak dapat dipandang sebagai kesatuan.

Peristimewaan dalam hal ini ialah tjara menghasilkan makanan dengan serupa, hal jang disebabkan terutama oleh sjarat-sjarat istimewa jang harus dipenuhi oleh suasana kehidupan.

Dimana-mana pertanian itu mata pentjaharian jang terpenting dan telah dimadjukan dengan luar biasa. Tjara melakukan pertanian itu perlu benar sebab suasana kehidupan tidak memperbolehkan perlakuan "shifting cultivation". Baik tanah perumahan baik tanah pertanian harus diusahakan dengan tenaga orang semuanya, ketjuali didusun-dusun pada tepi pantai selatan.

Untuk itu galangan-galangan pandjang dan sempit jang terdiri dari tanah liat, rumput terapung dan lumpur, ditimbun dipaja itu. Perbedaan tinggi pulau-pulau itu sesuai dengan tumbuhan jang akan ditanam. Djadi pulau-pulau itu untuk ditanami dengan sagu dan tales, agak rendah letaknja, sedangkan ketela dan ubi ditanamkan pada pulau-pulau jang letaknja sedikit tinggi. Untuk menetapkan waktu tanam perobahan dalam muka air dipaja harus diperhatikan. Memilih bibit, rabuk dan pemeliharaan tinggi tanah selalu meminta perhatian. Tiap-tiap tanaman ditanamkan dan diselenggarakan sendiri-sendiri.

Meskipun tjara pertanian jang sangat patut itu, keadaan penghidupan di hampir semua dusun tetap lemah sekali. Didusun-dusun disebelah selatan bala kelaparan timbul demi airbah dari laut masuk kedalam alur-alur dan suak-suak serta membinasakan hasil bumi. Tjelaka seperti itu terdjadi satu kali dalam lima sampai tudjuh tahun berulang dengan tertentu.

Dalam bagian paja jang lain kenaikan muka air sekonjong-konjong itu terutama disebabkan oleh musim hudjan jang sebelum waktunja; hal itu membahayakan suasana penghidupan. Maka dipulau Frederik Hendrik tidak sukarlah untuk menilik tanda-tanda kelaparan jang garib itu. Hanja pertanian sadja dapat memenuhi sebagian daripada kebutuhan pentjaharian pendudukan.

Makanan sehari-hari dilengkapi setjara berbagai-bagai matjam dengan berwarna-warna tanaman jang termakan – diantaranya akar paku itu terutama penting – lalu dengan menangkap ikan dan djuga dengan memburu. Dibeberapa dusun sagu itu mendjadi amat penting, tetapi tanaman itu tidak terdapat di hutan-rimba. Sebetulnja tanaman itu harus ditanamkan dipulau-pulau setjara sama dengan tanaman umbi.

Pulau pendiaman orang, jang disebut *patha* boleh dianggap sebagai dasar susunan kemasjarakatan didusun itu. Golongan "patha" itu terkadang-kadang dirupakan dari satu, tetapi biasanja dari beberapa keluarga pusat.

Pada umumnja parakeluarga ini terdiri atas seorang ajah dengan satu, atau beberapa orang anak laki-laki, baik sjah ataupun angkat. Mungkin djuga parakeluarga itu terdiri atas beberapa orang saudara laki-laki.

*Patha* itu adalah persatuan koperasi jang sangat penting, walaupun tempat kediaman susunan-susunan keluarga terpisah benar-benar dan tidak dapat dikatakan suatu rumah tangga bertjampur. Kalau golongan *patha* itu mendjadi terlalu besar atau bila salah satu daripada mereka tidak mengehendaki

kediaman bersama-sama parakeluarga tersebut itu, maka kadang-kadang sebagian dari keluarga itu meninggalkan pulau kediaman tersebut. Terbangunlah suatu pulau jang baru, biasanja disekitar pulau jang ditinggalkan tadi. Setelah berapa lamanja dari pulau jang baru ini terdjadi perpisahan lagi. Pulau kediaman itu jang mempunjai hubungan bersedjarah dan setjara-silsilah merupakan suatu golongan wilajah jang bertingkat lebih tinggi, bernama *kwanda*. Haraplah hubungan kekeluargaan *patha* dan *kwanda* tak dianggap terlalu erat, sebab ada pergerakan jang agak besar dan bukan hanja kekeluargaan setjara silsilah jang menetapkan hal kesekutuan golongan wilajah itu. Penting djuga kesoalan apakah orang dilahirkan atau dipelihara dalam golongan sebagai itu.

Dua atau beberapa *kwanda* bersama-sama merupakan suatu golongan wilajah jang bertingkat lebih tinggi lagi, jaitu *paburu* namanja, jang sesungguhnya berarti "sebagian dusun".

Mengherankanlah bahwa semua dusun, ketjuali dusun Bamol, terdiri atas dua bagian jang berbanding satu sama lain dengan hubungan berupertjara dan berlawanan. Tetapi keduabagianan itu tidak terbatas sehingga bagian dusun itu, karena *kwanda-kwanda* dari satu *paburu* djuga merupakan susunan setjara tjorak dua (dualistic), jang bersifat persaingan keras.

Dalam keadaan pertjektjokan parapihak menuruti golongan-golongan setempat, jang bersangkutan dengan langsung. Umpamanja perselisihan dengan seorang dari bagian dusun jang lain dapat mengadukan kedua *paburu*.

Kalau mengenai orang-orang dari *paburu* jang sama tetapi jang *kwanda* nja berbeda, maka kampung-kampung itulah jang mengadu tenaganja, meskipun kedua pihak biasanja dibantu oleh sanak saudara dari bagian dusun lain atau dari *kwanda-kwanda* jang tidak bersangkutan dengan langsung pada perselisihan itu. *Paburu* dan *kwanda* itu mempunjai tugas jang penting dalam penetapan hak milik tanah. Tiap-tiap dusun dibagi dalam lingkaran kuasa jang ditetapkan oleh *paburu* itu. Bagian *paburu* jang khusus ditentukan untuk pembuatan pulau-pulau tanaman, dibagi lagi dalam lingkaran kuasa untuk *kwanda-kwanda* bersusun itu. Lingkaran bawah itu disebut *paku* itu tiap-tiap anggauta *kwanda* berhak membuat pulau dimana sadja ia menghendakinja. Hal azas memperoleh hak luar biasa atas segala jang kebanjakan berdasar atas pengerahan tenaga sendiri, melemahkan hak kuasa

dusun sampai sedikit-dikit-nja. Keadaan itu misalnja berlaku bagi kepulauan tanaman, sehingga biasanja hak kuasa *kwanda* tidak begitu berdasarkan atas pulau-pulau, melainkan atas tanah pula, jaitu paja tempat letaknja pulau itu. Bila ada warisan, semua anak laki-laki dapat menuntut haknja, tetapi kakak laki-laki berhak mendahulu. Ia mengurus kebun tanaman milik mereka bersama itu, maupun sendiri, atau bersama-sama dengan adik-adiknja laki-laki. Kerap kali keadaan itu menjebabkan perselisihan diantara saudara-saudara laki-laki, sebab setelah dewasa adik-adik laki-laki itu menuntut, supaja kakak mereka membagi tanah kebun itu diantaranja.

