IRIAN
Bulletin of Irian Jaya

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VOLUME XIV, 1986
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LANGKAH-LANGKAH MENUJU PENGERTAHAAN

Ikhtisar


Introduction

This paper traces four kinds of initiation formerly practised by the Yali of the Heluk Valley. Of these, three were performed almost in a chronological progression, and with a sense of progression in both the quantity and in the sacredness of knowledge. These three are the primary initiation wit bal-enepuk or youa kelap-enepuk, the Kwalu rite, and the Moroal rite. The Kwalu and Moroal rites also reflect the migratory origins of the Yali and preserve two separate and distinct traditions. The fourth is the initiation of shamans, and I include it here because it also was a significant rite introducing many Yali males to further sacred lore.

Background

The geographical area of this study is the Heluk Valley of the Jayawijaya Mountains of Irian Jaya. The Heluk River flows roughly north to south and is a tributary of the Balim River, a few miles from its exit from the mountains to the southern lowlands.

The people of this valley are known as Yali, or, Jale (Koch). Their linguistic and cultural distinctives are inherited from groups both to the east and the west.

The Yali are subsistence farmers, scraping a meager existence from the rain-leached soil of the steep mountainsides. Their main crops are sweet potatoes, taro and yam, with the seasonal mountain and red pandanus nuts
also forming a significant part of their diet. Their only domesticated animals are dogs, kept as pets and for hunting, and pigs, which are used not so much "to provide nutrition or sustenance, but as an exchange object, with the purpose of constituting or consolidating social relationships and cultic-ritual functions" (Zöllner, 1977:39).

Their villages consist of clusters of simple round huts of split timber board walls, thatched with tree bark and leaves from pandanus palms. The largest of these are the men's huts (yowa or ouhaboum "sacred huts"), which are the focal point of many of the ritual practices, and entry to these and their yards is prohibited to all but initiated males. Willing or unwitting trespass is regarded as taboo (babi "incest")², for which the penalty was death.³ The majority of huts in each village are the smaller women's or family huts, occupied by the women, their uninitiated sons, unmarried daughters, and pigs. Most of these villages are located between 1250 and 2250 meters above sea level.

1. Primary Initiation — wit bal-enepuk or youa kwelap-enepuk

Men and women are markedly segregated in Yali society, both physically and ritually, and men have a great fear of contamination or pollution by a woman's menstrual blood. The primary initiation rite reaffirms the segregation, and is the means by which young Yali boys are ritually severed from the mother's hut, purified, and inducted into the men's hut even though some physical association of mother and child continues.

These concepts are contained in two terms commonly used to refer to this rite. The term "to initiate them" (wit bal-enepuk) is composed of two parts: wit which is applied to males subsequent to each rite of initiation, in the forms wiron "initiated kind of one" and wirahun "initiated man" and then the part bal-enepuk from the verb "to cut off/sever". The term baldek alludes to the cessation of the uninitiated state and the segregation of males, thus describing the function of initiation. On the other hand the term "to put them 'i.e., the young boys, into the men's house" (youa kwelap-enepuk) describes the process and object of initiation.

The Yali regard the primary initiation as the first step in a long process of acquiring the esoteric knowledge and lore to which men alone are allowed access. It took place in the Heluk Valley roughly every year. Pigs previously dedicated to the sacred objects (wam mouhve), which are devoted to the spirits, were killed by common consensus in all the villages. At that time, boys around five or six years of age would undergo primary initiation and be introduced into their local men's hut.

On the first of three days, the men removed the young uninitiates (kubilon) from the mother's hut and took them to the yard of the men's house. Then they exchanged and slaughtered pigs. The boy's uncles (amusii "patrilineal kin to the mother's brothers") presented breast-weaned pigs (wam ag hemeleg "weaning-from-the-breast pigs") and slaughtered and cooked them in front of the women's huts (homoia). This presentation formally recognised the role the mother plays in giving birth to the child, and acknowledged the relation of the boy to his mother's clan. 'It also
emphasizes the place of the mother's brothers as authority figures in the life of the initiate -- later he will be able to mediate in cases of conflict involving his sister's children. Zöllner (1977) notes that the goodwill of the mother's kin is essential to the growth and welfare of the child, and that this is guaranteed by the giving of pigs.

The mother's brothers reciprocated with taro and pork (wam hom salug "having-covered-the-taro pigs") because they were always cooked with taro provided by the mother -- taro is believed to be strength producing. The mother's brothers slaughtered and cooked these in the yard of the men's house (youa).

While the meat cooked, they cut the initiate's hair with a sliver of bamboo in readiness for rubbing his head with pig fat. The growth of hair is indicative of bodily growth and development. A cleansing ritual followed, in which a shaman (ap hwalon) symbolically removed the contents of the novice's stomach. In this ritual called enehummu angge sa-enepuk "to-pull-out-the-contents-of-their-stomachs," the shaman pressed a bunch of wild parsley leaves (musan) and sphagnum moss (nerahum) and rubbed them over the novice's abdomen. Then they pulled the leaves and moss away to the accompaniment of esoteric utterances and blowing, in order to extract food remnants inappropriate to, and soon to be taboo for, the initiate. They then washed the novice's body with sphagnum moss soaked in water, to remove all the outward dirt, ash and other contamination from the mother's hut. The shamans then rubbed the initiate's bodies all over with a piece of parsley warmed and softened in the flames of a fire and impregnated with pig fat. This ensured complete cleansing from the mother's menstrual blood (minga), which otherwise was thought to induce weakness and sickness in the boy.

In the yard of the men's house, the mother's brother(s) presented the boy with a black palm bow (sehen soynim) while pulling on the bow string and letting it go to snap loudly against the bow. This ensured the boy's strength and bravery in shooting people. He also gave the initiate a net bag (wit sum), putting into it some sacred objects, such as stones, shells, animal fur and a portion of pork from taro and pork (wam hom salug "having-covered-the-taro-pigs"). He also tied walimu shells, saul cowrie shells and cymbium meli shells on the boy's person. These gifts ensured that the boy would be rich, powerful and healthy.

Meanwhile, the shaman placed various sacred objects across the threshold of the men's house (yal bog duruk), including a sacred stone, a splinter from the mythical Yeli (see appendix B), shells, a bow and a stone adze. At this point, the initiate's mother's brothers lifted him into the men's house and cautioned him to take care not to tread on the sacred objects on the threshold, while the shaman brushed or waved a marsupial tail over the boy's feet, muttering esoteric formulae.

On this or a succeeding day, the boys participated in a foot-placing ceremony (eneyog awi feseruk "foot placing"), at the hearth of the men's house. In this ceremony the candidate held on to one of the house poles (or a stake planted in the ground as a proxy for the house when the rite was performed outside, as in the case of the Kwali rite) and placed his foot with first and second toes splayed around the pole. The shaman uttered
uttered incantations, invoking the protection of spirits of the founding ancestors of the men's house, and brushed the initiate's eyes with feathers of a bird. In this way he ensured health and strength of body and alertness of mind.

On the second day of the rite, the initiate was annointed with fat from a pig previously killed in honour of sacred stones (kembu). The women cooked pigs, but the young initiate remained in the vicinity of the men's house and the food was brought to him.

On the third day, the shaman performed a desacralizing rite called sali balduk ("to cut-off the-time-period"), to mark the ending of a period of sacred activity, and to release the effects of the sacred rite that may not be conveyed to non-initiates. In this case, the shaman preceded the boys along the pathway to the women's huts, waving a bunch of leaves over the path, while uttering an esoteric formula. Then the boy was permitted to return to the women's huts to eat, but not to sleep, as from now on he would sleep with his peers and older kin in the men's huts.

There followed at undetermined intervals, apparently only once in a generation, a pair of secondary rites for initiates in the teenage group or older. Only in the Heluk Valley area did the Yali perform both these rites, and this reflects the two strands of the basic Heluk area version of the Yeli origin myth. The one, Kwalu, originated in the migration of the ancestors from the west, while the other, Moroal, came through the migration of ancestors from the east. Each preserves the associated traditions.

Because these two rites belonged to separate traditions, they were not synchronised. However, it appears that youths in their teens and twenties were initiated into Kwalu, while the Moroal initiation took place when men were older, in their twenties and thirties.

2. The Kwalu initiation — Kwalu kwelap-enepek

This rite is described as Kwalu kwelap-enepek "entering-them-into Kwalu". It was apparently practised in the Yali area only down the western side of the Heluk Valley, and in a few Yali villages in the neighbouring Kwik Valley to the west. The sacred Kwalu hut where the rite was performed usually stood in its own yard outside and below the village.

The initiators and candidates gathered in the yard of the sacred house dedicated to the Kwalu rite, where the men slaughtered the kwalu-pigs (wam Kwalu wam) and cooked them by wrapping the pork together with pre-heated stones in bundles of leaves. When these were ready, the shamans introduced ten or so novices at a time into the sacred house. There the shamans gave them pork to eat, and uttered sacred formulae while pressing simultaneously on the novice's backs and chests with the palms of their hands. Finally, they performed the foot-placing ceremony.
In the morning of the second day, the men and new initiates went and placed branches of e bug hali saplings near a path on the western approaches to the community — symbolic of the western Hupla origins of the rite. This was followed by a desacralizing rite to mark the end of the sacred period and to release the men from food restrictions imposed during the ceremony.

On the third morning, preparations were made for a purification rite on behalf of the women and uninitiated children. Pigs were killed, cooked and distributed to everyone, and the men went off to fetch lengths of gwisiq vine (normally used as a source of string for netbags) and leaves from wild sugar cane (bare). The sugar cane leaves were wound around long lengths of the vine, and a symbolic fence was formed with the vine around the women and children. If any of the women stepped outside the fence this was regarded as violating a taboo and the offenders were put to death. From outside the fence of vine, the shamans experienced in Kwalu uttered incantations and sprinkled the women and children with water-soaked sphagnum moss and parsley leaves. After this purification ceremony, they made an opening in the fence and the women moved out to a place where a wooden stake from the hendip tree was driven into the ground. There the women participated in a foot-placing ceremony — a sacred stone (sie) and portions of pig fat and other ceremonial objects having been placed or buried at the base of the stake. In essence this was a fertility rite to ensure healthy people, successful pig breeding, and a good sweet potato harvest.

3. The Moroal initiation — Moroal kwelap-enepuk

A third and ultimate step in the process toward knowledge for all Yali males is called Moroal kwelap-enepuk "entering-them-into Moroal". It is the only rite which was constituted primarily with the killing and eating of marsupial meat rather than pork. It is retrospective to the eastern origin of the Yali through the felling of the Yeli by the two marsupials Houl and Hwesali. It appears to have taken place every 20-30 years (Zöllner 1977).

From the point of view of women and uninitiated children, there was a sudden burst of unprecedented activity — preparation of large amounts of firewood, followed by numbers of adult males leaving the village for a prolonged period of time. The men prepared for Moroal by building a temporary long house (o sabo yaron) high up in the forest above the villages. They would spend several weeks hunting and trapping various kinds of marsupial in preparation for the climactic rite of Moroal. To prevent women and children from seeing, they secretly harvested sweet potatoes in the garden areas below the forest by night. One marsupial (bak) had to be killed for each candidate for the Moroal initiation. The men gutted the marsupials and then, after washing the entrails wrapped them in the carcass, hung it all up to dry in the smoke above the fires of the long hut.

After the passage of as many as three months, when all was in readiness, the uninitiated youths were taken by night to the long hut in the forest. There they were greeted by a strange mournful chanting (enele enap duruk)
and whistling (yet-wet angge) or (wil uruk), (a piercing whistle by fast alternation of inspiration and expiration of air between tongue and teeth), which was a sign to men and spirits that everything was ready for the Moroal. Any men remaining in the village left stealthily to join those already in the forest.

At that point, the previously initiated men performed a dressing-up ceremony (waliban-enepuk "dress-up") in which they blackened their entire body with charcoal, and inserted pieces of vine through the pierced nasal septum (where normally pig tusks are worn) and allowed the vine to hang down in snakelike manner. Some men would release the string of the penis gourd (humi) letting the gourd dangle downwards. However, others used the hollow stem of a forest plant (hum-humi), blackened with charcoal, instead of the usual gourd. Singing and dancing ensued with the men thrusting portions of dried marsupial meat at the boys. The men were impersonating the spirits, and some of the men became ecstatic as they danced, sang and cried out.

Following this, all the men entered the long house, where they cooked and ate portions of the dried marsupial meat. Then they performed a foot-placing ceremony with a stake of a particular kind of wood (aniek). As in all foot-placing ceremonies they had previously buried or fastened sacred stones, pig fat, feathers (and in this case marsupial fur) at the base of the stake.

During the next month the men taught the new Moroal initiates (wiron) the associated sacred lore which could never be shared with or revealed to the women and uninitiated children. At the end of that time, when the initiates returned to the village, the women welcomed them with a dance, and put out newly woven netbags and roasted sweet potatoes. These were for the new initiates, but the men would trample these under foot, as the initiates had not yet been desacralized by the slaughter of desacralizing pigs (wam sali wam).

On the next day, the men slaughtered gourd-pigs (wam hobut angge "gourd-kind-pigs") and steam-cooked them without first singeing off the hair. The cooked pork was hung up in the men's hut and the men entered in turns, each biting from the hanging pork, then moving around the hut to exit, repeating the procedure until the meat was finished. (The name given these pigs may have resulted from the appearance of the meat as it hung, gourd-like, in the hut).

Two days later, the sequence of activities within the Moroal rite was terminated with the performance of a foot-placing ceremony for the women and a desacralizing rite for the men. The men were enjoined to observe certain food taboos, and told that failure to observe these could bring dire consequences such as landslides, crop failure, pig and human deaths.

4. Initiation of shamans — hwal sum sukni-enepuk or hwal kwelap-enepuk

At some indeterminate time after primary initiation, the shamans discussed appointing young initiates (mainly teenagers) to the role of shaman. This was a hereditary office and did not include all initiates.
The terms used are *hwal sum sukni-enepuk* "to-hang-on-them the-shaman-netbag" or *hwal kwelap-enepuk* "to-enter-them-into shaman-office". Through this rite, young boys began their education in the execution of various sacred acts and the esoteric utterances used in performing the various rituals for healings (including diagnosis and treatment of various sicknesses), divinations, purifications and initiations.

At the selected time, a group of candidates was taken to a mountain cave or to a temporary hut at the base of a large over-shadowing tree in the forest, where they stayed for about two months. There, the presiding shaman(s) slaughtered and cooked pigs. The shaman, grasping in his hands a small bundle of marsupial fur and feathers from the white-throated vine wren (*holi*), brushed the eyebrows of the candidates. This was to make the young men very alert like the wren, which is a nervous bird, first to sing in the morning. After this, a shaman netbag (*hwal sum*) and a small, traditional woven string bag decorated with *sibine* "hornbill", *wiyelu* "black capped lory" and *werene* "fairy lory" feathers, were hung from the novices' foreheads and hung down the back of the neck and shoulders. In these they carried pieces of pig fat and artifacts of intrinsic power such as splinters of *Yeli* (*Yeli asengupep*), marsupial fur (*bak oruk*), shells (*kombon*) and scented leaves or bark such as cinnamon (*kami*). Then the initiates began to learn to kill ghosts (*mungguat watuk ale* "the business of hitting/killing ghosts"), used for healing the sick, cleansing the land and in other rites. This included learning esoteric songs and recitations (mimicking the sounds of marsupials that embody spirits referred to in those songs and recitations) and producing special voices and actions.

At night the boys performed a foot-placing ceremony in the forest.

Then, while others slept, the shaman and the boys proceeded to the hut of a sick person, with the purpose of "hitting" or "killing" the spirits/ghosts which were causing the sickness. They stealthily entered the hut and climbed up to the sleeping storey while waving a bundle of marsupial fur and whispering incantations. In this way, they "hit" the spirits, then symbolically tied them up with a length of vine. They then bound the spirit and tied it to a tree far from the village, and warned the people not to go there. Then they returned to the cave or hut in the forest, and their education in shamanism continued through the night.

At dawn, they returned to the hut of the sick person and, with sphagnum moss soaked in water, ceremonially washed the outside boards of the hut. Then they treated the sick person by killing a pig and smearing its blood on his body using wild parsley leaves.

During the next one or two months, the newly appointed shaman continued to be educated. He maintained a symbolic fast (*ambilik hweang foruk*), eating only unwashed potatoes to ensure retention of the newly acquired knowledge (*hwal*) and its accompanying power.

Before they finally returned to the village, and to break their fast, they performed a desacralizing act in the forest. First, at the place where they had been going to drink water, they placed broad leaves from a lulubi tree over a drinking spout (usually a piece of bark or a section of
pandanus leaf strategically placed into a spring or stream), and then they killed desacralizing pigs.

On their return to the village, the new shamans cooked pigs for their initiators, and as they distributed the pork, the older men told them they were now able to perform the healings and other rituals on their own.