*Kwanda* itupun pula golongan-golongan dengan adanja penukaran isteri diantaranja; kebanyakan isalah penukaran langsung. Itulah mengenai penukaran diantara kakak-adik perempuan, karena tidak perlulah saudara perempuan sjah berlaku sebagai kawan penukaran. Perhubungan golongan *kwanda* itu dianggap demikian berkerabat, sehingga setiap wanita jang bersedia dari *kwanda* itu dapat mengganti saudaranja perempuan. Biasanja *kwanda* itu bersifat "exogaam" (perkawinan dengan seorang wanita dari luar) hal-hal perkawinan jang terdjadi didalam *kwanda* amat djarang. Sebagai diharapkan dalam peraturan penukaran langsung diantara kakak-adik perempuan, perkawinen ialah "virilokaal" (dilakukan ditempat kediaman sisuami), jang karena kokohnja hubungan ekonomi diantara ajah dan anak laki-laki, pada umumnja dapat dipandang sebagai "patrilokaliteit" (tempat kediaman mojang). Djadi silsilah *kwanda* itulah, apalagi kalau pengangkatan anak diabaikan, membajangkan sangat "patrilinealiteit" (keturunan jang berasal langsung dari ajah).

Akan tetapi susunan hubungan kekeluargaan dipulau "Frederik Hendrik" itu tidak dapat mempunjai tjorak sebagai demikian. Bangsa "Kimamer" tidak menganggap pergaulan hidup mereka setjara "patrilineaal". Hubungan kekeluargaan terpandang baik dari pihak ajah, maupun dari pihak ibu. Golongan-golongan jang berdasarkan hubungan kekeluargaan sungguhsungguh, bersifat "bilateraal" (dari kedua belah pihak), umpamanja "jaentjewe", ialah golongan-keluarga-sedarah jang asli dan tersusun dalam pupu, dan lagi "tjipente", ialah kekeluargaan jang terdjadi dari golongan-golongan "jaentjewe" berasal dari pelbagai turunan. Baik "jaentjewe" ataupun "tjipente" merupakan golongan jang bersifat amat giat. Pada waktu penjelidikan senantiasa ternjata, bahwa orang "Kimamer" sukar dapat melulu membajang-

kan suatu golongan jang berhubungan kekeluargaan sungguh-sungguh. Hal itupun menjebabkan, bahwa anak-anak ketjil, orang-orang berusia dan orang-orang jang telah meninggal dunia tidak termasuk dalam salah satu golongan tersebut. Sebenarnja golongan jang berhubungan kekeluargaan itu penting sekali, karena mereka merupakan unsur ikatan diantara berbagai-bagai golongan setempat. Oleh karena itu kerdja-sama pada perpestaan dan peristiwa-peristiwa lain, djarang terbatas sehingga para-anggauta golongan setempat sadja. Peristiwa-peristiwa jang penting bukan lagi hal ihwal golongan setempat tersebut, melainkan kadang-kadang mendapat perhatian dari seluruh dusun.

Arti golongan-golongan jang setempat dan jang berhubungan kekeluargaan itu tampak dengan terang pada perpestaan jang dilakukan di beberapa djangka pada masa berkabung. Djikalau seorang meninggal dunia, kerabatnja, terutama orang-orang se *patha* pula jang termasuk dalam golongan itu, wadjib berkabung. Mereka tidak diperbolehkan lagi menampakkan diri diluar, melainkan berkelubung dalam pakaian teranjang jang menjelubingi seluruh badan. Orang se *kwanda* jang lain dan para keluarga dari *kwanda* lain dalam pupu jang kedua atau ketiga kali atau djuga *paburu*, berwadjib pula berkabung, tetapi tidak begitu keras. Pada perpestaan mereka bertindak sebagai wakil daripada kerabat itu. Perkebunan seorang jang meninggal dunia pada saat itu terlarang bagi semua orang jang termasuk dalam bagian dusun orang mati itu. Akan tetapi buah-buahan terutama buah njiur disimpan baik-baik dan pada pesta berikuttnja diserahkan untuk sebagian kepada para pengubur dan untuk sebagian lain kepada *naburine*, jaitu orang jang seumur dengan orang jang telah meninggal dunia itu jang seperti para pengubur menurut upatjara harus berasal dari bagian dusun jang bertentangan. *Naburine* itu berwadjib mengarang suatu hadiah kembali jang sama besarnja, sehingga pemberian makanan masing-masing itu bersifat penukaran makanan jang dilakukan diantara orang jang telah meninggal dunia (atau wakilnja) dan orang jang seumur itu. Pada setiap pesta jang berikut lebih banjak bidang perkebunan ditutup bagi penggunaan sendiri. Sekarang hal itu tidak lagi mengana'i perkebunan orang jang mati, melainkan mengana'i perkebunan seluruh *kwanda* nja dan semakin dekat masa berkabung itu mengana'i seluruh *paburu*-nja. Djadi penukaran makanan makin besar pada pesta berikuttnja. Dalam hal upatjara



buah njiur ialah kurang penting daripada tales atau ketela. Berlawanan dengan buah-buahan njiur, tales dan ketela itu hanja dapat diserahkan satu kali sadja, jang terdjadi pada pesta jang terachir dan sambil jang terpenting. Setelah seorang meninggal dunia pulau-pulau sebanjak mungkin ditanami dengan ketela atau tales dalam musim kemarau jang berikut. Diantara ketela dan manusia ada hubungan jang sangat erat; terutama hubungan itu terang tampak dalam sebuah tjeritera "mythe". Dalam tjeritera itu pertanaman ketela dibayangkan sebagai penguburan manusia jang sewaktu penghasilan bumi dilahirkan kembali sebagai akar ketela.

Pembukaan bukit tanaman sewaktu penghasilan bumi, itulah waktu untuk mengachiri masa berkabung. Kuburan orang jang meninggal dunia itu dibuka, tulang-tulangnja dibersihkan dan dikuburkan lagi, kemudian kuburan itu diratakan.