**Conclusion**

There no longer remains any remnant or hint of any of these activities in Yali life. In one village at least, there remains only one man who has been through the Moroal. Since before my arrival in the Heluk Valley, in 1972, no more initiations have been performed and a new generation is growing up that knows little about these rites.

Several points emerge from a study of these rites, which perhaps embody the essence of life in the Yali worldview.

The Yali is anxious to maintain physical health and welfare, frequently expressed as health and strength of body, successful pig breeding, and good garden land and crops. In order to do this, he must recognize his origins and his solidarity with his ancestors. In the primary initiation (youa kwelap-enepuk), this is recognized by incorporation into the men's house and by giving attention to the initiate's relationship to the moieties. The danger of incest between members of the same moiety, or other acts deemed sacrilegious, is also mitigated by the act of separation of the boy at his primary initiation.

The Kwaku and Moroal rites each reiterate and reinforce the solidarity with the ancestors, of both eastern and western traditions, and endeavor to maintain the growth, health, welfare and fertility the Yali desires.

Where these three may be seen as preventative in function, the initiation and role of the shamans is curative. When somehow the status quo is upset, it is these men, initiated into shamanism, who have the knowledge of what to do to redress the balance.

Through these rites, the essential knowledge of life in the Yali world, and how its stability can be maintained, was passed on from generation to generation.
Appendixes

Appendix A: Yali Worldview

Due to the ruggedness of terrain and frequent inter-community strife, few Yalís have travelled far from their homes, and consequently, they have an awareness limited by what is immediate to their experience.

From high ridges they can see the lowlands to the south, where they believe the dome of the sky touches the land. According to Zöllner (1977:50), they view the world as centred on the high mountain range, the sides of which they live on, and they are completely bounded by rivers around the perimeter.

They have no concept of a supreme being or spirit, let alone a creator, but believe there are numerous ghosts/spirits (mungguat), (generally of malevolent intent and often embodied in marsupials and cassowary birds), which inhabit high mountain peaks, the forest and distant lowlands. These spirits must be appeased and perhaps manipulated through the observation of certain taboos (ousa "taboo") and rites particularly centred on the sacred sie and kembu stones, thought to be splinters of the mythical stone pillar Yeli. The Yali's creation, and that of the elements are explained in various forms of myth and legend.

Appendix B: The Yeli myth

The central myth concerns the Yeli. In the beginning, a huge stone pillar or tree called Yeli existed. Its base was believed to be somewhere in the east near the Durum area near Korupun (40 km east of the Heluk Valley). Two marsupials - Houl and Hwesali - came to the base of the Yeli, and gnawing with their sharp teeth felled it. It toppled from east to west along the mountain range. At its base a river began to flow from beneath a squatt́ing pig, and as the river flowed people emerged from underneath the pig, and they populated the east. Near the middle of the Yeli trunk where it splintered across the mountains near Angguruk, more people appeared, but some of these travelled further west underground through the mountains. They emerged where the tip of the Yeli fell against the Ferawe mountain near Wamera, pulled by the stream that flowed out from underneath a squatt́ing pig - out of the cave at Seimu. This stream flows into the Balm River, which drew the people south eastwards down the Valley until, at nightfall, they climbed out of the Balm and up on to a steep ridge called Yalisili, near Holuwon. They spent their first night in the Heluk Valley there and then began to migrate northwards up the Heluk Valley, some of them settling as they went.

Other forms of the Yeli myth occur in other areas, some with puzzling interchange of a Yeli pig and a woman. Zöllner records the Yeli as a tree. At Uwam, south of The Heluk, the Yeli was thought to be a large earthworm (dung) normally about 45cm long, the rainbow being its spirit.
Notes

1 John Wilson and his wife Gloria have worked among the Yali people since July 1972. The material for this paper was collected from July 1972 to 1987 under the auspices of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union.

2 The term for taboo (babi "incest") is used for incest between a man and woman of the same moiety, or any other sacrilegious act that could endanger the well-being of the community - the people's health, successful pig breeding and good sweet potato harvests.

3 Richardson records an incident that occurred when a girl strayed into the Kwalu yard at Ninia, and was subsequently cast alive into the Heluk River.

4 The Yali keep no calendar, but note the progress of the sun in its rising up and down the valley (ranging from the north in June to the south in December), referring to one complete cycle as (li "cycle"). But the availability of pigs determines the timing of the rite more than the time of year.

5 The term "uninitiates" (kubilon) is applied to all candidates prior to each of the rites described, as well as to all other children and women.

6 Both Koch and Zöllner record this as taking place after entry to the men's hut. There are other discrepancies of details, location and chronology, even from among informants in the Heluk, suggesting the main elements were the same, but that local variations occurred.

7 There are two types of stone adze, each associated with the teeth of the two marsupials which felled the Yeli. Geologically, one kind appears to originate in the east and the other in the west, but the exact origin is unknown. This is a tangible example of the meeting of eastern and western cultural distinctives, and mythically a representation of the two moieties.

8 In every house there is a central hearth, roughly square, with four wooden posts (e fisingge), one at each corner, supporting the upper floor and the roof. During building, a sacred stone (sieg) and some sacred pig fat (wamsei) are placed at the base of one of the posts.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


KEKERABATAN DALAM SUKU KETENGBAN

Ikhtisar

Makalah ini menguraikan beberapa hal penting dari sistem kekerabatan dalam suku Ketengban. Sebagaimana telah dijelaskan oleh sejumlah penulis dalam penyelidikan yang serupa tentang kekerabatan di Irian Jaya dan Papua New Guinea, penting sekali untuk mengenal istilah dan hubungan silsilah yang ada dengan lebih mendalam. Ada peranan dan tingkah laku tertentu yang rumit yang diharapkan di antara orang banyak dalam suatu hubungan tertentu.

Dengan mengingat hal ini, makalah yang disajikan ini menyelidiki tentang hak dan tanggung jawab yang telah disetujui bersama dari beberapa jenis kekerabatan yang penting dalam suku Ketengban sebagai alat untuk mengerti hubungan masyarakat yang saling mempengaruhi, dan dalam beberapa hal, pengaruh timbal balik antara pribadi-pribadi yang menggunakan istilah-istilah ini dalam hubungan antara yang satu dengan yang lain. Akhirnya, pandangan sekilas diambil dari beberapa strategi yang digunakan oleh orang Ketengban untuk mengajar sistem itu kepada anak-anak dan menentukan di antara mereka sendiri, hubungan yang bagaimana yang dapat dimiliki oleh seseorang dengan mereka.

Makalah ini tidak sempurna, hanya memberikan beberapa penjelasan mengenai bagaimana orang Ketengban berbicara dan berpikir tentang kerabat mereka.
Ketengban Kinship

by Andrew Sims

0. INTRODUCTION

This paper describes some features of the Ketengban Kinship system. As a number of authors have pointed out in similar studies of kinship in Irian Jaya and Papua New Guinea, it is important to recognize that much more than terms and genealogical relationships are involved. There are complex sets of role expectations and interpersonal behavior that each culture expects for a particular relationship. With this in mind the present paper explores something of the mutual rights and obligations of some key Ketengban kin types as a means of understanding the social interaction and, in some cases, reciprocal action between individuals who use these terms in relating to one another. Finally, a glance is taken at some of the mental strategies employed by the Ketengban for teaching the system to children and for working out among themselves what relationship a particular individual may have with them.

This material is not exhaustive but sheds some light on how the Ketengban discuss and think about their kin. It also suggests direction for further investigation.

1. BACKGROUND

The Ketengban people live in the Eastern highlands of Irian Jaya in the District (Kabupaten) of Jayawijaya. The Ketengban number between 5,000 and 8,000 people living scattered throughout a rather large geographical area of rugged, forested mountains between Elpomek to the west and Apmisibil (Oksibil) to the east. There is a line of eight large villages with populations of between 100 and 400 people running roughly east to west with many smaller hamlets and villages on the ridges and in the valleys between. The population is densest along this snaking east-west axis rather than to the north and south. The population center ranges from approximately 2,000 feet to 6,500 feet elevation. The larger villages have only come into being during the last decade after increased mission and governmental contact and the opening of grass airstrips. Five of the largest villages are clustered near such strips.

The generally good range of soils and climate in the area reward the gardening efforts of the Ketengban with a diet of staples including sweet potato, taro, manioc, sugarcane, pandanus, bananas and numerous green leafy vegetables. A number of more recently introduced food items do well in various parts of the language group. Among these are cabbage, tomatoes, lemon, jackfruit, papaya, maize, squash, cucumbers, onion and several legumes. The Ketengban derive some animal protein from domestic pigs, and a limited number and variety of marsupials and birds for which they hunt in the forest using bow and arrow, deadfall and snare traps and dogs. A very limited amount of protein comes from tadpoles, frogs and tiny fish caught along the numerous swift flowing streams of the area. Sago, though not unknown, is very scarce and not a major contributor to the diet. The sweet
potato is the staple of greatest importance and quantity. Though all may be exchanged, the most highly valued items in food exchanges seem to be pork or other game taken in hunting, pandanus, sweet potato, taro and manioc.

2. KETENGBAN KINSHIP TERMS

The Ketengban kinship system is a straightforward Iroquois system. Distinction is made between the cross and parallel kinsmen in the first ascending generation, ego's generation, and the first two descending generations. Terms extend bilaterally without distinguishing lineal and collateral kin.

2.1 CONSANGUINEAL KINSHIP TERMS

Ketengban consanguineal kinship terms are presented in figure 1. Consanguineal terms distinguish three generations of familial kin and one generation of grandkinsmen. Relative sex and actual sex of kinsmen is marked in the first ascending and descending generations and ego's generation, and optionally in the second descending generation. Relative age is also marked for parallel kinsmen in ego's generation.

Grandkinsmen

In the second ascending generation and above (all grandkinsmen), two terms are used: one for male grandkinsmen, -apke, 'grandfather', and one for female grandkinsmen, nau, 'grandmother' are used. These terms extend to their spouses and collateral kinsmen of the same generation. Only sex is distinguished by these terms, not bifurcation or relative age. The most common term for grandkinsman, -apke has an alternate form which when pluralized, is also a general term for ancestors: apo yape. The term -apke extends bilaterally to all collateral male kinsmen of the +2 generation, and the term nau extends bilaterally to all collateral female kinsmen of +2 generation. Thus, FaFaBr and MoMoBr are referred to as napke, and FaFaSi and MoMoSi are referred to as nau.

There is a more general term, co deiso ning, 'great-great grandkinsmen', which can, along with its alternate forms, be used for grandkinsmen of the +3 generation and up with no sex or other distinctions made.

Familial terms

To designate kinsmen of the parent and child generations the Ketengban employ five terms. These terms can be referred to as familial terms.

Four familial terms classify kinsmen of the first ascending generation above ego. They are nai, 'father', nainkon, 'mother', mam, 'uncle', and nau, 'aunt'.

These terms distinguish both sex and bifurcation, two referring to parallel kinsmen and two to cross kinsmen. Parallel and cross are defined as in Seneca (Lounsbury 1964)' by the relative sex of kinsmen of the first ascending generation above ego. Within the genealogical chain that links ego to alter, if the sex of the two kinsmen of the first ascending
generation is the same, they are parallel kinsmen; if their sex is different they are cross kinsmen. The sex of linking kinsmen of other generations is irrelevant. All four terms extend beyond their primary ranges of reference to include other collateral kinsmen of the same cross/parallel distinction in the parent generation. Thus, all men in mother's clan are mam, 'maternal uncle', and their spouses are nau, 'aunt'; all men in father's clan are nai, 'father', and their spouses are nainkon, 'mother'.

In cases in which one wishes to distinguish between one's biological parent and their siblings or clan members, the term sisa, 'true or real', is added. This may, in turn, be said of maternal uncles and paternal aunts. In the case of mother, one could alternately say nainkon sisa, 'real mother', or ne nong nerepe, literally 'my body woman' (she who brought me to being). Similarly, the term gwanamna, 'to adopt and care for', is added to designate foster or step parent, or adopted child, gwanamna mi. The parent terms also apply to spouses of parallel kinsmen of the parent generation. Thus, for example, mother's sister's husband is nai, 'father', and father's brother's wife is nainkon, 'mother'. The term nau, 'aunt', is also used to refer to MoBrWi.

Though it is not often necessary to do so, by the addition of the term kailye, 'parent's younger sibling', ego may designate the younger biological siblings of either parent. Thus, nai kailye are ego's father's younger brothers and nainkon kailye are mother's younger sisters. These terms do not extend to affinal kinsmen. Neither this term nor a corresponding term is used in conjunction with mam or nau.

The term mi, 'child', is the reciprocal of nai, nainkon, mam and nau. Sex is distinguished by the addition of the term ner, 'female or woman', as in other terms mentioned in this paper. The term mi designates the male offspring of ego and his parallel kinsmen in his generation. The term ner mi designates the corresponding female offspring of ego and his generation of parallel kinsmen. The terms for child do not extend to any spouse of first descending generation kinsmen, and no age distinctions are made for kinsmen of this generation. The child terms may be extended when used by ego in conjunction with the first person plural pronoun nun, 'our', to refer to all kinsmen of the second descending generation without bifurcate distinctions, or as in the first descending generation these distinctions can be maintained.

Children may be referred to by the plural term nyape. Though it is common to make sex distinctions in the usual way, it is also common to ignore sex distinction of offspring of ego and parallel kinsmen by means of this term. Similarly, sex distinctions are ignored by referring to cross kinsmen with the general term neiki yape, 'cross cousins'.

Sibling terms

In ego's generation, priority of parallel kin is based on age relative to ego whether alter is an actual biological sibling or not. One set of two terms is used for older sibling, du or tat, 'older sibling', and one term for younger siblings, wit, 'younger sibling'.
Sex distinction is made in reference to kinsmen in ego's generation by use of the words bo, 'man or male', and ner, 'woman or female'. The omission of these terms is an option if ego is referring to male kinsmen so that rat, du, or wit is unambiguously a male sibling. However, the most frequently heard reference to male cross kinsmen usually employs the term bo or occasionally mam. To indicate a female kinsman ego must obligatorily use ner, 'female'. So, for instance, ego may refer to his older male sibling as du, or du bo, 'older male sibling', and his older female sibling as du ner, 'older female sibling', but not simply as du. Among cross kinsmen no distinction is made as to age relative to ego or age relative to other cross kinsmen within a generation. Sex relative to ego, however, is marked. Ego's male cross cousin is called neiki mam or neiki bo, 'male cross cousin', and his female cross cousin is referred to as neiki ner, 'female cross cousin'.

Another two terms are used to refer collectively to siblings of ego's generation without distinguishing relative age. Males and females are referred to as mal ninge, 'male siblings', and mal nerepe-nerapu, 'female siblings', respectively. The corresponding singular forms are malnye, 'male sibling', and mal ner, 'female sibling'. The sibling terms extend collateral to any parallel kinsmen of ego's generation, but do not extend to any affinal kinsmen. Only male egos may use the mal ner set, and do not use the term malnye or its plural. The reverse is true in that only females can use the term malnye or its plural, and may not use the mal ner terms. Given this restriction, relative sex is still marked and ego must refer to same-sex siblings using the usual sibling terms as described above.
FIGURE 1: CONSANGUINEAL KINSHIP CHART

1. apke
2. nau
3. yamal
4. nai
5. nainkon
6. mam
7. nau mi
8. yamal ner
9. nau ner mi
10. wit
11. du
12. ner
13. wit ner
14. du ner
15. nernye
16. yamal bo
17. neiki
18. basi ner
19. ka ner
20. kap
21. neiki ner
22. mi
23. ner mi

KETENGBAN KINSHIP
FIGURE 2: AFFINAL KINSHIP CHART

*If in some way more closely related to ego, then a closer term would be used.

1. yamal bo 6. ner
2. yamal ner 7. ka bo
3. yamal 8. mi
4. basi ner 9. ner mi
5. nernye

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2.2 AFFINAL KINSHIP TERMS

Ketengban affinal kinship terms are presented in figure 2 and table 1 and 2. These terms distinguish sex of ego and of alter. There are two groups of affinals as defined by generation and one set of spouse terms. Within the same sex some of the affinal terms are reciprocal between ego and alter and some are not.

Familial Affinal Terms

The term *yamal*, 'parent-in-law', designates all of spouse's bilateral kinsmen of the parent and ascending generations including their spouses. For a male ego it is used to refer to all of spouse's affines of the 0 generation. This base term is marked in the usual way for sex of ego and alter. Therefore, HuFa and WiFa is *yamal bo*, 'father-in-law', and HuMo and WiMo is *yamal ner*, 'mother-in-law'. So either a man or a woman refer to their spouses' parent of either sex by the basic term *yamal*. This term extends to collateral kinsmen of spouse of the parent and ascending generations. Additionally *yamal* is used reciprocally by ego's affines of ascending generations and ego's descendants, so WiFa and DaC or SoC refer to one another as *yamal*.