Pesta kematian jang terachir berarti djuga penukaran makanan jang terbesar; diantaranja ketela itu jang terpenting. *Naburime* itu dan keluarga orang jang telah meninggal dunia itu berlaku sebagai wakil segenap *paburu* mereka. Sekarang kedua bagian dusun itu dengan seluruhnja tertjampur dalam penukaran makanan. Penukaran makanan diantara dua bagian dusun itu pada pesta terachir bagi orang jang meninggal dunia disebut *ndambu* dan sangat bersifat suatu pertandingan. Kedua belah pihak mentjoba melebihi masing-masing. Maksudnja ialah membawa makanan sebanjak-banjaknja dan umbi sebesar-besarnja kepesta itu, sehingga pihak sana tidak mampu mengembalikan djumlah jang sama. Djumlah dan besarnja makanan dihitung dan diukur dengan saksama dengan pertolongan tongkat hitung dan sosok ukur supaja makanan itu dapat dibanding dengan makanan jang diterima dari pihak sana. Sifat pertandingan *ndambu* itu ternjata lebih terang lagi didusun-dusun sebelah barat, tempat umbi-umbi dan makanan lain tidak diserahkan, melainkan hanja dipertundjukkan sadja kepada para lawan dan diukur dengan saksama.

Djuga didusun-dusun lain terdjadi hal bahwa dasar upatjara pesta *ndambu* itu kurang penting daripada sifat pertandingan. *Ndambu* itulah tidak lagi hanja diadakan di beberapa dusun berhubung dengan pesta terachir seorang jang meninggal dunia. Pelbagai perselisihan dapatlah menjebakkan *ndambu*, sedangkan hal itu bagi kebanyakan orang mengupajakan sekali akan memperoleh kekuasaan dan kemuliaan dalam kampung mereka. Seorang jang berhasil

dalam hal pertanian dapat memperoleh kekuasaan jang besar dengan menantang seorang perkebunan jang berhasil pula. Dalam hal itu ia dibantu oleh semua orang-orang laki jang termasuk dalam golongannya setempat dan oleh keluarganya dari golongan-golongan setempat lain. Tetapi dalam keadaan jang tersebut terachir itu dapat timbul perselisihan diantara kewadajiban orang sebagai anggauta golongan setempat jang tertentu dan kewadajiban terhadap kerabatnja. Dalam hal tersebut para kerabat akan berlaku sebagai pengantara untuk mentjegah *ndambu* dan kalau sekiranya hal itu tidak tertjapai mereka akan membantu kawan *ndambu* dari golongan setempat mereka sendiri dimuka orang banjak, akan tetapi diam-diam tidak akan melupakan kaum keluarga mereka dibagian dusun lain atau di *kwanda*. Orang jang mengadakan *ndambu* itu mendapat bantuan penting djuga dari semua orang jang menerima obat-obat sihir daripadanya untuk tumbuh umbi mereka. Setiap orang dapat mendatangi seorang sihir jang dikehendakinja untuk memperoleh obat-obat itu, asal ia termasuk dalam bagian dusun jang sama. Itulah berarti, bahwa seorang jang amat berhasil dalam menanam umbi pada umumnya djuga akan mendapat pengikut jang terbanjak, yakni orang-orang jang hendak menggunakan obatnja jang njata mandjur sekali. Oleh sebab itu orang-orang jang paling berhasil didalam pertandingan *ndambu* pada umumnya dibantu oleh kebanyakan orang. Dalam hal itu ternyata sungguh-sungguh bagaimana fana kemegahan itu, karena kekuasaan dan kemuliaan berkurang dengan segera, semakin orang berumur dan kurang berdaja menghasilkan banjak. Orang *warrewundu* jang tinggi usianja – begitulah disebut pemberi *ndambu* jang terkenal – tidak mempunjai kekuasaan sungguh-sungguh. Karena hormat atas kedudukan mereka jang penting dalam waktu jang sudah lampau, masih djuga nasehat mereka didengarkan, akan tetapi pengaruh mereka lemah.

## appendix I

## list of supplementary foods

<i>Mirrawat</i>	Stalk of the water-lily, eaten especially for its juice.
<i>Numa</i>	Sweet-tasting root of a brown species of reed.
<i>Tèbè</i>	Long, thick root of a species of reed growing abundantly among the eucalyptus trees. Usually eaten together with meat or fish.
<i>Kwèr</i>	Fruit of the wild pandanus. The pulp is sucked out.
<i>Tènè</i>	Oblong red fruit of a certain species of pandanus. Only the oily rind is consumed. These trees are planted.
<i>Bun</i>	Fruit of the nipah-palm. Only the pulp is consumed.
<i>Oert</i>	Bulrush of which the tuberous parts of the roots are eaten.
<i>Gagoe</i>	The succulent top of the sago-palm, which is mixed with lime.
<i>Tèpije</i>	Sweet-tasting stem of a banana-tree (only one particular species).
<i>Arama</i>	Sprout of the coconut-tree, eaten especially at mortuary feasts.
<i>Naàf</i>	Sprout of the areca-palm.
<i>Ndè</i>	Clay, eaten everywhere from time to time, either as a delicacy or to subdue hunger when far away from home. Customary also for a pregnant women and for people with stomach complaints.
<i>Awamuna</i>	Larvae of ants, found in dead eucalyptus wood. These are cooked together with eucalyptus-leaves or else eaten raw after having been held under water for some time.
<i>Grasshoppers</i>	Eaten grilled from time to time in practically all the swamp-villages.
<i>Sago-larvae</i>	Especially bred and much appreciated as a delicacy.

- Rats* Only the large specimens are eaten, ordinary domestic rats only very rarely.
- Beetles* During the dry season very numerous especially in the southern villages, eaten grilled on the fire.

Apart from fish, the following water-animals should be mentioned: turtles, crabs, shrimps, snakes and crocodiles. Land-snakes are also eaten. Only in one village, however, were they especially hunted.

It is quite remarkable that frogs, which live in great numbers in the marsh, are not eaten anywhere, even though otherwise the people are not very fastidious in their choice of foods. No insult could be greater than to say to someone that his father eats frogs. The mere idea is enough to make a person retch.

Some government officers have remarked that few of the edible vegetables growing in the marsh are used, while the introduction of new types of vegetables has also failed. The latter fact is not surprising, however, considering the limited area of cultivable land available. Few plant-beds or none at all could be withdrawn from the production of root-crops or people would permanently have to go hungry. Vegetables alone do not fill the stomach and the production of root-crops is marginal even under present conditions.

## appendix 2

## *calendar of agricultural activities*

- Tararemma* April-May  
The easterly winds begin to blow and the swamp-rice comes into bloom. Taro may now be harvested. Plant-beds are cleaned, the soil is loosened, new drift-grass applied and planting materials are inspected.
- May-June  
Yams, sweet potatoes and cassava may be planted.
- Tjara* June-July  
The crops are in their first stage of growth. Shading, applying drift-grass and mud.
- Bràmènémbö* August  
The kumbili-beds are made ready. Also the taro-beds.
- Mörendu* September-October  
The water is at its lowest level. Height of the dry season. The crops are almost fully grown. During this time special attention is paid to the *ndambu* crops. Great activity in the sphere of agricultural magic. Towards the end of this period yams and sweet potatoes are harvested.

- Tarre*                   October-November-December  
 The harvest is finished. Some beds are now planted with cassava, especially with the *Wendu* variety which will stand a great deal of water. About halfway through this period taro is also planted. There is much rain already in december. The harvest has for the most part been consumed by now. People start eating sago. Food-shortage in various places.
- Tjupa*                   The rainy season  
 This term is used to indicate the whole of the rainy season from January to April. During this time hardly any agricultural activity takes place apart from the cultivation of *wati*. During this time the people like to spend much time in the forest where they hunt now and again and cultivate small pieces of land.

This calendar was recorded in Bamol. Since there are considerable variations in planting and harvesting times between the different districts it is quite possible that their calendars also differ.

The calendar is wholly based on the various stages of agricultural work and therefore on the changes in the water-level of the marsh. For this reason the months that are given next to the native names must not be taken too strictly, for they vary with the onset of the rains and the beginning of the dry south-easterly monsoon.

## appendix 3

## *division of labour between the sexes*

### *Men*

Making and maintenance of garden-islands.

Planting, tending and harvesting all root-crops.

Making and maintenance of dwelling-islands.

Building and maintenance of day- and night-huts and forest-bivouacs.

Keeping sago-plots clean.

Cutting down sago-trees.

Removing the pith from the trunk.

Cutting down trees to make canoes, paddles, houses etc. (including the further process).

Making and carving of drums, eating utensils and tools.

Plaiting atap (roof-covering).

Hunting.

Fishing with fishing-spear or bow and arrow (also with poison).

### *Women*

Making bricks for cooking-ovens.

Preparing meals (in which the men sometimes assist).

Assistance in agricultural work such as the cassava harvest.

(In the western and southern villages the women take a much greater part in agriculture.)

Assistance in raising the level of dwelling-islands.

Looking after the children (in this too the men often assist).

Gathering firewood (on account of the relative treelessness this often has to be brought in from a large distance away, during the dry season by carrying on one's back).

Fishing with large and small nets, with hooks, by damming off and with fish-traps.

*Men*

Carrying out magical rituals both in the gardens and to cure illness.  
 Serving as rowers for government officials and missionaries.  
 Building and maintenance of police-station, church, school, village-teacher's and welfare-worker's houses.

*Women*

Together with the men, fishing with the use of poison.  
 Catching water-snakes.  
 Gathering and processing *mapiè*.  
 Gathering of plaiting-materials and all plaiting work.  
 Beating the pith and the further processing of sago.  
 Making ropes and nets for fishing.  
 By order of the government the cleaning of the water-ways to the village (pulling out reeds over great distances).  
 Assistance in carrying the hunters' catch.



appendix 4      *kinship and affinal terms (c.f. genealogy)*

1. *edde|nantji*      father, father's elder brother, father's younger brother, father's elder sister's husband, father's younger sister's husband, mother's elder brother, mother's younger brother, mother's elder sister's husband, mother's younger sister's husband, elder sister's husband.
2. *namamu*      mother, mother's elder sister, mother's younger sister, mother's elder brother's wife, mother's younger brother's wife, father's elder sister, father's younger sister, father's elder brother's wife, father's younger brother's wife, elder brother's wife.
3. *nanuko*      elder brother, father's elder brother's son, father's elder sister's son, mother's elder sister's son, mother's elder brother's son.
4. *tjaka*      elder sister, father's elder sister's daughter, father's elder brother's daughter, mother's elder sister's daughter, mother's elder brother's daughter.
5. *namundje*      younger brother, younger sister, father's younger brother's son, father's younger brother's daughter, father's younger sister's son, father's younger sister's daughter, mother's younger brother's son, mother's younger brother's daughter, mother's younger sister's son, mother's younger sister's daughter.

6. *nanaghawe* son, daughter, elder brother's son, elder brother's daughter, younger brother's son, younger brother's daughter, elder sister's son, elder sister's daughter, younger sister's son, younger sister's daughter, father's brother's child's child, father's sister's child's child, mother's brother's child's child, mother's sister's child's child, husband's younger brother, husband's younger sister, wife's younger brother, wife's younger sister.
7. *nanaghavedanaghawe* son's daughter, son's son, daughter's daughter, daughter's son, brother's child's child, sister's child's child, etc.
8. *nantijjowende* father's father, father's father's brother, mother's father, mother's father's brother, mother's mother's brother, father's mother's brother, etc.
9. *namamujawende* father's mother, father's mother's sister, mother's mother mother's mother's sister, father's father's sister, etc.
10. *nabarre* younger sister's husband, wife's elder sister, wife's elder brother, wife's father, wife's mother, daughter's husband.
11. *nanarre* husband's elder sister, husband's elder brother, husband's father, husband's mother.
12. *jatjeboe* younger brother's wife, son's wife.
13. *menuko* daughter's husband's mother, daughter's husband's father, son's wife's mother, son's wife's father.

The terms given above were recorded from genealogies in Bamol and are thus representative for the *Kimaghama* speaking group of villages. Within this language-group considerable dialectal differences occur, which means that the pronunciation of these terms may differ slightly from place to place.

A comparison with the terms found in the *Ndom* and *Riantana* groups reveals an unmistakable linguistic relationship. The term for elder brother, for instance, in *Kimaghama* is *nanuko*, and in *Riantana* *nandaka*. The word *menuko* indicates the same relationships in both language-groups. On the other hand, the word *nawa* in *Ndom* indicates a mother's brother, while it is used for 'male affine' in *Riantana* and is not found at all in *Kimaghama*.

There is no sharp division between terms of address and terms of reference. Only for father etc. are separate terms used, *edde* when addressing and *nantji* in both situations but mainly when referring to the relative in question. When used in reference the terms are often possessively inflected. Thus one never hears simply *barre* (father-in-law), but always the inflected form with the prefix *na*. The same is true of *nanarre* (the woman-speaker's parents-in-law). In direct address the words *nanuko*, *namundje*, *nanaghawe* and *namamu* are used both with and without the possessive pronoun.