There is some difference of opinion and practice as regards the use of the *yamal*, 'parent-in-law' terms by female egos. Some Ketengban say that it is appropriate for female ego to use these terms for all of husband's bilateral kinsmen in parent and ascending generations in the same fashion as a male ego. Others report that this, while not strictly incorrect, would not be appropriate. It is felt by those holding this latter viewpoint that it is much preferable to use parent and grandparent terms for husband's kinsmen of ascending generations. Thus HuFa would be calle *nai*, 'father', and HuFaPa *napke*, 'grandfather'; likewise, HuMo would be called *nainkon*, 'mother', and HuMoMo *nau*, 'grandmother'. This pattern would then be followed throughout just as for the consanguineal terms of the +2 generation. This is said to be based partly on following the lead of husband's reference to these kinsmen, partly on general grounds of respect and deference to elders, and partly on relationship as described elsewhere in this paper. It is generally reported however, that a wife's kinsmen would refer to her spouse's senior kinsmen as *yamal* kinsmen.

Sibling-in-law Terms

There are three terms which denote affinal kinsmen of the same generation as ego or his spouse and extend to all kinsmen of these generations. One term is *basi ner*, used by either a male or female ego. A pair of terms, *nerrye* and *basi bo*, is used by a male and female ego respectively to refer to essentially the same set of kinsmen but marking relative sex.

The term *basi ner*, 'sister-in-law', is a non-reciprocal term used by a male or female ego to denote any female kinsman a spouse or sibling's spouse refers to by one of the female sibling terms (*wit ner*, *du ner*). Ego's male sibling's spouse is also referred to by this term. Thus ego's female affines of the 0 generation are included in the scope of the term. However, the range of the term also encompasses kinsmen who are not affines.
with whom a direct geneological link exists, but who are emically considered affines as well, such as HuBrWi.

The term nernye, 'man's brother-in-law' is a reciprocal term used by a male ego which denotes any kinsman's wife, or a spouse of a female sibling referred to by one of the male sibling terms (wit, du, or tat).

The term basi bo, 'woman's brother-in-law', is a non-reciprocal term used by a female ego which denotes any kinsman a husband or a spouse of a female sibling refers to by one of the male sibling terms. Ego's female sibling's spouse is also referred to by this term. This set of people reciprocate with the term basi ner, 'sister-in-law'.

Some speakers report that rather than using the term basi bo for the spouse of husband's female siblings, (HuSiHu), it is correct for female egos to refer to this person with the descriptive phrase ne basi ner, er ninge, 'the husband of my sister-in-law'. If there are actual clan or closer consanguineal connections to alter, these terms would normally supersede the use of the in-law terms.

Spouse Terms

There are two basic terms of reference for spouse: ninge, 'husband', and ner, 'wife'. If in accordance with levirate a man takes his deceased brother's wife, he may refer to her as his soli ner or soli daksi ner, 'widow wife', or 'the widow wife I picked'. If a man has more than one wife, but the additional wives are not levirate wives, he may refer to them as his tarumne ner, 'additional wives'. A man may refer to these or any of his wives simply as ner, 'wife', or again in the case of multiple wives he may refer to the first as men ner, 'first wife', and later wives as tarumne or amenda ner, 'later wife'. Women who are co-wives of the same man may refer to one another informally or to express friendship and equality as ka ner, 'female friend'. Other options are for the first wife, whether she is older or not, to refer to the second wife as ner mi, 'female child', and the second to the first as nainkon, 'mother'. Where relations are good, should the second wife be older than the first, the first would respectfully refer to the older as nainkon, and this could be reciprocated by ner mi, 'my child', by the older to younger, or alternately, they might refer to one another as nainkon, 'mother'. Actual personal relationship is a key determining factor here. If there are geneological connections between the two women or their clans, the appropriate term based on this relationship would be used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Nearest English Translation</th>
<th>Consanguineal</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Affinal</th>
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<td>+2</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
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<td>FM, MM</td>
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<td>uncle/father</td>
<td>FB, F, MZH</td>
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**KETENGBAN KINSHIP** 23
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<th>Term</th>
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<th>Consanguinal</th>
<th>Affinal</th>
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Key to symbols:

F = Father  
M = Mother  
B = Brother  
Z = Sister  
C = Child  
S = Son  
D = Daughter  
H = Husband  
W = Wife  
(s of either sex)  
S = Sibling  
(s of either sex)
3. MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Kinship terms for the Ketengban are not merely lexical notations for certain spots on a genealogical chart, but serve to define the parameters of social interaction between individuals and groups. In some cases these are fairly broad and in others more detailed and, ideally, more binding. In the primary use and in the extension of the terms to one another, people not only keep track of who they are, but how they should behave towards one another. Furthermore, these expectations give some basis for evaluation of how well the relationship is being maintained.

3.1 MAM MATERNAL UNCLE MI SISTER'S SON

As is the case in many of the societies which have been studied in Irian Jaya and Papua New Guinea, the relationship between a man and his maternal uncle (MoBr mother's brother) is a key one for the Ketengban. Though many of the expectations and actual behavior between a MoBr and a SiSo are not different in kind from other important dyads such as between brothers or a father and son, there is a difference in the degree and frequency to which these things are carried out and in the intensity of the personal relationship. One's mam, 'uncle', represents a person with whom there is a special relationship and bond of intimacy. The mam represents one's mother's group or clan in a special way. Some writers have described this type of relationship as one's "male mother" in that he does for ego significant things that only a male can do, yet from the mother's clan; (that is, representing mother's clan). There is not only the fullfilling of many relationship roles, which are crucial indeed to a person, but there is also a closeness in feeling for one another that resembles the intensity of the love between a mother or father and child. This is evidenced in the usage of the kin terms in that the person referred to as MoBr, mam, refers back to SiSo or SiDa as mi or ner mi, 'my child'. The relationship between ego and his MoBr ties the two clans together economically, socially and emotionally. This has not only been idealized verbally, but in our observation has been seen to be frequently true in behavior.

From early childhood onward ego's mam gives him gifts of food, net bags, prized meat, axes and other valued goods suitable for exchange. He also offers, or may be called upon for, help in house building, collecting firewood, opening gardens and supplying the root stock and seeds for gardens. In periods of difficulty, both during childhood and adult life, one's mam is often a key figure in help and support. In sickness he would help procure firewood, food and water and various means of alleviating or curing sickness or injury either directly or by his influence. A mam kinsman also supports ego in disputes and fights though this does not seem to be strictly required. If ego (SiSo) brings shame on the clan, the mam is often among the key ones reprimanding him in public discussions of the offences.

Later in life, when a young man is ready to take a wife, his mam is frequently considered the very best choice as one to select a prospective bride and to arrange it with her parents and relatives. In this role he is called the ner moromna ng'be, 'the wife-asking man'. In that the cross cousin marriage pattern is considered excellent, if not the marriage of choice, whether actual MoBrDa or classificatory, the mam is in a very
strategic position to exert his influence as 'father' on behalf of his 'child' (in this case a SiSo as groom and perhaps even Da as bride). He may actually be the one who acts as mediator of the intricacies of bride price collection, he himself contributing such valued items as pigs, nets, bows, axes, necklaces, or, more recently, a mixture of these items and newer introductions to the system such as soap, machetes, cloth goods, salt and so on. In the event he is not the kinsman asking directly for the bride, he often collects the bride wealth and passes it on to ego and his kin who, in turn, relay it through appropriate channels to the eventual recipients.

The mam may also help the new family to gain some economic stability and security by opening gardens and providing a variety of starters (shoots and seeds) for it. If there is a great enough geographical distance precluding a lot of frequent, direct help the mam will still be expected to participate in key ways in the collection of bride wealth, if on no other occasion. (Can a mam collect for his Da on behalf of his SiSo and then get some of this back in the redistribution??) In fact, if no help is forthcoming on such an occasion, one's mam may be verbally disclaimed and the relationship considered broken and shamed. If he eventually does meet the expectations of a good mam in this matter, the relationship is restored. It is said, and I believe it is a true cultural expectation, that "a good mam will always help his mi, his SiSo 'child'." Though he may ask directly for help, a SiSo usually does not. Some say it would be improper to do so in times of obvious need. This is, I think, not so much a prohibition as a reflection of the clear expectation that well-meaning, responsible mam kinsmen will always come to one's aid, making the request unnecessary.

Mi Child (Nephew)

The MoBr-SiSo dyad is a reciprocating relationship and the Ketengban with whom we have researched it say that all which has just been described of help and support, sharing and cooperation is mutual. It is often the case, due to frequent obvious generation differences, that a SiSo will not be involved in the major exchanges of bride wealth for his MoBr. However, in larger families, or in the case of classificatory MoBr where age differences may not be as great, it does happen that a SiSo is involved in helping with some aspects of the collection and distribution for his mam kinsman.

One difference is that it does not seem to be inappropriate for the mam to request help from his mi. But it is said that one should be careful to notice what one's mam kinsmen may be doing or need so as to volunteer support beforehand. This is perhaps due to the frequent difference in generation and the fact that it is common for elder kinsmen to ask help of or to tell younger kinsmen to do things, in keeping with the natural seniority implied in the terms MoBr mam, and mi 'child'.

Although strict obedience is not often required of any relationship, in the case of the MoBr-SiSo dyad to refuse one's mam is to cause a break, not only in the natural authority of elder to younger, but also to break intimacy in a key relationship which is widely nurtured in the society and has ramifications in many spheres of life. One's interactions with MoBr lead to relations with a group of kinsmen which provide a balance in the
patrilineal society by ties with a network of those of a clan other than one's own. This clan has contributed directly to one's being via conception and birth by one's mother. Often this relationship is marked by a degree of relaxed congeniality and overtly happy friendship that is not commonly seen between a son and his father or his father's brothers, who are all seen as father, having a parental authority in relation to him.

3.2 FATHER-SON

As would be expected in a patrilineal society, the relationship between a father, nai, and son is crucial indeed. Especially in the early years of a child's life from the time he begins to get around by himself until he is in his early teens, a major portion of his acculturation comes via the nuclear family. A great many things are learned about his society and his eventual place and rights and obligations within it from his father. In the Ketengban society, as in many similar cultures, the acculturation and general education as well as the modeling of behavior is shared by a range of other male kinsmen, through association in the men's house, by the time a boy is in early or late teens on into young adulthood. Even though a son's circle of models and teachers widens, the Ketengban still feel it is primarily the responsibility of the father to love, care for and provide for his sons. He is also to teach his sons certain key things, especially those things related to inheritance along patrilineal lines, the essential basic knowledge of gardening and gathering, and matters of proper kin relationships and exchange.

A father teaches his sons which of the vast variety of plants, nuts and fruits in the surrounding jungle are edible and, where it applies, how to plant these and other types of garden produce considered suitable for men to plant. He also teaches his sons where in terms of altitude, proximity to houses, other plants and water these are to be planted for the most efficient results. The skills of house building, fencing, damming streams and breaking ground for new gardens are taught primarily by father as his sons play or work alongside him and his male kinsmen or friends in work parties.

A major area of key knowledge a son gains from his father is that of inheritance rights and introduction to important kinsmen, particularly males.

A father is careful to show his sons the land, springs and perennial produce which he himself has inherited, and to which he has territorial rights and which will pass on to the son. He will, for instance, show his sons just where he and his fathers have planted and still harvest pandanus, bananas, bread fruit and nuts. He will show his son how to clear the area around it so that it is clear to everyone that he recognizes his rights to it and is maintaining and caring for it should anyone else seek to harvest or claim rights to it. This is particularly important in that, over time, village and garden locations have moved around a bit. Also, more recently, where people have gathered in larger, more heterogeneous villages, garden areas may be farther removed from the houses. These factors mean that a greater number of non-relatives may be traveling through the area or gathering and gardening nearby. Likewise, father teaches his son where his own garden and gathering areas are to be and those of others so that he can
avoid trespassing in others' areas. Father also takes his son along as he plants things which will perhaps not produce for years but will be for the son's use. All of these things potentially come to be the possessions of the sons after father's death or in his very old age, and where disputes arise one has only to argue convincingly that these things are rightfully his on the grounds that his fathers and grandfathers used them.

In addition to items which are directly inherited from his father, a son also learns from him who his own and his father's key relatives are. Many of these kinsmen will form his own network of reciprocal sharing kinsmen and/or have been in such relationship to his father beforehand. It is primarily in this way that a young boy learns who his mam and neiki kinsmen are.

A father teaches his son that he needs to be continually visiting and sharing with these kinsmen so as to fulfill his own obligations and to know where his resources are (in terms of material and personnel) in times of need. A son is taught that if he shares the right kinds of things generously that these kin will be eager to help him in return. For instance, if a mam kinsman lives far away a piglet is an especially nice gift because he will remember you as it grows and it is an impressive gift; thus the disadvantage of geographical distance can be partly overcome.

Finally, a son receives advice and reprimands from his father in regards to appropriate behavior between the sexes. Among other things, he is counseled not to joke with or be often near the wives of other men or single women generally to avoid incurring the wrath of their male relations which could result in death and the loss of his inheritance to other kinsmen.

3.3 OTHER KINSMEN

Neiki do

There is a very high degree of similarity between the type of close personal relationship and the kind of help that is reciprocally shared by COUSINS, (NEIKI kinsmen), as there is between UNCLE (MoBr) and NEPHEW, (SiSo). There is the same type of bond emotionally and socially and a very similar relationship economically. In ways, one could think of the relation as the same as UNCLE-NEPHEW, but in a toned-down version. COUSINS share reciprocally in work of all kinds, food and goods exchange, and general support. One obvious difference is that these kinsmen are of the same generation and may be very close in age. Thus, they are peers who can as members of separate but interacting clans look forward to the potential of a long and mutually helpful relationship. Because of their age similarity, they will often be going through the same or similar phases of life together, having the same needs and struggles, and so taking frequent advantage of the understanding and willingness to help this affords.

In addition, they can potentially be involved in the sister exchange marriage pattern and again contribute to the bonding of two clans in a wide range of interactions. In our observation there is probably more actual help between, and talk about, the neiki and mam kinsmen than just about any other.
Yamal

The relationship of ego to spouse's parents and their clansmen is not necessarily marked by a notable degree of fond, warm friendship. Since the primary residence pattern is partilocal this can often be accounted for simply on the basis of geographical proximity, the wives' relatives often living a considerable distance away. However, if these kinsmen live close by, there may be a fair degree of friendship and there will, very likely, be more frequent visiting and sharing. This seems to center primarily, though not exclusively, around spouse's actual parents. A good relationship will be characterized by occasional help with work projects and minor reciprocal sharing of food. If the older generation yamal kin come to visit, they are given food, the use of sleeping mats and a place to sleep. Upon their departure, which is usually after one night if they live close by or within three or four days if they have come a long way, the new family gives gifts of some sort. These are not usually large or expensive and may include nets, pandanus or other foodstuffs. If a man and wife visit the wife's kinsmen, the latter give the gifts to the wife, who will later share with her husband. In the opposite case the gifts may come directly to the wife, (often HuFa to SoWi), or to the son. The basic pattern seems to be that where yamal relations are geographically close, minor sharing, help with work, congenial relations and visits are encouraged. If a fair distance separates them, these exchanges of visits and help are less frequent and no particular pressure seems to exist to go to special lengths to have frequent contact.

Siblings

Between male siblings there is a general pattern of mutual help and support throughout life. Brothers help one another with the whole range of daily work and especially with the heavier recurring projects such as house building and opening new gardens. Alternately, if one of the brothers is having friends and kinsmen do a major project for him, the other brothers might help in the collection and preparation of food for the customary feast for the workers at the end of the day or project. Brothers may or may not be part of the same men's house (bokam or nimi ati), but they will share and visit reciprocally. If the brothers have wives, the demands on their personal energies due to their broadened obligations and commitments to affinal kinsmen — providing for personal security or repaying to existing kinsmen obligations incurred in the marriage transaction — may result in less frequent help to siblings. There does seem to be a slight trend towards greater frequency of help to elder siblings than to younger ones. This is, of course, more pronounced when younger siblings are not fully responsible adults. Particularly for males, there is a sense in which the elder has more power and influence at his disposal due to wider contacts and more refined skills. Thus it is more attractive and eventually more rewarding to help him.

Generally the above is true also for sisters. The particulars differ since the division of labor and power in the society are strikingly different for men and women. Brothers will help and receive help from sisters in areas where the culture considers it appropriate, for instance: a brother may help his sister in house building, and a sister may cook to
help feed her brother's workers. There is also minor mutual sharing of food
stuffs, nets and other items.

As is often the case sisters marry out to other locations. Therefore,
both between same sex and opposite sex siblings, geography may determine or
limit the frequency and kind of reciprocal support. It is still considered
important to help one another throughout life, and siblings will
occasionally come to visit, help and bring small gifts.