The terms for grandparents are derivative, consisting of the words for father and mother with the addition of the affixes *jowende* and *jawende* respectively which mean "old" and when used without the kinship-term may indicate any old man or woman.

The term for grandchildren is descriptive and in its fullest form literally means "my child his (or her) child". The term for younger sibling in the *Ndom* group is also descriptive: *namanie*, literally "my mother's child". No term, in any of these language-groups, is used exclusively for one kin-type. All kinship-terms are classificatory. The choice between a personal name or a kinship-term in any particular case depends on a number of different factors. With respect to affines there is a name-taboo both in direct address and in reference. For all other relatives, generally speaking, kinship-terms are used in addressing a person belonging to a different generation. This is often true even with persons who are not relatives. In such cases the use of personal names is not prohibited but of infrequent occurrence nevertheless, because it fails to express clearly the respect due to a person of an older generation. For members of the same generation and especially for persons of more or less the same age the use of personal names is more common. Even there, however, the terms used differ according to the situation. I never heard a younger brother, for instance, address an elder brother by his personal name or even use it in reference, which does occur frequently in the opposite case. Age-mates who are on friendly terms with one another prefer to call each other *naio* ('friend') or if necessary use a sibling-term even when there is no question of actual relationship. Personal names are most frequently used for children. In reference, personal names may be used for all relatives and non-relatives for whom there is no name-taboo, if this is necessary for the sake of clarity. Nowadays personal

names and kinship-terms are sometimes replaced by Malay titles such as, for instance, *kepala* (government appointed village headman), *kepala tua* (ex-headman), *mandur* (assistant headman), *mandur tua* (ex-assistant), *toagama* (assistant catechist), etc.

Since various aspects of kinship terminology were already treated in our chapter on "social structure" it will suffice here only to indicate a few variations in other language-groups.

In the *Ndom* and *Riantana* groups the terms for grandparents and grandchildren are reciprocal:

<i>Ndom</i>	<i>naitet</i>	mother's mother, father's mother, son's daughter, daughter's daughter.
	<i>nandet</i>	mother's father, father's father, son's son, daughter's son.
<i>Riantana</i>	<i>nètu</i>	mother's mother, father's mother, son's daughter, daughters, daughter.
	<i>neite</i>	mother's father, father's father, son's son, daughter's son.

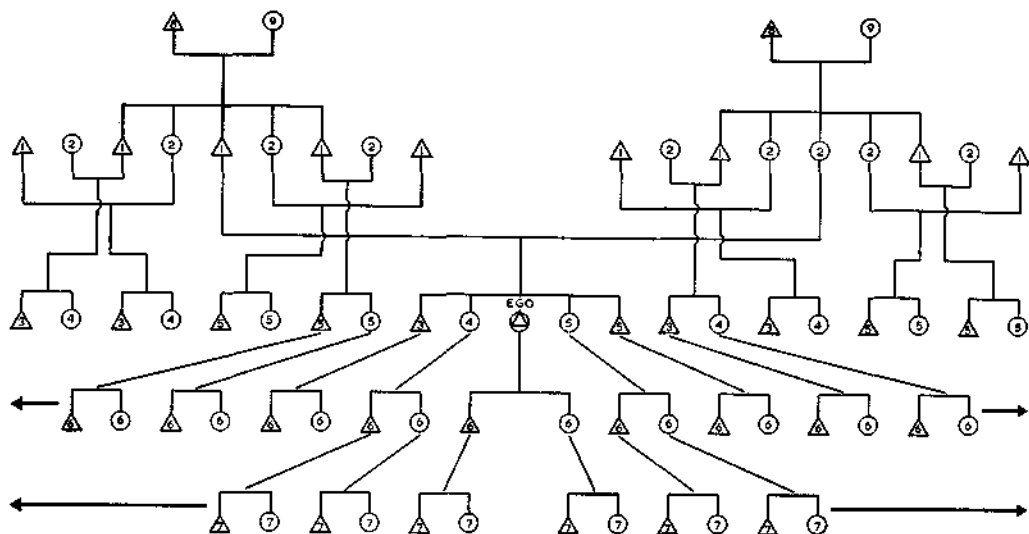
The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is of a very special nature, characterised by intimacy and the absence of any strong element of authority. Grandparents are very indulgent towards their grandchildren, while conversely the grandchildren in their behaviour towards their grandparents display a conspicuous lack of respect.

In the terminology of the *Ndom* and *Riantana* groups all affines are classified according to sex under two terms:

<i>Ndom</i>	<i>nanumb</i>	male affine
	<i>nanarend</i>	female affine
<i>Riantana</i>	<i>nàwa</i>	male affine
	<i>nana</i>	female affine

A wife's or husband's younger relatives, however, are indicated by the term for child in all language-groups.

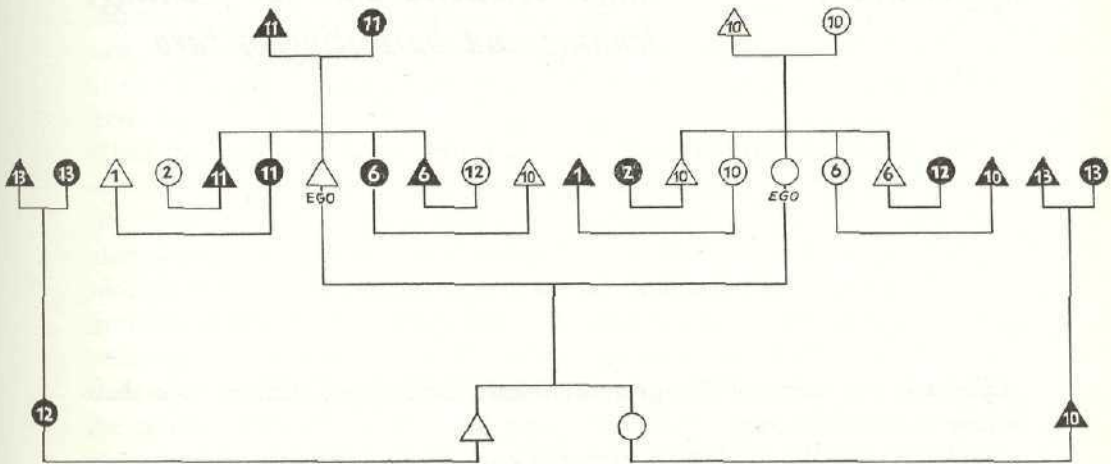
## KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY : COGNATES



We have not succeeded in finding a satisfactory explanation for the special terminology between father-in-law and daughter-in-law (*nanarre-jatjeboe*), but we would like to offer a suggestion. In the *Kimaghama* group a girl moves to her father-in-law's house immediately after her betrothal. She remains under his authority until her marriage, which does not take place till many years later when the young man leaves the bachelors' house. Thus the relationship between daughter-in-law and father-in-law is not only of a contractually reciprocal nature, such as the relationship between the young man and his parents-in-law, which is mainly a consequence of the exchange-contract. The daughter-in-law, therefore, has more or less the position of a child in her father-in-law's house. It would seem not unlikely that this deviating situation is reflected in the terminology.

The number of terms for affinal kin is very small, so that a large number of kin-types are indicated with one term. The terms are automatically extended

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY : AFFINES



Figures in black symbols indicate female-speaking terms.

Figures in white symbols indicate male-speaking terms.

to include husbands or wives of those for whom these terms are used. Thus the term for a wife's elder brother (*nabarre*) is also used for the latter's wife, that for a wife's elder sister for her husband, and so on. Only very rarely, however, are such terms used for the siblings of such a spouse. For a wife's elder sister's husband's brother, for instance, no affinal-term is used.

The collateral principle occurs as a factor only in one case, the use of the plural form *ni* instead of *na* in the case of children of siblings. In this way a subtle distinction is made between lineal and collateral relatives in the first descending generation. This was noted only in the *Kimaghama* group. The most remarkable difference in terminology is found in the special mother's brother and cross-cousin terminology in the *Ndom* group. Since this subject is treated in detail in our chapter on social structure we need not discuss it here.

## appendix 5

### *magic connected with the planting, tending and harvesting of taro*

*Adjeriga* is the name of the great mythical kladdi (taro) planter. We shall briefly recount his story.

*Adjeriga* lived in Wendu (village-sector in Bamol). One day when he went out hunting in the forest, he decided to hide his wife from possible seducers. While he was away came a man called *Wiramunemma*, who had no wife of his own. He turned the whole house upside down but did not find the woman. *Adjeriga* had hidden his wife in a bundle of coconut-fronds. The second time *Adjeriga* went to the forest *Wiramunemma* again came to look for the woman, but did not find her. But the third time *Adjeriga* went out hunting *Wiramunemma* went on searching until he did find her. The woman died when she was raped, for *Wiramunemma* had a barbed penis which killed the woman when it was pulled back after the coitus.

When *Adjeriga* came home he saw that the water had risen, so he knew that something must have happened to his wife. When he found her dead in the *paia* he flew into a rage. He cut down a banana-tree and at the same moment a terrific storm started up which carried the tree to the village of Jeobi, where it made a great lake. The wind also carried away the (kaju-putih) forest which previously reached right up to the village. If *Adjeriga* himself had not taken drastic action, the whole village would have been blown away. He planted a tall pole in the middle of the village and thus kept it in its place. On the spot where *Adjeriga* had cut the banana-tree, water kept welling up and this eventually became the present lake *Wiramu*. *Adjeriga* went to *Wiramunemma* and asked

him whether he had killed his wife. *Wiramunemma* silently bowed his head, so *Adjeriga* ran him through with his spear and then cut off his head. *Adjeriga* now taught the people how to cut off the heads of their enemies and what songs to sing afterwards. Before and after head-hunting expeditions food-offerings were made to *Adjeriga*.

When the beds have been cleaned and the grass that has been thrown to the sides has been dried by the sun, bananas, medicine, *wati* and planting-materials are hung on a bamboo pole and placed in the lake called *Wiramu*, which is the place where *Adjeriga* cut down the banana-tree. Next day men and women, all adorned in their dancing-array, go to the lake and take everything down again from the bamboo pole. They then take their canoes to Bomapuda or some other site of taro-beds. The *warrewundu* goes in front with a drum and the other men and women follow him singing all the while. When they have arrived at the central *müthö* the women go back. The *warrewundu* raises his fire-stick towards the sun and says: "Let us make fire so that we shall be able to plant taro." He now makes fire, and must succeed at the first attempt or else the planting has to be postponed. Each planter now takes fire, medicine and planting-materials to his own plant-beds, where the dry grass is burnt and subsequently the tubers are planted. The men then return to the central spot where they chew betel. For the women a special hut has been built where they sit together silently during the whole of the ceremony. When the men return the *warrewundu* goes inside, beats his drum and at that moment the women rise and start to sing and dance together with the men. The planting-ceremony is called *Tjaridde*.

When only three leaves are left, that is, when the taro is at an advanced stage of its development, the same ritual as described for yams in Chapter 6 is carried out.

They sing of the wind which moves the taro-leaves up and down, about *Adjeriga* and his wife, about *Warremuje* and *Kumbiema* who are asked to fecundate their respective wives and who, it is said, once carried taros so large that they could scarcely walk. They also sing of *Muma* who once filled his canoe with taros. All these beings are asked to steal taro from other villages and bring it here. In the same way as during the yams-ritual the singing is now and again interrupted by invocations of female beings who must be made pregnant:



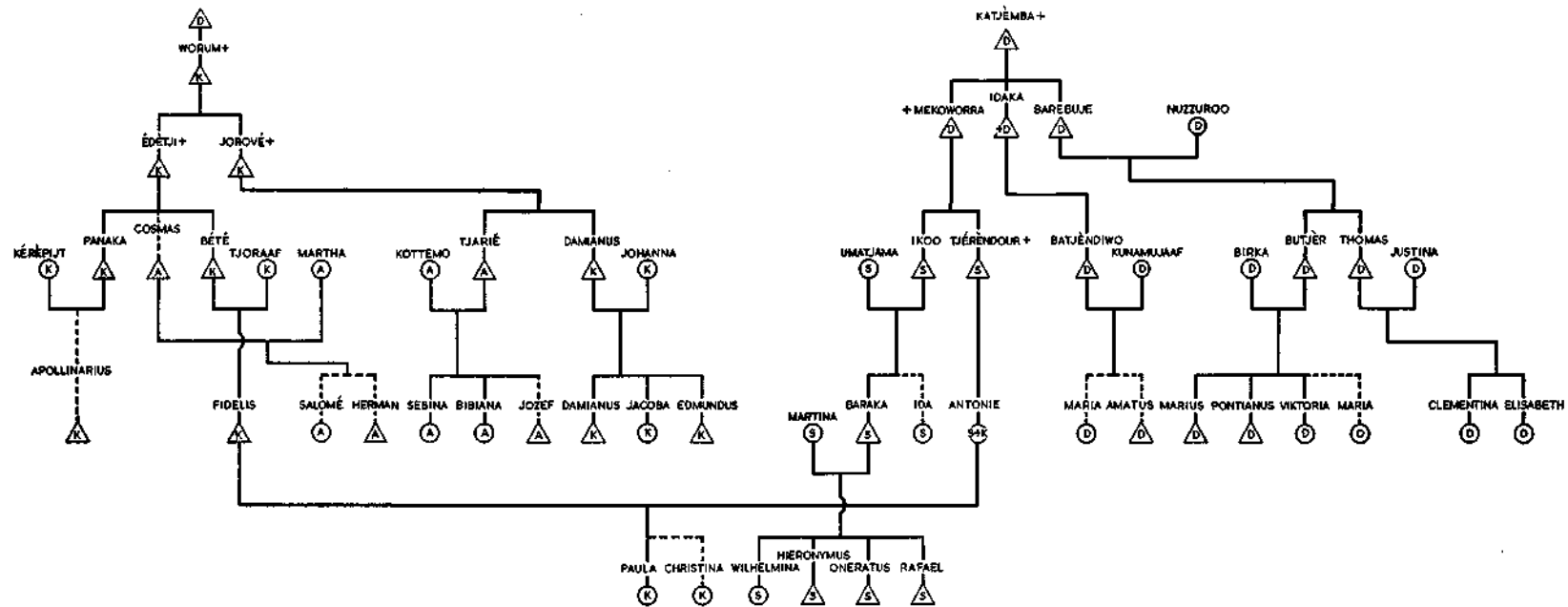
“*Bimbarija joomba*  
*Bimbarije joomba*  
*Tjatedowwu puri-tra.*”