4. BASIC MENTAL STRATEGIES

During the research for and discussion of data for this paper, our
Ketengban friends would often go through a most interesting process in
order to determine what a given individual would be called. In cases where
alter had kinship relations with the person questioned, ego could answer
readily and usually without hesitation. However, when we were discussing
the kinsmen of other people, those involved would work out the appropriate
terms by checking through various principles or 'rules of thumb'. These
gave them the guidelines for, and where options existed, the probable best
choice of reference. Even when discussing their own kinsmen, wherever
confusion or misunderstanding was present on our part, the explanations
were given by use of one or more of these principles. Though there does not
seem to be a formalized set of these, especially as regards the exact
phrasing, those which are mentioned in the following section occurred with
great frequency. These always served to clear up questions in the
Ketengban helpers' minds so satisfactorily as they thought through them in
relation to their own or others' kinsmen that they suggest some strategy or
rationale for accurately categorizing kinsmen. They were clearly used by
adults to guide their thinking and as 'teaching aids' in explanations to
younger speakers and outsiders like ourselves who did not control the
system.

Uncles and Cousins

For a Ketengban, his UNCLE, specifically MoBr (mam), is a special
kinsman. In talking about whom may be considered a true UNCLE the most
succinct and frequently occurring statement is:

1. "His sister gave birth to me so he is my mam."

Very closely related is the common and more figurative statement that:

2. "My mother's brother put me on breast milk," or "It was on my
mother's brother's breast milk that I grew."

With these first basic parameters in mind, it is said of the true COUSIN,
neiki kinsman:

3. "All of the children to whom my mother's brothers gave birth are my
neiki kinsmen."

These two relations are extended in similar fashion by heeding the
following guidelines. First, for an UNCLE a Ketengban may include:
1. "All of my mother's brothers and the men of her side or clan and generation are my mam."

2. "I can call my neiki (MoBrSo), kinsmen mam (MoBr) because their clan woman gave birth to me."

Then for a COUSIN:

3. "All of the children born to men of my mother's clan or side are my neiki kinsmen."

4. "Any men who come into our area to live from far away and with whom we have no clan connections, I can call neiki bo if we are living close by and sharing and want to live together well."

For UNCLE the same basic components or qualifications are that there be a blood link, a cross sex distinction (Mo to Br, Pa to Si), a difference in generation (+1) from ego, and, though not stated explicitly here, an actualization of the relationship by appropriate behavior. This last is important in that it is failure to fulfill this basis of expected behavior that can lead to "disclaiming" a mam, or claiming that he is not a very good one.

The COUSIN is essentially the same except that actualization of the relationship is not so crucial (partly because the expectations are not as major or perhaps as binding), and the generations involved are the same. (Strategies 1-3)

As to the extensions, in the first, though mam may be chosen as the term of reference for mother's clansmen, ego may take considerations of generation into account and refer to those who are much older as -apke and those of younger ages as neiki mam/ bo. In the second type of extension there is a raising in status involved, particularly where alter is only slightly older. In a sense generation is ignored and ego is thinking more in terms of all men and women of a given clan as siblings. The females of the clan are seen as a group of women like mother and the men as their brothers, although biologically, alter may be MoBrSo. The fourth and fifth principles recognize primarily that alter is in a separate clan and that the obligations and expectations of the relationship either have been realized (as in the past with father), that they are presently being fulfilled, or that a suitable basis for their fulfillment has been established by classifying one another as neiki.

Particularly in the fourth statement, there is the recognition that, unless people are to remain simply uninvolved acquaintances in a given locality, a pattern for which there is almost no traditional basis, they need to categorize one another to know how to properly relate. A COUSIN can be a close kinsman, though without heavy obligations, and must be of a separate clan so it works well as a term for extensions. What makes it preferable is that there is the blood connection in the primary usage and in the extended usage, people behave as if there were.
Grandfather Grandmother

It is said that one's grandparents are those included in the statement:

"The men who gave birth to my father and the men who gave birth to my mother are my grandparents."

This is extended to:

1. "The clansmen of the women who gave birth to my mother are my grandkinsmen," or:

2. "She is of the women who gave birth to me and is an old woman." (So she is a female grandkinsman).

The primary statement recognizes the crucial direct blood link and the generation (+2) difference. In the extension, however, men who are much older than ego certainly, but even ego's peers and those who may be slightly younger, could be called grandparent. If, for instance, grandmother was in clan A and her spouse in B, then mother, although a clan B member, was the offspring of clan A. Ego, who is of clan C, may then see all clan A members in his lifetime as grandparents by virtue of grandmother's part in bearing mother. Consider the case of Elias and Pius. Pius calls Elias napke, 'grandfather', and Elias reciprocates with mi, 'child'. Elias is a Basidoman clan member, and Pius' grandmother was a Basidoman woman. Pius' grandmother's husband was a Diprur man, and so Pius' mother was a Diprur woman. She married a Kukka man and her child, Pius, is a Kukka boy. However, as outlined above, Pius, remembering that his mother was the offspring of a Basidoman woman, will call all Basidoman clan members 'grandparent'. Elias is slightly older than Pius and is called 'grandfather'. Likewise, Manuel, who is an age-mate of Pius, and his younger brother, about eight years younger than Pius, will be called 'grandfather' by Pius because they are Basidoman clan members.

Mother-Father

The actual biological parents of ego may be designated by saying:

1. "He was the one who had intercourse with mother and put me (gave birth, or being to me)."

2. (for mother) "She actually gave birth to me, she is 'my body' woman."

Father and mother may be extended to include the collateral kinsmen of each by the statements:

1. "All the men of my father's clan are my fathers."

2. "All the women of my mother's clan are my mothers."

3. "The women who gave birth to me are my mothers."

Fathers may be extended to those covered by the statement:
4. "He married my mother so I can call him father."

The principles delineating biological parents are very straightforward, as are the first two extending principles. In the case of these latter, ego may take into account relative age and choose to call women nau, 'grandmother', nanin, 'mother', or neiki ner, 'cousin'. For male alter, ego may choose to say napke, 'grandfather', or nai, 'father'. The third statement is simply a restatement of the second. In extensions of the fourth type, ego is referring to an affinal link through mother's sisters and other clan women of the parent generation. It can, of course, refer to additional husbands of mother after ego's biological father dies. This includes both Levirate husbands who are already 'father' to ego, and any spouse of mother, who is automatically 'father'.

Child

The statements verbalized regarding children are:

1. "I had intercourse with my wife and placed him/her (gave being to), so he/she is my child."

2. "My wife placed (gave being to) him/her, so I call him/her my child."

3. "I (female speaker) placed him/her, so I call him child."

Extending statements are:

1. "Any children born to men of my clan are my children."

2. "Any children born to women of my clan are my children," or,

3. "My sister gave birth to him so he is my child."

The three primary statements simply recognize direct contribution to conception and birth. The first and second extensions, in practice, actually refer to offspring of ego's clan in ego's generation and below. As seen in earlier sections, elders of ego's clan and ego's mother's clan may be parents or grandparents by indicating relative age in the terminology. The third statement extends to children of collateral kinsmen in ego's generation.

Brother-Sister

Regarding siblings it is said:

"If our mothers and fathers are the same we are siblings."

Extensions of this basic idea are:

1. "If our mothers or fathers are of the same clan we are siblings," and similarly,

2. "Any children born to women of my mother's clan are my siblings."
3. "My mother's sister gave him/her birth so I call him/her sibling."

The actual vernacular words used in the first statement make it clear that the reference is to a single set of biological parents. The first extension refers to all collateral kinsmen of mother and father in their own generation. The second extension doesn't explicitly say so, but it always comes clear in discussion that the women referred to are women of mother's generation. The last is essentially the same, simply recognizing that women of mother's clan and age will refer to one another as siblings. Actual mother's sister's children are ego's siblings, forming the precedent by which these clan sisters' offspring may be called siblings.

Sister-in-law

The basic principle is verbalized as:

"My brother took her as a wife so she is my sister-in-law."

This includes, in the Ketengban thinking, the spouses of clan brothers as well unless some other consanguineal, linkage to that spouse is known. Consanguineal terms would normally supercede the affinal reference.

Brother-in-law

The principles verbalized are:

1. "He took my sister as wife, so he is my brother-in-law."

2. "If his sister took my brother as husband, he is my brother-in-law," and stated in a slightly different way,

3. "My brother's wife's clan men are my brothers-in-law."

The first two statements can refer specifically to spouses of biological siblings of ego. However, all three can be understood in an extended sense by interpreting "sister" in statement 1 and "brother" in 2 and 3 as meaning my clan siblings. As worded above, statement 2 refers to the brothers of ego's brother's spouse. With this particular term the reader will remember that male ego says nerye and female ego says basi bo. From the female point of view it is said:

4. "Their brother took me as wife, so I can call them brother-in-law."

This refers both to husband's brothers and to his male clan members. The fact that men of spouse's generation are in view is implied.

A much broader extension of this particular term is:

5. "If our grandkinsmen or fathers traded wives with your clan we can call the men of your clan brother-in-law."

This usually seems to be in reference to men of ego's generation, and means that our clan gave women to your clan. It is likely that the reverse situation would still allow for this extension.
Parent-in-law

For parent-in-law it has been said:

1. "My wife's father and mother and their clan people are my parent-in-law."

2. "My daughter's husband and all his father's and mother's and their clan people are my yamal kinsmen."

The "clan people" to whom reference is made are not people in ego's generation, but are ego's parents' peers and those in ascending generations from the parent generation.

5. EXTENDING THE BASICS

It is clear as one lives among members of a society like the Ketengban that in daily interaction with close friends and kinsmen, and in certain special cases, people do not always use kin terms in a rigid fashion. Though there are clearly primary sets of kinsmen to which each term applies, which can be thought of as the core, or basic relationships which are thereby delineated, this is not the total picture. While it is true that some terms are much more restricted in usage than others, thinking in terms of a rigid, prescribed group beyond whom terms cannot be extended does not account for what actually takes place as people interact. In the following section is a brief discussion of some common extensions in Ketengban kin terminology, and some suggestions as to what is involved. What is clear is that not only the terms and categories marked, but also the way they are used and extended in the system is reflective of the kinds of interaction among the Ketengban. As others have pointed out, "The interaction which establishes a relationship may determine the term which should be used." (Shaw, 1974) Conversely, to some degree the fact of commonly understood and shared roles and expectations for given relationships (marked by certain terms) means that using certain terms can strongly influence the direction a relationship will take, or the tone of that relationship in the future. It is interesting that as Shaw has reported for the Samo, geographical location and place of residence play a part for the Ketengban as well in the application of some terms and the degree of fulfillment of the roles implicit in them.

5.1 PARENT-CHILD

As a means of showing respect and deference, and as a means of expressing a general sense of group unity, the kin terms of the parent and child generations are commonly extended. Thus, any man or woman who is enough older than ego to be considered of comparable age to ego's parents may be referred to as nai, 'father', or nainkon, 'mother', respectively. These people would then reciprocate using the terms mi, 'male child', or ner mi, 'female child'. In this case clan and other actual kin connections are not in view. This could be said of an older adult or child from whatever location or clan. As used here, there are no real expectations of reciprocation or other special behavior. But politeness, the courtesy of deference to elders, and recognition of the dependence of children are generally expected. The younger person is not expected to actually obey or
follow the advice of the elder, neither is the elder expected to care for
the younger. What is in focus is proper etiquette. This is in striking
contrast to the application of these terms to parallel kinsmen of the
parent generation and their spouses. They are emically considered as
parents and there are definite obligations and expectations, just as for
biological parents. Similarly, the clan members of father and mother,
although one step removed from biological parents and their same-sex
siblings, are still considered "closer" in terms of potential obligations
and relationship than the general populace to which I am now referring.
However, where close proximity of housing and general 'life space' and
ongoing congenial interactions are present, people may actually come to
behave towards one another and almost regard one another as parent and
child. Where relations are not particularly good and no real interest in
developing them exits people may simply refer to one another as wisi ning
or wisi nerepe, 'older men and women', and nyape or ner nyape, 'male or
female children'.

5.2 UNRELATED PEERS

Similarly, peers who have no actual superceding clan or genealogical
connection may call one another kap, or kau, 'friend'. This term, as do
similar terms for friend the world over, may have a range of meaning in
terms of actual behavior depending on the degree of personal closeness.
What I am referring to here is its usage as a polite,
"no-strings-or-responsibilities-attached" term of respect between
generational peers. In this sense, it may also be used to refer to people
who have come in from distant areas to live in ego's home area. Of course
kin or nonkinsmen may refer to one another reciprocally and informally as
kau, 'friend'. I will mention this application of the term again in section
6.

5.3 NEIKI CROSS-COUSINS

A very interesting extension of terms is common in the case of
outsiders coming to live in ego's area. Since there are no known or
clearly no clan or genealogical connections to such a person, he falls into
a general category of "others". As explained above ego may wish to let the
situation remain as such and simply refer to him as kap, 'friend', or nun
nimi, 'our men', meaning not much more than 'someone who is of our language
and race'. However, if relations between the newcomer and ego are good and
it is clear that both parties are interested in close relations and are
likely to "live together well", ego may begin referring to the newcomers as
neiki kinsmen or 'cross cousins'. That is, he is someone of a clan other
than ego's, but with whom ego can have a close personal relationship, and
who, more significantly, can be considered as the source of marriage
partners. This opens a whole new network of potential reciprocal
relationships. This particular extension of terms tends to draw people
together, allowing them to see and behave towards one another as kinsmen
with a history, though fictive, of mutual aid and support and an
expectation of a future of mutually beneficial interactions. This has
potential for personal benefit, but also contributes greatly to group
solidarity, serving to ameliorate some of the possible intra-group friction
and tensions.

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The advantages of this strategy for the present-day Ketengban culture are considerable. As has been pointed out, now, much more than in the past, there is a trend toward larger, centralised, more heterogeneous villages. Additionally, there is increasing population and greater travel. Both of these bring people into daily contact who might otherwise have lived in smaller, more exclusive hamlets. It is noteworthy, in contrast, that the term *mam*, 'maternal uncle', with which are associated greater expectations, is not extended in this way.

Another interesting use of the *neiki* terms is the way the term may be applied by a male ego to his sister-in-law. The basic term used in reference to BrWi is *basi ner*. Because this term extends to the female siblings of BrWi, and because of the historical practice of the levirate marriage, these women are potential marriage partners for ego. Sister exchange, of both biological sisters and clan sisters, has been and still is an attractive marriage option. Remembering that a cross-cousin is considered a preferred marriage partner and that, in this case, it would be ego's MoBrDa, his *neiki ner*, I think we can see at least part of the reason for this extension. It is said that if a man's relationship is good with his brother and brother's spouse that it is a nice thing to refer to BrWi as *neiki ner*, even if she is not of mother's clan, that is, not actually MoBrDa. She is moving then into something of a closer relationship with ego by an affinal connection, and is being included as a member of mother's clan, to which there are important ties. Thus, even if only theoretically, she is seen as a potential preferred marriage partner.

The closeness and importance of the use of this term can be seen in that in the contrasting case where BrWi in fact is a cross cousin, she would not be referred to as *basi ner*. This would be considered impolite in that it ignores the genealogical link and the crucial importance of the network of people the *neiki* relation represents and the closeness they are expected to have with one another. Where there is no connection to mother's clan and thus no expectations of reciprocity, *basi ner* is quite the acceptable term. An actual MoBrDa or girl of the same clan is spoken of as being a "from my mother's side (clan, or area) woman". One of the key reasons for the preference of an actual cross cousin *neiki ner* that is frequently verbalized is that "she will listen to what I say, obey well and work well." The implication is, partly, that since mother was a good worker and provider who loved ego, girls of that clan will be of the "same" stock via MoBr, *mam*, and will be as good a woman as mother was. On the other hand, it is said that if she is not of mother's clan there is no particular compulsion for her to behave this way and she may or may not "behave". It is not uncommon to hear the wife ask rhetorically in domestic quarrels between partners of this type, "Did our mothers give birth to you?", as a reason for not following a husband's orders. To restate the point: referring to one's BrWi as *neiki ner* and not simply *basi ner* is a way of expressing the acknowledgement of or the expectation and hope for a closer relationship. It is a raise in status and value.

5.4 AS ELDER, SO YOUNGER

Another type of strategy for referring to people for whom it may be unclear just what, if any, actual connection exists, is to follow what father says. One very important way in which this is realized is when there

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has been a long standing relationship between one's father or grandfather and another individual. For instance, whether or not a clear genealogical connection can be worked out if father traded with and related to alter as to a mam kinsman, ego would then relate and refer to him in the same way. This would be true with whatever the relationship was said to be and could even be extended to the members of the same clan as the individual with whom there was a relationship in the past. It has been said to us numerous times that, "Well, we don't know what the genealogical connection is but father reciprocated with him (or his clan) as to a mam, so we do also."