which may be rendered as follows: “Let *bimbarije* (name of a particular type of taro) grow in the belly of *Tjatedowwu* (name of a mythical female associated with taro).

In the meantime the women sit together silently and as I was able to observe on one of these occasions, are really terrified of the magic invoked by the men. They huddle together fearfully on a small island and wait until the men have made all the food once more fit for consumption and give the sign to break the silence. The hut that was built on the occasion of the planting-ceremony has been decorated this time. In the roof a hole has been made beneath which the drum is suspended. When the men return, they walk towards the house. In front goes the *warrewundu*. He takes the drum and puts it through the hole in the roof. All the men now start pulling down the hut. The *warrewundu* beats his drum while the men and women dance. The taboo on sexual intercourse has been lifted. The women take off their pubic aprons, which they throw in the direction of the men, who catch them and throw them away. It is not known to what extent promiscuous intercourse still takes place on this occasion. This feast is called *wararawawa*.

Like the yams, the large *ndambu* taros may only be harvested by the *warrewundu* himself and may on no account be eaten by the man who planted them.

*Genealogy of the kwanda Tjire (Sibeenda)*



The various dwelling-islands have been indicated by means of letters:

A = Awedar            K = Koretjedar            D = Damburendar            S = Sinodar

dotted line indicates adopted children.

The genealogical relationship between Worum and Katjamba could not be traced anymore.

The marriage of Fidélis and Antonie being an intra-*kwanda* marriage gave rise to much opposition, even though it could not be traced anymore whether they were in any way related.



## references

### CHAPTER 1

- <sup>1</sup> Braak, p. 58/59
- <sup>2</sup> Sperling, 1936, p. 48
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 28
- <sup>4</sup> van Steenis, p. 235/236
- <sup>5</sup> Heeres, p. 29/30
- <sup>6</sup> Kolff, p. 348
- <sup>7</sup> Modera, 1830, p. 39/40
- <sup>8</sup> Verhandelingen en Berigten, 1837-1840, p. 602/618
- <sup>9</sup> Verslag, 1920, p. 168
- <sup>10</sup> Drabbe, 1949, p. 1f.
- <sup>11</sup> Notes and Queries, 1951, p. 273
- <sup>12</sup> Wirz, 1922-1923, p. 127/128
- <sup>13</sup> Pouwer, 1958, p. 16
- <sup>14</sup> Vogel, 1962, p. 15
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 25
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 14
- <sup>17</sup> van Heurn, toerneeverslag. 1957. (patrol-report)

### CHAPTER 2

- <sup>1</sup> Boelaars, 1953, p. 126
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 126
- <sup>3</sup> Nevermann, p. 135, Boelaars, 1953, p. 126, Verhage, 1957, p. 73

<sup>4</sup> van Heurn, 1957

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Serpenti, 1962, p. 43f.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, p. 42/43

<sup>9</sup> de Groot c.s.1956, p. 7f.

<sup>10</sup> Vogel, 1962, p. 28

<sup>11</sup> van Heurn, 1957

<sup>12</sup> Nevermann, p. 135

### CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup> Murdock, 1949, p. 101

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 109/110

<sup>3</sup> Oceania, Dec. 1958, vol. XXIX, no. 2

### CHAPTER 4

<sup>1</sup> ter Haar, 1948, p. 81

<sup>2</sup> van Vollenhove, 1909, p. 19f.

<sup>3</sup> ter Haar, 1948, p. 82

<sup>4</sup> Serpenti, 1962, p. 49f.

<sup>5</sup> Pouwer, 1955, p. 70

### CHAPTER 5

- <sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the organisation of the village welfare-worker system see Veeger, Papoea dorpsverzorgsters, een sociaal hygienisch experiment.

- \* van Baal, 1938. *Memorie van Overgave*, p. 71 f.
- <sup>2</sup> Thieman, diary-notes
- <sup>4</sup> van Baal, Dema.
- <sup>5</sup> Serpenti, 1962, p. 50f.
- <sup>6</sup> Verhage, 1957, p. 5.

CHAPTER 6

- <sup>1</sup> cf. Lévi-Strauss' theories on exchange e.g. *Les Structures elementaires de la parenté*, 1949.

EPILOQUE

- <sup>1</sup> Mauss, 1954, p. 1 f.
- <sup>2</sup> Schoorl, 1953, p. 27
- <sup>3</sup> cf. Erasmus, *Man takes Control*.
- <sup>4</sup> Hoebel, 1954, p. 28
- <sup>5</sup> Lévi-Strauss, 1949, p. 74/78
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 1958, p. 56
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 56
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 1953, p. 538
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 1958, p. 70

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*list of native words and expressions used in the text*

aghave	kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	kwanda	village-ward	paku	territory in which the members of a kwanda make their garden-islands
aga	supernatural being	mabureede	final period in bachelors' house	pangi	head-hunter
bangaura	state of latent danger during the planting of yams	mapié	fern-root	patha	dwelling-island
bapanda	mourning-hood	menuko	affinal kinship-term	patha-imba	real adoption
aghavemamu-imba	adoption of an older child	möthö	garden-island	pente	tree
akar-paku (Mal.)	fern-root (see also <i>mapié</i> )	muje	eating, drinking	perre-muje	chew betel, make peace
aramu	sprout of the coconut-tree	munaka	lowest phase in bachelors' house	prawat	village welfare worker
burawa	bachelors' house	munawarre	feast of shaving a child's head	pu-anim	stranger (expression derived from the Marind-Anim)
buru/börö	part, section	nabarre	affinal kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	taumuku	tobacco
gaba-gaba	sago-leaf ribs	naburine	age-mate	tigwa	see also <i>wati</i> , a powerful sort of kava
gamu	sorcery practised especially by Marind-Anim	naio	friend	tjada	herbs used in the yams-ritual
dijangare	large dug-out	naïokoné	partners in the exchange of sisters	tjaë	taro
dijjarane	small dug-out	namanu	kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	Thubödubor	promiscuous sexual intercourse before and after head-hunting expeditions
djeruk (Mal.)	lemon	namavor	affinal kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	tjatowa	hairlengthenings
gathö	bride-price	namuadje	kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	puri	belly, pregnant
guru	village-teacher (Indon.)	nanarre	affinal kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	tji	human being
ibunné	ritual to discover the name of a guilty sorcerer	nanjti	kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	tjigi	high ground south of Jeobi-Webu
ikan (Mal.)	fish	nanuko	kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	tjipente	bilateral kindred
imba	adoption, to adopt	nawa	affinal kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	tjutjine	middle period in bachelors' house
inga	sago	ndakoné	cassava-roots	tutupi	short measuring-tape
irakoné	sweetheart	ndambu	food-giving competition on the occasion of the final mortuary feast	ubi	tuber (Indon.)
jaentjewe	sibling-group	ngadzi	dance borrowed from the Marind-Anim	undani	magician
jatjebu	affinal kinship-term, see diagram, appendix 4	niwanda	fellow-members of a kwanda	vee-kuni	sweet potato
jemmö	exchange of food between relatives of a deceased and the latter's age-mate at mortuary-feasts	nöwedde	one	wadi	immaterial part of man, thought of as smoke, heat or vibration
jet	bull-roarer, also mythical figure	numba-numba	immaterial element, thought of as a shadow of man	warrewundu	great cultivator and successful ndambu-giver
jetörendör	house where the initiation of young men takes place(Ndom)	pa	village	wati	Marind word for piper-methysticum, a powerful type of kava
jiwendiwo	final mortuary feast	paburu	village-sector	watjip	dance
joomba	food-bowl	paburu-kavé	division of the village into two sectors	wèwe	immaterial element of man, capable after his death of bringing illness to other persons
kapapie	long measuring-tape	paja	sleeping-hut	wètewutu	place where the dead reside
kantji	variety of yam			wontj-imba	adoption for a limited period
kavé	two				
koa	coconut				
koné	mythical female				
kuni	yam				
Kuruamma	"Urheber" figure				

1

Het verdient aanbeveling in etnografieën van landbouwculturen meer aandacht te besteden aan de rationele kanten van de produktiemethoden.

2

Bij vele schriftloze volken zijn de landbouwmethoden in hoge mate aangepast aan de eisen van het natuurlijk milieu en aan de beschikbare technische hulpmiddelen. Onvoldoende kennis hiervan kan ertoe leiden dat de westerling bepaalde handelingen als irrationeel beschouwt, die het in werkelijkheid niet zijn.

3

Bij pogingen om de inheemse landbouw aan te passen aan een moderne economische ontwikkeling is kennis van de traditionele landbouwmethoden noodzakelijk.

4

Er zijn duidelijke aanwijzingen dat de landbouw bij de Marind-Anim eens op een hoger peil stond dan tegenwoordig het geval is.

5

De exploitatie van het fysisch milieu bij de diverse papoeavolken van de zuidkust van Nieuw-Guinea vertoont naast verschillen ook opmerkelijke parallellen. Een vergelijkende studie van de landbouwculturen in Zuid Irian-Barat en het aangrenzende deel van de Territory of Papua, is zeer aan te bevelen.

6

Het zou toe te juichen zijn indien het Vaticaans concilie zou leiden tot **meer** begrip en belangstelling voor de autochtone godsdiensten in missiegebieden.

7

Aan het onderzoek naar de werkelijke betekenis van het Christendom in het leven en de wereldbeschouwing van recent gekerstende volken wordt in acculturatiestudies te weinig aandacht besteed.

8

De hypothese van Holmberg dat in maatschappijen met een marginale of onvoldoende voedselproductie "Kin groups will be more cohesive than all other social groups and will perform a greater number of significant functions than local or other internal social groups", gaat voor Frederik-Hendrikeiland en waarschijnlijk ook voor vele andere volken niet op.

Holmberg, A.R. Nomads of the long bow. The Siriono of Eastern Bolivia. Washington 1950., bladz. 99.

9

De onbruikbaarheid van het extreme cultuurrelativisme, zoals verdedigd door Herskovits, blijkt onder meer uit situaties zoals die welke het gevolg waren van de introductie van besmettelijke ziekten in Zuid Nieuw-Guinea.

Herskovits, M.J. Man and his works. The science of cultural anthropology, New York 1948., bladz. 61 e.v.

10

Het experiment van Papoea-dorpsverzorgsters in Zuid Nieuw-Guinea heeft in het algemeen niet aan de verwachtingen beantwoord.

Veeger, L. M. Papoea-dorpsverzorgsters; een sociaal-hygienisch experiment in Nederlands Zuid Nieuw-Guinea. Amsterdam 1959.

11

De archieven van vele voormalige koloniale gouvernementen zijn niet toegankelijk voor het wetenschappelijk onderzoek. Opening en ordening van deze archieven zijn van groot belang voor het onderzoek van het cultuur-contact en het proces van verandering in niet-westerse maatschappijen.

12

Musea die zich ten doel stellen de kennis over niet-westerse volken te vergroten dienen minder dan nu de nadruk te leggen op de esthetische aspecten en meer op de culturele context van de tentoongestelde voorwerpen.

13

Het verdient aanbeveling dat gehuwde onderzoekers bij veldwerk van langere duur door hun gezin vergezeld worden.

**MAP OF FREDERIK-HENDRIK ISLAND**  
*(after map of J. van der Meer, 1968, DASH 2546.)*

- Scale: 1 : 50,000
- Legend:
-  village
  -  cultivated area or abandoned cultivated area
  -  meadow
  -  river
  -  lake
- Key:
- Koedjehand - Koedjehand
  - Jaba - Jaba
  - Koedjehand - Koedjehand
  - Bora - Bora
  - Saba - Saba
  - Kaba - Kaba
  - Kaba - Kaba