6. PRIORITIES

There does seem to be a kind of hierarchy of terminology in cases in which ego could legitimately refer to alter by one of two or more kin terms. For instance:

Elias took as a wife the biological sister of a man who is very near his own age. Therefore, this man Ales is WiBr or nernye, 'brother-in-law', to Elias. However, Ales is of the Lepeletan clan and Elias' mother was a Lepeletan woman. It is considered that Ales' clan mother gave birth to Elias, so Elias should call Ales mam (MoBr), 'maternal uncle', rather than nernye because the former is a closer more powerful relationship. Ales, then, can call Elias mi, 'child', or because the generations are close, neiki mam (PaSiSo) 'cross cousin'.

Similarly, a man named Obes took a wife from the Kulka clan who is the BrDa to a man named Musah. Musah refers to this girl as ner mi, 'female child'. Therefore, Obes has married Musah's daughter and is DaHu to Musah or yamal bo, 'son-in-law'. The term is reciprocal so Obes can call Musah yamal bo, 'father-in-law'. However, Obes' mother was Kulka and considered sister to Musah who is, therefore, MoBr (mam) to Obes. Obes must call Musah mam, 'maternal uncle', and not yamal.

In both cases there is a superseding genealogical connection that supersedes the use of the in-law term, a kin relation in which there is not necessarily a strong personal or reciprocating expectation. One's yamal and nernye relations are often outsiders in terms of bonds between clans. Particularly as regards affinal terms, wherever there is an actual genealogical connection and/or it is felt that there is historical precedent for a certain type of kin relation, then these terms supersede other options. Preference is often given to the highest generational term appropriate if there are good relations. So, if ego could appropriately call a certain woman nainkon, 'mother', and generational factors would allow for it at all, he might very likely call her nau, 'grandmother'.

This same factor is illustrated by the example of Amos and Semuel. Amos is of the Kulka clan and his mother was a Lepeletan woman, so men of the Lepeletan clan like Semuel, who are generator peers with Amos, would be called his neiki bo kinsmen, as they are MoBrSo to Amos. However, as Semuel is slightly older than Amos, and it is considered a raise in status and respect to do so, Amos can and often does refer to Semuel as mam, 'uncle'.

When there are two genealogical connections between ego and alter, and it is possible to look at the kinship relationship in more than one way or
from more than one viewpoint, the closer blood link is often the one on which kinship reference is based.

This may be illustrated by the example of Amos and Nas. Amos is a Kulka man, and his mother was a Lepetalen woman. Therefore, Lepetalen men of his generation are his neiki bo kinsmen (MoBrSo). Nas is the son of a Lepetalen man, but his mother is a Kulka woman whom Amos may consider as sister even though she is older than he is. Thus, Nas is SiSo to Amos, who will refer to him as mi, 'child'. Nas will reciprocate with mam, 'uncle'. This is considered preferable even though from the first point of view they could have referred reciprocally to one another as neiki bo, 'cross-cousin'.

A very similar pattern is commonly observed which has the effect, in certain circumstances, of "equalizing" kinsmen who may actually be in a clearly hierarchical relation by genealogical connection. For instance, it is very common for both men and women to refer to one another as kau, 'friend'. A context in which this is appropriate is during a work project or the discussion of current issues, or simply in chit-chat. Male kinsmen frequently do this during discussion of some topic which may be highly emotive and potentially dividing. It is generally initiated by the one holding higher 'status'. Thus a mam or -apke may refer to his mi (SiSo) in this way. Even wives may refer to husbands as ka bo, or ka ner as a means of showing that the relationship is on good enough standing and there is positive feeling enough to make reference to primary terms seem unnecessary or even slightly distant. This is said to be a "soft" or "pleasant" way of speaking.

7. SUMMARY

Ketengban kinship organization is essentially an Iroquois system. All parallel cousins are referred to as siblings while cross-cousins are referred to collectively by a separate term. Along with bifurcation in the first ascending, ego's and the first two descending generations the Ketengban also distinguish relative sex throughout the system. Relative age is distinguished only in ego's generation among parallel kinsmen. In discussion of expectations and obligations for some of the kinship relations we see that not only are there definite cultural expectations for some key kin relations, but also the extension of these terms outside their primary ranges is one means of setting up hopes and expectations that strongly influence the type of personal interactions between people, whether kinsmen or other. Maternal uncle's relationship with sister's son emerges as a key to a whole network of wider social and economic relations characterized by interdependency and reciprocating support.
8. FOOTNOTES

1. Information for this paper was gathered during periods of living in the village of Omban between February, 1981 and September, 1983. It was written during a six week workshop held in October and November 1983 conducted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics working in cooperation with Cenderawasih University. I wish to thank our good friends Elias Basinye, Pius Kulka, and Amos Kulka, Ketengban speakers from the village of Omban, who, along with many of their friends and kinsmen, helped in gathering and refining the material. I also would like to acknowledge the helpful comments by Dr. Wayne Dye and the invaluable advice and suggestions from Lloyd Peckham during the actual drafting of the paper.

2. Neither the wild pig nor smaller marsupials of various kinds are abundant in the area. In fact, it is quite infrequent for men to bring in wild pig killed in hunting and only slightly more frequent in the case of kus-kus and other marsupials. Most pig meat consumed is provided by domestic animals.

3. Spelling of all Ketengban words in this paper follows analysis done by Sims, as does the orthography as presented in Sims 1981.

   All kin terms are used in conjunction with personal pronouns. In the case of some terms like -apke, the morphological processes involved render a term like napke for the first persons, but for instance, er apke would be appropriate for third person. The term nau remains the same throughout, so: ne nau, er nau, not er au, 'my grandmother, his grandmother'; ne nai, er nai, not er ai, 'my father, his father'. There is some difference between person categories in the terms used. Thus ego would in reference to Mo say ne nainkon, or nanin, 'my mother', but in referring to the Mo of a third party one would say, er nin, not er ainkon. Therefore, the terms used in this paper are those used by ego in reference to his own kinsmen where ego is a single individual (first person singular).

4. Many of the terms have alternates which are in quite common usage. Sometimes there is a difference by some nuance of meaning or a slight emphasis on some component over another. In other cases there is no discernible difference. Similarly there are a few dialectical differences in some terms where one area may prefer one choice over another, or even exclusively use one term. However, all the terms seem to be common knowledge throughout the area. This paper follows usage in the central dialect and Omban village. I make no effort to include these dialectical variants, but a list of some common alternates for terms in the central dialect and their meanings (if there is anything notable about it) can be found in appendix 2.

5. Lounsury 1964 as referred to by Peckham 1981. In addition a number of the features of this paper as regards format and style follow Peckham 1981.

6. Among the primary ones would be biological and clan brothers, older male cross cousins (neiki bo) and mother’s brother, (mam).

7. Men commonly plant and transplant from suckers, shoots or seeds such items as pandanus, taro, bananas, breadfruit and various kinds of
introduced vegetables like tomatoes, soy beans and peanuts. But they would, for instance, most likely not be involved in planting the new shoots for a potato garden. That is considered more properly the domain of women.

8. For male friends, kap or ka bo, for female friends, ka ner; for ego of either sex, kau when referring to a friend of either sex.

9. Many aspects of the whole sphere of marriage have changed dramatically among the Ketengban in the last decade, but greater detail as to marriage practice and custom and the effects and patterns of change are beyond the scope of the present paper. Suffice it to say that, although sister exchange is still an attractive option for marriage, the conditions under which it is arranged for and carried out have changed considerably.

9. REFERENCES


Appendix 1: PERSON CATEGORIES

PERSON

(Pairs):
Hu-Wi
Fa-So
Br-Si, Br-Br, Si-Si
Si-Si

(Individuals):
female playmate
polygynist
age mates
widow
levirate wife
ancestors
a common ancestor
bachelor/

KETENGBAN TERMS
sun ninge botini
sun kange kwirye kupke
kange tenpo, ninge botini
sun witap duap
wite du
witapselip
wit ner, du ner
uruna nerepe
ner isamka ngop
ner botini ngop
amse ninge
kikiman ninge
soli ner
soli ner
-oupu ning/ yape
-apu "
-apke "
co puna ning
co deyo ning
yal kemna ning
tenpo ngop gereksua ngop
kaper ngop/ ner
kanam " . "

ENGLISH
their minds/ happiness
is straight (one)
two people with one
mind/ happiness
siblings
a person rich in wives
a two-wife person
people (men) who are
together, or the same
the people at the
tree base
the people who made/ did the clan
one person that tied
us together
a light (weight) man/
woman, or a carefree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first child</td>
<td>dunge, menmenange, weni mi/ wenyen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle child</td>
<td>tarumna mi/ ner mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second wives (other than levirate)</td>
<td>tarumna ner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last child</td>
<td>siria mi/ ner mi/ siriange, kale mi/ ner mi/ kalengé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offspring</td>
<td>sun nyapselip, nun di deiringe, nyape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illicit child</td>
<td>yut mi/ ner mi, nyang kolongne mi/ ner mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adopted child</td>
<td>gwanamne mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>kap/ kau/ ka/ kapu (plus sex), ai ngop/ ninge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namesake</td>
<td>atem ngop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enemy</td>
<td>yu (mutu) ngop, posunung ninge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stranger</td>
<td>mendiramep ning, yuk mutu ning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barren woman</td>
<td>you nere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>childless</td>
<td>taren nere, kanam nere, kaper nere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman with children</td>
<td>gau deiprop nere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>levirate polygynist</td>
<td>soli ner dopu ngop, soli ner daku ngop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orphan</td>
<td>lyan mi/ ner mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger siblings of parent</td>
<td>nai/ nin kalye</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**person**
- the oldest
- the first

**offspring**
- their children
- the ones we "put"

**namesake**
- a mean area person
- people who kill us

**enemy**
- people we don't see
- people of another area

**stranger**
- a man who took a widow
- a man who picked a widow
### Appendix 2: ALTERNATE TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KINSMAN</th>
<th>ALTERNATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>-apu bo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-apke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-oupu bo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>bo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ngaibo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ngop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>nainkon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nanin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nonge nerepe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>kau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kai/ kae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kabo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-ai ninge (pl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male friend of female</td>
<td>nakinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sister</td>
<td>ka ner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polygynist</td>
<td>soli ner daku ngop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>soli ner dopu ngop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ner botini ngop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ner isamka ngop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single female</td>
<td>taren ner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kaper ner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kanam ner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age mates</td>
<td>amse ninge/ nerpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kikiman ninge/ nerepe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ancestors</td>
<td>co puna yape/ ninge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>co deiyo yape/ ninge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yal kemna yape/ ninge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yal deiyo yape/ ninge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last child</td>
<td>siriange/ siria mi/ ner mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kalenge / kale mi/ ner mi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 3: LISTS OF TERMS BY CLASSIFICATION

Elementary Terms

nai
nainkon
ner
ngin
mi
wite
du
-ape
nau
nernye
mam

Classificatory and Derivative Terms

nau
-ape
nainkon
yamal bo/ ner
ner mi
neiki ner/ bo/ mam
du bo/ ner
tat bo/ ner
wit bo/ ner
basi bo/ ner
nernye

All others in descending generations use a combination of elementary terms in descriptive phrases. (ne neiki bo ner mi: 'female child of my male cross-cousin').
Ikhtisar


MY ROW OF BIRDS

A short history of the Sawi village of Kamur, an analysis of their kinship system, and a description of related marriage customs

A. John Mills

"I am a Sawi, one of the Real People (rigav bohos) who speak the Language of the Jungle (ayauroh). My name is Imae. My Row of Birds is Kamur (large parrot). I am about thirty-three years old, married, and I have one adopted daughter. I would like to record for history many things about our people because the older ones are dying, our culture is rapidly changing, and soon such knowledge will be lost forever...."

Thus might Imae, an influential Kamur village leader, begin a report on his people. He likens his village to the majestic ironwood tree, so prominent in the Sawi's jungle. The nests in these branches are now home to about 330 birds in three clans consisting of parrots (Kamur and Kwaiato) and cuckoo (Yot). Imae as a Kamur parrot is a member of the largest clan. In the era of intertribal and intratribal warfare, names of other birds, animals and plants were also used.
Clans represented in each Sawi village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Kr</th>
<th>Yt</th>
<th>Ko</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Wr</th>
<th>Ao</th>
<th>Ap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamur</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seremit</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hainam</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauro</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esep</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanapai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiar</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kagas</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of the clan birds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbr.</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kr</td>
<td>Kamur</td>
<td>Red-sided eclectus (35cm long), male has green head, female has red head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yt</td>
<td>Yot</td>
<td>Large cuckoo with brown barred back &amp; tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko</td>
<td>Kwaito</td>
<td>Small parrot (20 cm long), green with yellow beak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To</td>
<td>Tiro</td>
<td>Sulphur crested Cockatoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wr</td>
<td>Wiar</td>
<td>Mid size parrot (20 cm long), black cap, red throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ao</td>
<td>Airo</td>
<td>Hornbill (Yearbird)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ap</td>
<td>Atap</td>
<td>(Classification uncertain)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other birds which have been used are: Kuvi (Black Cockatoo), Erag (Lesser Bird of Paradise), Kuyay (Cassowary), Maohwan (Priarbird), Esohwe (Chicken Hawk), Waro (Eagle), and Yavah, Pisav, Tahaisam and Sato of uncertain classification.
During that period a person within a particular bird-clan might invoke (mahor fadan) the name of several different creatures or items after killing an enemy. Thereafter a token of this creature or item was placed as a boundary marker, a sign of a recent visit, a trail marker indicating their presence back in the jungle or emblem of their claim on a certain tree. As an example, a Yot man might invoke the name of a bird of paradise (erag) as he gloated over the corpse of his enemy. Thereafter when his friends were to see some feathers of an erag used as a marker they would know it was this particular man who had placed it there. The principal markers used now in this age of relative peace are the Kamur parrot tail feathers by the Kamur men, beetle grubs by the Kwaito men, and tarahwe vines by the Cuckoo men.

A brief history of Kamur village

Most Sawi do not know their grandparents' names, never having seen them and only rarely having heard them referred to. However, some of the oldest living Kamur village men can remember some things about their grandparents. Some of the men came from Tamor and Aro (see map) on the far Au river on the northern borders, some from Wiar, a closer northern village, and some from the downriver village of Seremit.

Sawi legends (Mills 1981) contain accounts of some mythical ancestors. However, most of the present generation Sawis, unlike the previous generation, are not well-versed in these legends and do not give credence to them as some of the older men did. One Auyu story known by a few Sawi men (including Davai Yot, the last gifted legend teller) told of the first people coming out of an extensive dimly-lit underground cavern to live in the recently discovered upper world where sago palms, pigs, etc. abounded. A Sawi legend called Atap (Mills 1981:3) makes the sun to be a glorious man who was the owner of all the original goods with which the Sawi are familiar. The story of Sir (Mills 1981:2) has Kamur village originally grouped with three other villages, but the events resulting from a dog defecating in the middle of a floor caused them to separate and establish individual village sites.

Perhaps forty years ago there was no Kamur village. At most there were only a few Kamur men and their families at that time. Those men of the 1940's represented only the two clans of Yot and Kamur. Sometime in the 1950's the third clan, Kwaito, was added as certain men of the other two clans adopted a new bird. The necessity for at least a third clan was obvious to these men. In their growing village there was the need to work toward an ideal that they had possibly observed elsewhere among their neighbours.

Sawi marriage ideals

The first developing ideal, simply stated, was that "You must not marry the same bird as that of either of your parents." A Sawi's family bird is determined patrilineally so that a child's bird is the same as his father's. So the rule restated would say, "You must not marry the same bird as your own or your mother's."
In the geneological charts I have collected, there are many instances where the ideal was not realized. The following diagram illustrates the number of past female exchanges between and within the three clans. Future figures will show different proportions. We see, for example, that Kamur often got their wives (16 times) from within their own clan. This is now rare.

An 'ideal' Sawi marriage requires getting a wife from a clan different from mother or father's clan. For example, a Kamur man with a Yot mother should take a Kwaito wife. A summary of the above data from the point of view of such idealism is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLAN</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
<th>Non-Ideal</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KWAITO</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOT</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMUR</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many marriages are classified here as questionable (?) because information on the clan of the women involved is not obtainable.

It was often difficult to find a suitable mate for one's child or to be able to make a satisfactory deal with the candidate's parents. Many girls were brought from other villages for Kamur's sons and these, though sometimes representing the wrong family, were considered
eligible. Thus Imae was not married 'properly' since his
mother was Kwaito and he married Kwaito (Ko). Graphically:

\[
\begin{align*}
NARIAN & \quad Kr = \text{saesah Ko} \\
\downarrow & \quad IMAE \quad Kr = \text{aeni Ko} \\
(Kr = \text{Kamur})
\end{align*}
\]

However, that was not as bad as Seman's partnership:

\[
\begin{align*}
ADI & \quad Yt = \text{ano Kr} \\
\downarrow & \quad SEMAN \quad Yt = \text{mam Yt}
\end{align*}
\]

(Yt = Yot)

Seman married a bird 'of his own feather' which caused a small war. Imae
and most present generation Sawis with younger children plan to marry them
according to this first ideal.

A second ideal was that a man should seek to get at least five wives
(a Sawi would say 'a hand of wives'). According to Richardson (1974:2):

Men with marriageable daughters in other Sawi clans would surely
be inclined to promise some of their daughters to Yae and
Kauwan, bringing each of them nearer to the Sawi ideal of
possessing a harem of five healthy wives.

In the days of continuous tribal warfare there were many times when
widows would be added to the survivor's harem. However, many women were
killed or stolen during those times, too. At any rate, the founders of
Kamur village all managed to acquire many wives though not all
concurrently. The record for the most marriages is six.

National law encourages Sawi men to have only one wife at a time
(which Sawi Christians also hold to). The Sawis also recognize the trouble
that multiple wives can cause. The legend of Kaisahor-Mauri (Mills
1981:23) well illustrates the problems that can occur between wives. The
result of the famous dispute between the women named Kaisahor and Mauri was
that one turned into a frog and the other a rat.

A third ideal was that a man's wives should all be sisters (or
half-sisters). In the legend of Mantahaviap (Mills 1981:29), the old
witch, Yar Ivar, gave her many daughters (perhaps 10) in marriage to one
man, Mantahaviap. None of the records of Kamur village show a man getting
more than three sisters (Udap Kamur) but in Seremit, Yawi Yot was able to
acquire five sisters. Now some Kamur men have managed to get two wives
who are sisters.

Related to this ideal is the preference for getting a sister to
replace a wife that has died. Although there is no evidence that other
kinds of relationships between wives were thought to be coveted, it is
interesting to note that such occurred. For example, Homgan Yot married
Tovo Kamur and later her niece, Awab Kamur. Yahae Kamur married two girls,
Asoho Kamur and Tasi Kamur, who were first cousins. Although rare, it
seems that in the past, it was an acceptable practice for a man to marry his father's widow (not his own mother, but rather one of his father's other wives). Two examples of this occur in the genealogical charts. 

Non-ideal marriages

Besides the situation of a man marrying into the wrong clan (his own or his mother's), the Sawis can remember cases in which a man married his half-sister, and another, his daughter. Such incestuous ties were highly frowned upon. Two Sawi legends in particular deal with the problems which are caused by incest. In the story of Kamamidap Hapkon (Mills 1981:23), a sister's offer of herself to her younger brother results in his losing a leg to a hungry cannibal. The story of Faitiao (Mills 1981:26) depicts a man who deceived his daughter and took her for his wife. Later she and her mother drowned him for his wickedness.

Sawi marriage customs

A man's additional wives did not necessarily require much advance preparation or arrangement by other parties. When a man died, a good opportunity presented itself to get another wife. When such happened, it seems that there was quite a scramble to make the best of the situation. Richardson (1974:165) records one such occasion:

Earlier in the day, the tall Atohwaim man, Yakub, had announced his intention to take the widow Pasaha as his third wife. One end of Hainam was in favor of the transaction, but Nair in the other end of the village protested that the widow should be given to him instead.

At midday, when Pasaha's relatives decided against his proposal, Nair, supported by his brother, Paha, stormed out of his house shouting threats at Yakub. Two of Yakub's friends, Mavu and Sinar, came out to face the two furious men. The four rapidly closed in combat, while the shrieking of their womenfolk rose like a warning siren above the village.

The fight lasted only a few seconds...

Taking a widow as a wife was not cheap. Her relatives would demand payment from the new husband even if she had been his brother's wife and he had given part of the previous bride payment.

A Kamur man's wife will now normally come from Kamur village. In the past his father (or step-father) would have arranged for a wife when he was yet a small child, whereas now the Sawis deem it better to wait until the children have finished whatever schooling they can get. It was always regarded to be important to marry off the young men as soon as they started to show their virility. To not do so would be to invite immorality and the resulting battles in the village. A well known Sawi legend called Morfwi (Mills 1981:111) ends with the witch warning the Sawis not to let their young men get too old before marrying them off.
A Sawi man does not have to seek a wife himself; others will take the initiative on his behalf, unless he is like the single man in another legend called Uv (Mills 1981:15). He had no one to arrange a marriage for him so took matters into his own hands. He sent a crocodile to grab a girl when she dived into the river. The moral is made clear at the end that each man should be given a wife.

The arrangements for a promising girl are made by the girl's mother's brothers (whom she also calls her fathers) or mother's clan, but not by her real father. They consult with the prospective husband's family. If they have an exchange in mind, the name of the girl they want in return is mentioned early in the discussions. Appendix A is an example of an actual case of an exchange marriage.

Relationship to parents-in-law

Richardson's commentary on a Sawi man's relationship to his in-laws is worth noting:

Nothing could be more sacred to the mind of a male Sawi than his relationship to those who gave him their daughter or daughters in marriage. So great was a Sawi man's respect for his parents-in-law that he would not allow himself even to utter their names out loud. He would only refer to them by their title of tade. He would lavish gifts of fresh wild pork or beetle grubs upon his parents-in-law with faithful regularity, often at the expense of his own family. In fact, his debt to his parents-in-law ranked higher in his mind than his debt to his own parents or to his wife or children (1974:65).

Richardson's analysis of the situation is:

In...(this)...society, there was always the danger that mutual hostilities would cut off the free exchange of marriageable daughters between opposite clans, thus threatening the existence not only of the individuals but of the very society itself. Hence the collective instinct for self-preservation required that the highest priority be given to the parent-in-law/son-in-law relationship. Whatever other ties might...(exist)...the tade/azen relationship, as it was known in the Sawi language, must be preserved intact. For only as the social rewards of giving a daughter were secure would parents continue to give their daughters in marriage. (1974:65)

From the time of his engagement a Sawi man is not allowed to use the proper names of any in his wife's family, not just his parents-in-law. If he is accidentally asked for the name of one of his in-laws he will get embarrassed and use such terms as tade or no ivar navo (my wife's father). This carries over in the giving of his own daughter in marriage. He must leave the decision to his tade as to whom his daughter will be married. In return his tade refers to him as asen. Even though this term is the most disrespectful of kinship terms, it does not seem to cause any hard
feelings. The asen becomes the brunt of pretended wrath during the days declared as odakem min.

The wrath of the Odakem

The term odakem refers to the "in-laws who serve as pall bearers, comforters and suppliers of food to the bereaved during a funeral and throughout the period of mourning thereafter." Odakem mim means 'the game of the odakem'. In this game the women club the men to the sound of hilarious laughter by all participants and spectators. At first it appears to be indiscriminate punishment being dealt out, but such is not the case. There are opportunities for both men and women to hit certain men without fear of retaliation. However, the women are by far the most sincere in their task. The men who are being hit run half-heartedly and allow themselves to be caught. Sometimes other men grab them so the woman can give them a drubbing. This is the day of the asen's chastisement by his tade.

The occasion for such activity is an all-night dance which has been called by a man or woman who wants either to kill a pig he or she has raised and have a feast or to commemorate a dead relative. The Odakem mim game occurs just before the all-night dance (bisim). The situations involved are:

a) An older sister can hit a younger sister's husband (whom she refers to as asen). A younger sister has to show more respect to an older sister's husband. She calls him navo (father) and cannot hit him. Sometimes a girl's brother (or one of the same clan) will hold the asen and call for the girl to come and hit him.

b) Men may hit other men (their asen) who married their clan sisters. However, they do not do it to their closest relatives feeling too great an affinity to these brother-in-laws. In case a) above the oldest sister's husband is not hit but case b) shows that he too can get hit by men in his wife's clan.

c) An older tade at any time during the dance may castigate an asen for a cultural infraction such as:

i) The asen urinates and his tade sees it. His tade then rebukes him in front of everyone and causes him extreme embarrassment. Although he would try to be discreet, his tade would have been on the lookout for this opportunity.

ii) The asen steps on his tade's foot or over his outstretched legs while he is sitting. This may be accidental or done on purpose to arouse some excitement. His tade will then heat the end of an arrow in the fire and chase him around trying to burn him with it.

iii) The asen gets caught taking a sip of water he has drawn for his tade.
When a tade attacks his asen everyone on the dance floor gives a big shout of approval. The tade may yell out something like, "You shouldn't have taken our daughter for your wife! You should have taken Yar Ivar (mythical witch) or a hamar (evil spirit) instead!" upon which the asen might retort, "No way! It serves you right that I took your daughter!" followed by much jocularity.

The basis for odakem mim is not readily apparent and the Sawis themselves have no logical answer. All Sawi men to a greater or lesser degree mistreat their wives so this could be the time to get revenge for a mistreated sister (Mills 1981:28,41).

There were "run-of-the-mill" family quarrels when a husband, for example, would punish his wife by shooting an arrow through her arm or through her leg. Or beat her across the back with a flaming faggot. Or force her to sit in a corner staring at the wall for days on end, striking her soundly every time she dared look around at her children or other relatives - a punishment, called yukop hauhuyap, usually inflicted on young wives whose eyes strayed too often in the direction of strange men. (Richardson 1974:186)

Perhaps sisters, remembering how close they were before marriage, may consider the asen as intruders who broke up the happy sisterhood and thus promote odakem mim. This game can only occasionally be witnessed now. Many do not like the connection with the all-night dance and its wanton and immoral dissipation. Others point to the incoming Indonesian culture where in-laws call each other by the name ipar and show mutual respect.

Death of a married man

The death of a man often means a widow(s) and orphans are left behind. Regarding widows, I have previously alluded to the keen interest other Sawi men have in picking up a marriageable widow. If she is beyond hope of bearing more children, she will not be in such great demand but she will still be considered useful as a worker to support the family. Sawis are not levirate in their conduct toward these widows. The following are the statistics for who the widows went to after the death of their husbands. If a woman was married to someone in the same clan as the deceased man it could have been either a close or distant relative of her departed husband. Or she may have been married to someone in another clan with no relationship to the deceased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>Close</th>
<th>Distant</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwaito</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yot</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics show that as often as not the widows went to other clans.

SAWI KINSHIP
More often than not a man of another clan will acquire the widow. In fact, the Sawis say most often the brother of the deceased will not even consider taking the widow out of respect and sorrow for his brother. There have been other men though that, upon seeing their brother's health and strength dwindling, have made an agreement with the prospective widow herself. Sometimes the wife would initiate such an insurance policy. The mourning period of at least a month is deemed proper before another man can take the widow.

Arguments and fights to claim the widow would take place during the time of mourning. Attention would be given by the widow's brothers to the ability of the prospective husbands to pay the bride price and their decision would, in part, depend on that. Sawis can remember big wars fought during these periods. Sometimes a widow's brothers have held out for a bigger price and this has caused great hardship to her in that she becomes a target for rape by the young men of the village. Such was the case with a widow named Asuvu in 1972. Her brothers in Hainam were looking for the highest bidder and as a result she was raped several times. She finally fled to the village of Seremit where several men quickly claimed her. After much furor between the villages and within Seremit itself one of the Seremit men was allowed to marry her.

Regarding orphans, there would be no doubt that a girl would be taken into the new father's house because she will fetch a bride price. However, in the meantime she will be given all the heavy jobs to do and will not enjoy the favor of her new father's real children. She will be given a mat to sleep on by herself whereas the other children will be able to sleep on the same mat as their father if they want to. Thus, whatever happiness of childhood she might have known ends with her father's death.

The boy orphans have always fared much worse. They do not hold the promise of bride price, but rather the opposite: a bride will have to be found for them. Boys get to play far more than girls and are not expected to work. There are tales told of orphaned boys who were terribly maltreated by their step-fathers. In one case the father continually chased the boy out of his house, beat him, threw him in the river, etc. He had to crawl into a far corner of the house to sleep after his step-father had gone to sleep. In another case where a man had taken his brother's widow he cared nothing for her sons. One of them became critically ill with fever and diarrhoea and was unable to move off his mat, which became filthy. No one would care for him and he came close to death. Because of the terrible odor, his uncle/step-father walled off his corner of the house so they would not have to smell him or look at him. He was in that condition for perhaps a month. Fortunately a young unmarried man of his own clan upon hearing of his pitiful condition took him to the river and bathed him and then took him to his own house to live.
Sawi kinship analysis

Due to intermarriage and multiple marriage it seems that every person in Kamur village is related to every other person by marital or blood link. The Geneological Circuit Diagram (Appendix B) illustrates how some of the people are related to each other. Every person on the diagram has unique links with every other person. Some of these links are closer and have kinship terms; others are much more distant and do not have terms. Often one of these links is more important than the others. Sometimes there are two close links relating people and it is not apparent to an outsider which is the more important and, if there are kinship terms for both links, which term to use. An example of this from the chart is as follows:

```

yoho | HADO maosi | DAVAI KANGAI | aiyu
```

Davai is both Amio's FaSiHu which uses the term asen and his WiFaBr which requires the term tade. Before Amio got married he called Davai asen, but now he must use the more respectful term tade.

Sawi kinship

The Sawi practice a patrilineal kinship system that is classified:

(A) By 1st Ascending Generatiog type as a compromise between generational and bifurcate merging. Differences between the Sawi system and those systems are as follows:

1. FaSi = Si(o) ≠ Mo
2. For male ego, FaBr may = Br(o) as well as ≠ Fa
3. For female ego, FaBr = Br(o) ≠ Fa

Thus diagramatically:

```

(B) By cousin type as Omaha in that it equates parallel cousins with siblings while distinguishing cross cousins as follows:

1. Matrilateral cross cousins are considered the same as certain of those in the 1st ascending generation namely:

MoBrSo = MoBr = Fa and
MoBrDa = MoSi = Mo

SAWI KINSHIP
57
(2) Patrilateral cross cousins are considered the same as certain of those in the 1st descending generation namely:

\[ \text{PaSiSo} = \text{SiSo} = \text{So} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{PaSiDa} = \text{SiDa} = \text{Da} \]

Such Omaha systems are common in Irian Jaya. Cook and O'Brien compiled considerable kinship data in New Guinea and make the following comment in their book about the area of New Guinea west of the Strickland River which includes all of Irian Jaya,

Although kinship terminologies in our sample of New Guinea societies exhibit considerable variety, there are a few constant elements seen in almost every system...Among these constants are several features related to the prevailing patrilineal descent ideology. In all the systems, for example, paternal parallel cousins are classed as siblings and the mother’s brother is terminologically distinguished from the father and the father’s brother...the Omaha systems in this sample all occur in societies west of the Strickland. (Cook and O'Brien 1980:463)

Sawi kinship terminology

At first glance the Sawi kinship terminology outlined in the following chart looks formidable. However, it is easier than it seems. Many relatives fall either into the s (siblings category) for those of the same clan, or the c (child category) for those of other clans. Those of the same clan can be called B/Z when there is a great age disparity. This means they look on them the same as their own children whom they refer to by the terms S/D even though they are in the same clan.

Looking at the kinship charts carefully we can make some helpful general observations in the form of another chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st GENERATION</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>oB/ys</th>
<th>oZ/s married to L</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not MB</td>
<td>MB</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd GENERATION</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>ys</td>
<td>L/D</td>
<td>S/D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L = in-law

An explanation for the first relationship on the row for 1st generation would be: if you call someone Elder Brother, you know you will call his children younger sibling, and you will call their children younger sibling or Son/Daughter. For Father it is important if he is Mother’s Elder Brother or not. If the person is Elder Sister/younger sibling then it is important if she is married to In-law (respectful) or not.
When a woman is remarried to a man in a different clan from her first husband, then her children of that new marriage will be of a different clan than her previous children. However, these step-siblings still use the elder Brother/elder Sister/younger sibling terms with one another.
### Sawi Kinship Chart

#### User of the Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term Generation</th>
<th>Male Only</th>
<th>Female Only</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cong</td>
<td>Affin</td>
<td>Cong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tatnavo +2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(grandfather)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tatnai +2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(grandmother)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>navo, +1</td>
<td>FB</td>
<td>M2H</td>
<td>HF, HPB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(father)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>W2H</td>
<td>FBDH, MBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>MBDS</td>
<td>HoB, o2H</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HMBSS, MBSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nai +1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HFZ, HPBW, M, MZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mother)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MBDH</td>
<td>HMBW, HMZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ave +1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FB, M2H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(older brother)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>FBS</td>
<td>H2H, oB, M2S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awe -1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F2, MBW</td>
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<td>(older sister)</td>
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<td>FBD</td>
<td>o2, M2D</td>
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<tr>
<td>agas +1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MBW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(younger sibling)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>WBW, WZH</td>
<td>HW, yS, PBC,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HZH, HBW, M2C, BC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aekao 0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(brother)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>aekao 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sister)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atirim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aesom 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sibling)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hab 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>Cong</td>
<td>Male Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tade</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>WPP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in-law (respectful))</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>WP, WFW</td>
<td>WPS, WMBW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>WS, WMS, WFBC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>WBS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>WBSS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asen</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>FZH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in-law)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atahap,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>ZH, FsDH</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(non-respectful)</td>
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<tr>
<td>names</td>
<td>-1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tim, at</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>HyB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(son)</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>BCS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atirim</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>yBW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(daughter)</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>sSW, WBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>CSW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>som</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(child)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fan</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>timin</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>WMZH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to symbols:

- F = Father
- D = Daughter
- M = Mother
- H = Husband
- P = Parent
- W = Wife
- B = Brother
- Sp = Spouse
- Z = Sister
- S = Sibling (of either sex)
- S = Son
- C = Child (of either sex)
- Y = Younger
- O = Older
- Cong = Consanguineal
- Affin = Affinal
APPENDIX

Appendix A, Tumo Takes A Wife

Au Yot's parents, Homgan Yot and Awab Kamur, saw that she was getting to marriageable age so they pointed out the fact to Awab's brothers, Imae and Kawito Kamur. They knew of Tumo's interest, since he recently lost his third wife. In making their offer of their niece, Au, they requested in return, a young girl named Kaumhan Kamur to one day be wedded to a Yot boy, Mamodon. Kaumhan's mother, Asi Kawito, passed on the request to her brothers, Tamai and Asaman, who with Tumo (their clan brother) had the right to answer this request. Mamodon was still just a boy in school so it would be a long time before his marriage could take place, but he was the most likely of a young brood of Yot boys growing up to first need a wife. Also, one of his sisters had previously been given to Tumo.

Tumo and the other men agreed to the offer. Had Tumo been just a young boy, he would have been expected to help pay the bride wealth by working for his prospective father-in-law as occasion arose. For example, whenever Homgan's house needed a new roof, Tumo would have been one of the first to go and get sago leaves for that. He would have brought gifts of food too every time he came back from the jungle.

The main payment was made on the wedding day. It was collected from many of the Kwito clan, both men and women. The payment consisted of axes, machetes, knives, clothing and anything else of value to a Savi. When the payment was all ready they advised Homgan. Since he was the father, it was not fitting for him to take Au to Tumo so he asked his nephew, Kaurai Yot, to do it.

On the morning of the wedding day, Kaurai and his wife, Yari, took Au down out of her house and proceeded to Tumo's house where all the payment was on display. Gadon Yot, Mamodon's half-sister, also went along since she would be a key participant in Mamodon's future wedding. Had the payment not fulfilled Kaurai's expectations he could have become offended, which in turn would have affected the exchange payment later, but Au's hand would not have been withdrawn from the deal, since the two families were committed to each other. However, the payment did meet with Kaurai's approval so, at that point, Tamai Kwito told Kaumhan to stand up. He went over and cut off some of her hair and handed it to Gadon as a guarantee of their covenant. Then Kaurai took all the goods back to the Yot people and divided it out, with the exception of one particularly fine axe which Tumo reserved to be given later. All who received a portion were expected to contribute later on Mamodon's wedding day.
Subsequently, Au went to the jungle with a number of the Kwaito women (her new family) and other Yot women who had similarly married Kwaito men. These other women went with Au to gather food for the evening meal and to have one last 'fling' together in the jungle with their virgin sibling. They especially went to fell sago palms in order to get out the hearts and edible immature leaves. They also chopped holes in the trunk so that beetles would lay eggs inside and their grubs would develop there for a later feast. The women all brought back bundles of their sago vegetables that afternoon. Au had one big bundle that she gave to Kaurai to distribute to her own Yot family. Each girl went to her own house to eat the evening meal.

Au went in to Tumo's house to cook for him and the children of his previous marriages. She cooked a sago stick and handed it to him. He broke it in many pieces to share with the boys and then they ate it. This was the final step in the marriage ceremony. When Tumo ate at Au's hand they were married! After the meal Au took the special axe that Tumo had saved and went with some of her friends over to her father's house. She gave the axe to him so that he would permit her to take her sleeping mat back to Tumo's house. The girls walked slowly back as, at this point, terror strikes the newlywed Sawi girl. Her friends tried to console her and left her to go into Tumo's house by herself. She would have to spend the night in the unpartitioned house with a number of boys old enough to have a good idea of what was about to take place.

About five weeks after the marriage Au and her friends went back to the sago trees earlier felled to harvest the crop of beetle grubs. Au brought large package of these to Kaurai to again divide among the Yot family. After their marriage Tumo continued to take gifts of food to Homgan until Homgan's recent death. At this time of writing Mamodon and Kaumhan still have not married even though Mamodon has now finished school and is of age. Once last year Mamodon was falsely accused of immorality with another girl. Such accusations put a lot of pressure on the family to get the accused married.
An example of a Sawi Exchange Marriage

[Diagram of a family tree with various labeled nodes and connections]

IRIAN VOL XIV
GENELOGICAL CIRCUIT DIAGRAM
for some of the people of Kamur village showing close interrelation of the 3 clans
Footnotes

1. Based on studies done by John Mills of RBMU International in 1982-1984 in Kamur village only. Considerable variation is known to exist in other villages.

2. Each Sawi clan is now named after a bird.

3. Personal correspondence

4. Their names were Asahe, Mi, Ain, Aute and Kayam, all daughters of Yei Tiro and his wife, Siahao.

5. Hane Kwaito and Tamai Kwaito married full sisters; Sadi Kwaito married a half-sister.

6. Giriman Kamur and his son, Masai, both had Divade Kamur as their wife and each had children by her. Similarly for Yahae and Hawam Kamur. In more recent times, Mawi Kwaito in Seremit took his father's widow.

7. A Generational system equates all cousins with siblings, whereas a Bifurcate Merging system equates FaBr with Fa and MoSi with Mo.

8. John and his wife Esther have worked among the Sawi since 1971 under the auspices of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. John received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Alberta as well as additional studies at Prairie Bible Institute and the University of North Dakota.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


ISTILAH-ISTILAH KEKERABATAN ORANG DOU

Ikhtisar


Istilah-istilah kekerabatan dalam makalah ini adalah mengenai istilah-istilah kekerabatan menurut keturunan dan istilah-istilah kekerabatan menurut perkawinan.

Seseorang dapat menggunakan lebih dari satu istilah untuk memanggil kerabatnya tergantung pada hubungan kekerabatannya. Istilah kekerabatan sangat penting bagi suku Dou, karena secara tradisi orang yang tidak mempunyai hubungan kekerabatan dengan mereka, kemungkinan besar merupakan musuh mereka.
DOU KINSHIP TERMS

Ivor Green

UNCEN/SIL

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to show what kinship terms are used by the Dou people and for which relationships each term is used.¹

THE PEOPLE: a brief overview

Dou is the name given to a group of people who live in the western Lakes Plains of Irian Jaya, in Indonesia.

The Dou live in an area that is largely sago swamp. There are a few hills but people live on only one of these, and that only since an airstrip was commenced there about 1978. Most Dou live along the River Tariku (formerly the Rouffaer). Their land is approximately between 137 degrees 15 minutes and 137 degrees 30 minutes East and between 3 degrees and 3 degrees and 20 minutes South.

There are just over seven hundred Dou people, whose language is a Papuan one, classified by Voorhoeve (1975) as in the Trans-New Guinea Phylum and the Tor-Lakes Plains Stock. Dou is a member of the Turu language family, Iau being the most closely related language to Dou.

The staple food is sago. The other chief foods are bananas, breadfruit nuts, sugar cane and meat or fish that they catch. Meat includes pig, turtle, crocodile, cassowary, bandicoot, small birds and sago grubs. Cassava, taro, pumpkin and sweet corn have more recently been added to their diet.

The Dou live in wooden houses built on posts, with sewn sago leaf roofs. They usually have walls of sago leaf stems in the villages, but on their clan lands they often do not have walls. Houses may contain from one to about four hearths, depending on the number of wives — normally one, but sometimes two or three — and on whether a nuclear or extended family live there.

Travel is usually by dugout canoe, though hunting is mostly done on foot.

Recently some people have become Christians, but many retain their traditional religious beliefs.

CLANS

The clans are the basic unit, each clan having its own land. Land rights are normally inherited from one's mother.
There are just over twenty clans averaging about thirty people each. The four villages were all founded in the mid 1970s when people from outside the area came and started to build airstrips. So most Dou people have a house in a village and also one on their own clan land.

**KINSHIP CHARTS**

The Dou kinship terms will be illustrated by six charts.


The following abbreviations are used:

- B - brother
- M - mother
- Y - younger
- F - father
- O - older
- Z - sister
- H - husband
- W - wife
CONSANGUINEAL KINSHIP CHART - MALE SPEAKER - B

Δ=○
1 1

Δ=○
2 3

Δ=○=△
4 3 4
MOB MOZ

Δ=○=△
4 3 4
MYB MYZ

5 6 7 5 7 5 7 6 7 6 7
OB ego YB

9 9 9 9 9 9 9 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

Δ=○=△
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

KEY
1 = ai 4 = soi 7 = oit 10 = sai
2 = au 5 = boi 8 = hu 11 = si
3 = ja 6 = ida 9 = sa 12 = te
AFFINAL CHART - MALE SPEAKER

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\hat{\Delta} &=& \circ & = & \Delta & = \\
10 & 7 & 7 & 5 & 7 & 6 & \text{OB} & \text{YB} & \text{ego} \\
11 & 7 & 10 & 5 & 7 & 6 & \text{WOB} & \text{WYB} \\
\end{array}
\]

AFFINAL CHART - FEMALE SPEAKER

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\hat{\Delta} &=& \circ & = & \Delta & = \\
8 & 5 & 8 & 6 & 5 & 8 & \text{OZ} & \text{YZ} & \text{OB} & \text{YB} & \text{ego} \\
12 & 5 & 8 & 6 & 8 & 8 & \text{HOZ} & \text{HYZ} & \text{HOB} & \text{HYB} \\
\end{array}
\]

KEY

1 = ai  
2 = au  
3 = ja  
4 = soi  
5 = boi  
6 = ida  
7 = oita  
8 = hu  
9 = sa  
10 = sai  
11 = si  
12 = te  

DOH KYUCHUN
One of the most striking things about the Dou kinship terminology is that grandchildren use the same term for their grandparents as their grandparents use for them -- ai.

It is also very interesting to note that the term aua refers to a person's father and all his father's siblings, both male and female. The term soi refers to one's maternal uncles and the husbands of one's maternal aunts. The term ja is used for one's mother, for her sisters, and also for the wives of one's paternal uncles.

The word boi is used for older siblings of the same sex as oneself. It is also used for certain cousins of the same sex — one of whose parents was an older sibling of either one's father or one's mother. The term ida is for younger siblings of the same sex and for the corresponding cousins, one of whose parents was a younger sibling of one of one's parents. The terms boi and ida are also similarly used for certain affinal relations, as also is sai. So we can summarize the use of these three terms as follows.

A woman uses boi for:
her older sisters,
the female children of her parents' older siblings,
the wives of her older brothers,
her husband's older sisters, and
the wives of her husband's older brothers.

The term ida is used in the same situations providing the word 'younger' is substituted for 'older' in each case.

Women do not use the term sai.

A man uses boi for:
his older brothers,
the male children of his parents' older siblings, and
his wife's older brothers.

He uses ida similarly.

But he uses sai for:
his sisters' husbands, and
the husbands of his wife's sisters.

A women refers to all her brothers and her male cousins as hu, as well as to her sisters' husbands, and to her husband's brothers and to her husband's sisters' husbands. Similarly a man refers to all his sisters, his female cousins, his brothers' wives, his wife's sisters and to his wife's brothers' wives as his oita.

One's children, siblings' children and cousins' children are all referred to and addressed as sa.
A man refers to his wife as *si*, who refers to him as *te*. These words are also used to refer to women and men in general.

CONCLUSION

Sometimes a Dou person can refer to a particular relative by more than one kinship term, because they are related in more than one way.

Relationship terminology is very important to the Dou, because traditionally anyone unrelated to them seems to have been considered a potential enemy.

More research could be done to ascertain the responsibilities and privileges that accompany these relationships. It is, however, evident from the terminology that sisters in particular and women in general have an important role in Dou society — as land-owners.

NOTE 1. The author has lived among the Dou people since July 1980 with his wife Sylvia working under the auspices of the UNCEN/SIL Cooperative Program. The information for this paper was supplied by the Korodesi people, with special thanks to Tobadesi.
KAMI BERASAL DARI PERABU - MEREKA BERASAL DARI KAYU
DUA BUAH DONGENG ASAL-USUL ORANG ASMAT

Ikhtisar

Dua buah dongeng yang disajikan di sini adalah asal-usul orang Asmat dan cerita tentang Fimbiriw. Fimbiriw disebut Fumbiripic atau Fambiripic dalam dongeng dari versi yang lain. Versi yang pendek dari kedua dongeng itu sudah pernah diterbitkan (dalam bahasa Inggris). Ada tiga buah alasan mengapa saya memilih kedua dongeng ini dan bukan dongeng lain yang belum pernah diterbitkan:

Pertama, keduanya adalah dongeng yang paling penting di daerah Asmat Tengah, dan agaknya keduanya saling melengkapi. Yang pertama berhubungan dengan turunnya nenek moyang pertama orang Asmat dari langit, dan yang kedua berhubungan dengan penciptaan manusia di luar daerah Asmat—sedikitnya mengenai mereka yang tinggal di sebelah barat laut Asmat.

Kedua, versi-versi yang telah diterbitkan, tidak ada yang mencerminkan dengan tepat kekayaan perincian cerita-cerita ini sebagaimana yang diceritakan menurut aslinya. Sering terjadi, cerita lisan yang sampai kepada kita hanya dalam bentuk pendek, ringkas yang tidak menarik, hampir menyerupai karikatur dari yang asli, yang memberikan kepada kita sebuah kesan yang buruk dari seni menceritakan yang ada di antara masyarakat yang belum menggunakan tulisan.

Akhirnya, versi-versi yang diterbitkan sampai sekarang, semua berisi kesalahan-kesalahan, yang, dalam hal cerita tentang Fimbiriw, telah menyebabkan ide yang salah bahwa Fimbiriw (Fumbiripic) adalah pencipta dari semua orang Asmat.
WE, PEOPLE OF ONE CANOE - THEY, PEOPLE OF WOOD
TWO ASMAT ORIGIN MYTHS

C.L. Voorhoeve
Australian National University

Introduction

On a late afternoon in the coastal village of Yepem, an old man was sitting quietly on a big log watching the glowing colours of the western sky slowly fade away. "One shouldn't look too long at the red clouds of sunset," he finally said, "they make you pine for the old times." The year was 1962, and the old times were then only ten years away, still fresh in the memories of all but the very young.

The stories which I am presenting in this chapter belong to those bygone days in which the Asmat, only faintly aware of the outside world, lived their own life of fishing, hunting, and sago making, of feasting and warfare, with all the pain and sorrow, but also the glory, that was part of it. A life, too, in which man lived in an intimate relationship with the unseen beings around him — the ancestors, the spirits of animals, trees, and plants, the Guardians of the rivers. An invisible but ever-present world, reflected in the hundreds of folktales which made up their oral literature, many of them sacred and to be told only on special occasions in the large ceremonial houses or yew. Although most of these stories are still remembered and told today, the time to which they belong and the culture of which they formed an integral part are gone forever. So are the men who told me their stories when I lived amongst them in the early sixties. It is to two of them that I dedicate this paper: to the great chief and warrior Warsekomen who told me the origin myth of his people, and the small, lively Oscowak, narrator of many tales amongst which was the story of Fimbiririw, the creator of all people living to the west of the Asmat.

To date, only a very small part of the oral literature of the Asmat has appeared in print, although the number of recorded stories must well be over a hundred. The first to write down Asmat folk tales was G. Zegwaard, M.S.C., who between 1949 and 1956 recorded dozens of them, often noting several variants of the same tale, told in different villages. With a few exceptions his collection of texts has remained unpublished. The manuscript containing these texts was retyped in the early sixties and a small number of copies were made. One of which is in my possession. I shall in the following refer to it by an abbreviation of the Dutch title: ZAO (Zegwaard: Asmat Oorsprongsverhalen -- Asmat myths of origin). A number of stories were collected by P. Drabbe, M.S.C., when he studied the Asmat language between 1957 and 1959. Of these, seven have appeared in

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I myself recorded about seventy folk tales on tape during my fieldwork in the area (1960–1962). Five of those have been published (Voorhoeve 1965). Since the early sixties many more stories have been collected, mainly by the missionaries in the Asmat area. I am not aware of any Protestant publications containing folk tales; but the Catholic Crozier Fathers published at least a few of them in An Asmat Sketch Book (ABS) in their publication series on Asmat culture, history, and language.

The two myths presented here are The Origin of the Asmat People, and The Story of Pimbiriw. Pimbiriw is called Fumbiripic or Pambiripic in other versions of the same myth. Short versions of both myths have been published before. The origin myth is found in ASB 6, and the Pimbiriw myth in Gerbrands 1967a:33-4, Gerbrands 1967b:21-2, and twice in ASB, cf. endnote 3. The ASB gives an unabbreviated English translation of the version recorded by Zegwaard in 1949 (ZAO:69-73). The reason that I have chosen these two myths instead of others still unpublished is threefold: Firstly, they are two of the most important myths of the people of the Central Asmat area and they are in a way complementary. The first deals with the descent from heaven of the first ancestors of the Asmat, the other with the creation of the people outside the Asmat area — at least those living to the northwest of it. Secondly, none of the published versions does justice to the richness of detail of these stories as originally told. Too often oral literature reaches us only in short, uninteresting abstracts, almost caricatures of their originals, which give us a poor impression indeed of the art of storytelling as it exists among preliterate peoples. Finally, the versions published to date all contain errors which, in the case of the Pimbiriw myth, have given rise to the mistaken idea that Pimbiriw (Pumbiripic) is the creator of all Asmat people. I shall return to this point below in my comments to each of the stories.

Both myths were told to me in 1962 in the privacy of my home in Agats. I recorded the myths on tape so that the narrator could tell his tale without being interrupted. Later, I transcribed and translated the recordings with the help of my informants. The original translation was in Indonesian. The English translation, while leaning on the Indonesian, was made on the basis of the Asmat original and keeps as closely to it as possible without becoming clumsy. One of the few liberties I took was to sometimes substitute for the regularly recurring anaphoric pronouns (he/she/it/they (said, did....etc)) the proper name of their referent. While they were easy to interpret in the spoken context, in the written version they are often awkward and obscured. I have put aside by the storyteller in parentheses, explanatory comments by myself between square brackets. Endnotes explain obscure points and give some cultural background where I thought this would assist in understanding the story. In my spelling of Asmat words I have deviated from the spelling I used in my thesis (Voorhoeve 1965). The phonemes /m/ and /n/ are here written according to their phonetic realizations as [b], [mb], [m], and [d], [nd], [n] respectively. I have kept c to render the sound written in Dutch as ts, or tsg, which is the English ch in chew, thus keeping in line with the Indonesian spelling of this sound. I have not indicated the word-accent on Asmat words; as a rule of thumb one can say that most words of two or three syllables carry the accent on the last syllable, and longer words carry it on the third syllable from the end. Thus: Yep' em, Ew'er, Ow' us (also
Endnotes

1. They are: "The story of Ac" (Drabbe 1959, 1963), "The origin of the coconut tree" (ASB 6:104), "The origin of the moon" (ASB 6:105), "The snake and sago preparation" (ASB 6:106), "A myth of Warsekomen (the story of Sokorew)" (ASB 6:107-12), "The origin of the coastal villages" (ASB 6:113-4), and "The flood story" (ASB 6:120). Except for the origin stories of the coconut tree and the moon, all of them have also been recorded by Zegwaard and myself. The tale of the snake and the sago is called The story of Yokor in ZAO:175, and The story of Pit in my own collection. The flood story is the of The bad man and the bad woman (cf. fn. 2) which I recorded.

2. Viz. "The squashable between the baciw snake and the am fruit"; "How the fet fish came by its scarred nose"; "The bad man and the bad woman"; "The origin of the sago palm"; "The story of Batamyen".

3. In ASB 1: the stories of Bedn, Jok, Asanjokikiwr, Sempar: the two brothers, Bisirak, Komor; the birth of the moon; the orphan boy, ASB 4: Bis, Famiripic, Fire and sago, ASB 6: Famiripic, The source of fire, Sago myth (Pit story), Besokopeer, Keke and Paja, Bioro, Tonjaep. Other stories may perhaps be found in ASB 5, but this volume was not available to me.

Myth I: The Origin of the Asmat People

Preliminary remarks

Warsekomen, the narrator of this myth, was the old chief of the yew Ar in Suru village. At the time he must have been in his late seventies. It was said that he was already a married man when the first Dutch vessel reached Flamingo Bay in 1907. Among the Big Men of the villages round the bay he was the most influential, a great war leader, and an undisputed authority in matters of ceremony and tradition. Physically too he was an imposing man, even in his old age towering over his fellow men, with sharp features and a high-bridged nose. He traced his ancestry to the Kaye-Minipir group who in former times lived on the Yindiw, the river on which the present-day village of Per is situated. Zegwaard tells us that they were decimated by repeated attacks of the people of Per, Yepem, Owus and Beriten, and that the survivors were scattered over the villages Namkai, Yamas, Suru, Ewer and Ayam (ZAO:15). Warsekomen died in 1970.

Before I recorded the origin myth, Warsekomen had told it twice to Zegwaard in the early fifties, and once to Drabbe, in 1957. Zegwaard wrote it down in detail (ZAO:8-14). Drabbe's version is much shorter and contains a number of aberrations of which some seem to be due to a faulty translation of the original text (see note below). In addition, Zegwaard's noted local variants of the same myth in Ewer, Yaun (Youn, Yowun), Amborep and Warse. I shall give these variants after the main text. Zegwaard's version and the one recorded by me are in fact two renderings of the same
variant. They run entirely parallel except for some details which are present in the one but not in the other, and vice versa. I have therefore systematically indicated in the text where the two renderings supplement each other. Where the Zegwaard version differs from mine, it is indicated by an interpolated (21), (22), etc., and his version is given after the last preceding endnote. Endnotes to both versions are treated on a par and numbered consecutively. Thus, after endnote 1 to the text follows version 21 which contains endnote 2, is then followed by endnote 3 to the text, and so on.

Note:

I come to this conclusion because Zegwaard’s and my versions are virtually identical, and I see no reason why Warsekomen would suddenly have deviated from it when telling the story to Drabbe. Thus, in Drabbe’s version, Baitep is said to descend through a crab hole; Yepem is cutting his canoe on the Siric and then follows his father into the world below — an obvious error; since the discovery of Kaimos follows the arrival of the ancestors at the Aswec river instead of preceding it.

The text

Baitep’s sons were Nagew, Ewer, Kamkai, Akayir, Sinewakap, Yowunakap, Kaimoakap — a whole crowd. (21) And Yepem, Suru; there were many of them. Baitep’s father was Manufuko, the great old Manufuko. He reared him. Ewer and Nanew were his grandchildren. Baitep’s father Manufuko was their grandfather. Baitep was a huge pig. No human being sired him. A big boar sired him, and his name was Baitep.

His daughter’s husband, whose name was ...(I always forget it, do you perhaps know it, Yakafo?), Baitep’s son-in-law, hit him with an arrow as if he were a bush pig while he stood, head down, searching for food in front of his son-in-law’s house.

“Father, father, look, there is a pig!” said the children [of Baitep’s son-in-law].

“Hah,” he said when he saw it.

“Do you want to shoot me? Very well then, here I am,” said the big boar. “Try to shoot me with a pig’s arrow! Let it hit my back with a thud!”

He let it fly, aiming to hit him in the back. Thud! The heavy arrow hit him in the neck but it did not hurt him. Grunting, he ran off to the south.

Dosow, Care, Biset, Mumburkor, the Bleeding-Shin people, the Crooked-shin people and the Protruding-Forehead people (22) were making canoe tracks, filling the air with the sound of tree-cutting when, making a noise like a storm wind, Baitep came running towards them, and they dropped their axes in fright. They [and also] the Flat-Nose people and the Bare-Teeth people climbed into the trees and there they all waited, huddled up.

“What’s the matter with this big pig? Who is he? Hey, wait, what’s the matter with you?” they said to him, but he ran on to the south.
He rooted up the tubers of a yen and a mambu plant, and also a mimakam vine. When he had lifted them out, thus opening a hole in the sky above, Baitep slid down through it. There, underneath the hole, stood a tall breadfruit tree which was forked. With a thud he landed at its foot.

The sun had gone down and his children cried all night.
"Father went south on his own yesterday, and has not come back since. Let's look for him!" they said.
They all set out to search for him, walking in a long line. Nanew went in front; he was the eldest. Then came Ewer; next in line was Yowun, then Sinew, then Kaimoakap. They all went south, walking behind each other, following his footprints. Baitep's son-in-law was at home.
"Brother-in-law, are you home?" they said.
"Yes, I'm here," he said.
"Yesterday your wife's father went off on his daily search for food and he hasn't come back."
"Brothers, be cross with me! Yesterday I hit your father in the back with a pig's arrow because he looked like a bush pig! He has fled towards the south. The noise of the people down south -- Care, Biset, Mumburkor, Dosow, the Crooked-Shin people, the Bleeding-Buttocks people, the Crooked-Thigh people and the Deformed-Buttocks people -- the noise they made while heaving new canoes suddenly stopped yesterday and it has been quiet since. He has gone south," he said.
"We have set out to search for him," they said.

At once they went on their way. His footprints led to the south. They were as big as stone axes; not tiny, but huge! He Baitep stood as tall as the roof of a house. They followed the tracks south till they ended. The hole was closed; after he had opened it and had slid down through it he had ordered it to shut itself. He had descended from the top of the breadfruit tree and had landed below. (He descended through a hole in the sky. Up there, there is a separate people and we down here are separate people, too. They, the sky people, are Asmat people, too.)

While they were looking about, searching for his footprints, Nanew said, "Ewer, look, the ground here has been rooted up! He lifted these plants here, the yen and the mambu, roots and all, out of the ground. Our father must have descended here. Yesterday he must have rooted them up and gone down. Here are his footprints, as big as stone axes!"
They looked. "Oh, what shall we do now?" they said.
"Don't say 'What now'? We aren't orphans yet!"
"Let's follow our father," they said.
And that is what they did. The men all lowered themselves into the crown of the tall breadfruit tree. All the sons followed their father below.

This is what Baitep did: with a grunt he broke from between the branches of a ci tree down below, (near the Sirec River), which Yepem was shaping into a canoe.
"Oh, big boar, have you been down here since yesterday? Oh, my dear one!" saidYepem when he saw him.

He broke off a crust of roasted sago and put it down beside the canoe for the big boar. Then Yepem began to wail over him. He wailed and wailed...
"Lie down close to me now," he said. Baitep spent the night there.

All his sons had descended from the breadfruit tree and had gone down to the upper reaches of the Sirec River. There in the water lived a tortoise, Buciwuc. She was an Asmat woman. (24) Ewer shot a big arrow through her temple. He made her cry out 'Aaah!' (She waved her hands like this). "Oh, I thought you were a big female crab," he said.

He seized the end of the arrow shaft and he pulled her onto the shore, but he did not cut off her head.

Yownu, however -- Yownunakap, the man with the buttocks full of sores and the slightly crooked shins -- said, "You shouldn't pull her onto the shore without cutting her head off!," and he cut it off himself. (25)

Now Nanew said, "Bah, I don't want to hear the sound of your horns all night!" and he went up the river.

He killed Okomberawuc who lived there on the Sirec and he cut off her head. (26)

When Ewer saw her he said, "Hey, that woman is Okomberawuc! She owns this river! What have you done? She is a sacred woman!"

"But you were the first to kill someone to take a head," Nanew said. (27)

They all went to pay Yepem a visit.

"Ah, there's Yepem." they said when they saw him.

"So there you are." Yepem said when he saw them coming. "Look, there are your sons. Perhaps they are longing for you," he told Baitep. And he rested on his axe. "What do you want?" Yepem asked.

"Oh, we are only going to the river."

"Come on, speak up," he said.

"We are longing for father. We are looking for the Old Man Baitep!"

"Yesterday your father emerged from between the branches of this ci tree, on his way to the Sirec. Last night he slept beside the canoe. I gave him some sago and fish. He's still here," Yepem said.

Thereupon the sons began to weep. "O Great Sacred Man, yesterday you really were overdoing it," they said. "Our brother Suru is yonder, down the river. Every day he shapes a canoe out of a huge yuwur tree. He chars it and launches it, but at night it changes again into an unworked tree trunk. Let's go and see him," they said.

Yepem quickly took his axe home and joined them.

When Suru saw them and also his father, he said, "Hey, how long have you been travelling? Since yesterday or the day before?"

"Father has been down here for two days; we followed him."

"Yesterday I heard Yepem wailing all day long," said Suru. (Ewer, Nanew, Sinew, Yownu and Kankayakap reached the Sirec at the bend of the river where the Amanupum and the Nai [creeks] are). "I char the canoe and launch it, but during the night it changes again into an unworked trunk. Perhaps you could try your hand at it for me," he said.

"Perhaps you made the shape too rough," said his brothers.

"No, I always make the canoe as smooth as a paint trough," said Suru.
Then Nanew began to work. He took up an axe and began to shape the canoe starting from the stern. Yepem began to work at the prow. It lay quivering [under their blows]. They dug out the whole inside of the canoe and then smoothed the outside. They worked the inside with an adze; Yepem went to make the carvings at the prow. They made a canoe out of that huge yuwur tree, and they decorated it with tufts of rattan leaves. Then they lit dry sago leaves, charred the bottom, and launched the canoe. It quivered as if it were a paint trough when they lowered it into the river.

"Hurrah, that's my canoe!" Suru shouted.

They went to sleep and at dawn the owner of the canoe went to have a look at it. Then he returned to the house, went inside and decorated himself with bird's feathers and paint.

"Yeeah, yeeah, that's my canoe," he kept on shouting till sunrise.

The men all woke up. "You were hewing only the rough shape of a canoe. Look there, the canoe we made yesterday so expertly, that's a real canoe!"

But he said, "All the time I made a good canoe! Perhaps you made this all happen, so that I had to try it again and again!"

That morning he painted it white with lime and red with ochre, and he decorated it with long strands of rattan leaves.

"Now we feed it enet," they said.

He cut out a pig's heart, liver and kidneys. Then a human heart, and the heart and kidneys of a cassowary. All these he cut out and laid down in a row. Then they took their bows and shot their arrows, hitting the organs so that the blood ran out.

"From now on man will die when hit by an arrow in the lungs, the liver, or the kidneys," they said. (58)

They pulled out one of their father's tusks. Then they pulled out the other tusk. They all boarded the canoe.

"Come across here, in the water," they said to him.

Their father, the huge boar, went into the water under the prow of the canoe. "Ugh," he grunted as he descended into the river.

Then his sons started paddling down the Sirec. (59)

Kaimo and Kaimoakap, went ashore.

"I want to have a look on the opposite bank, near the mouth of the Sar Creek," he said.

He went ashore by the Sar. At the Yoworapes, Namen jumped ashore.

Sumuyakap went ashore by the Pawec.

Serew said, "I want to defecate on the opposite bank in the nipa-fringed bend of the river. Perhaps that's a place with good, firm soil."

He jumped ashore by the mouth of the Mimin -- or perhaps it was the Bayap.

"All right, this is my spot. This spot where the nipa grows has good, firm soil," he said.

Kamb jumped ashore by the Yenat.

Nanew stood at the front by the prow. The men near the stern had left them and had gone ashore one after another. (210)
Now Nanew, Kamkai, Ewer, Yepem and Suru paddled downstream together. And Yownakap, and Sawakap*, the people of the Sirec. Nanew, the eldest brother who was a sky-man, said to Suru who stood below on earth, and whose canoe was made by Nanew. "I shall become the yew Nanew; you must give your name to the people of the village Suru."

The owner of the canoe said: "I have made the canoe; the name of the people must be mine! You took your place at the bow of the canoe, you should give your name to the oldest yew." (211)

In the morning they all started out downstream; they had spent the night by the mouth of the Yenat. There Sinewakap went ashore, and they left without him. At the mouths of the Seper and the Usmateser there was an abundance of fish, and they began to fish with pronged spears.

Ewer went ashore with a dog to hunt pigs. But he and his dog killed only one. Nanew tried again and again to spear fish. Yepemakap in the meantime just stood looking at Nanew, following him with his eyes.

"It's no use," said Nanew.

"Ewer, would you come back please!" they called.

"His dog didn't bark at all," Nanew said.

At once Ewer returned to the canoe. He had killed only one pig. Now Nanew jumped ashore with his dog and Ewer went aboard the canoe. Quickly he took a spear from the bottom of the canoe, and he made a hit! Ewer caught a fish, with the many-pronged spear.

When Nanew had gone ashore with his dog it began to bark. He killed one pig after another; the canoe was full of them. Now Ewer tried to spear another fish, but he did not succeed. Quickly Yepem threw a spear from the middle of the canoe and it was a dead hit.

Thereupon Ewer said, "Come here and stand by the bow."

When Yepem had gone to the bow he speared the fish. He didn't miss, he didn't throw the spear into the water without hitting.

"The descendants of Yepem will be the fish spearing people," they said.

(I shall have to tell the episode of Kaimes....Where did that happen? Was it at Cape Koser, between the Seper and the Bowakap?...No, it happened near the mouth of the Seper).

Nanew jumped ashore to hunt pigs and he came in our direction. There was Kaimes, a man who lived in the mud, in the mud heap of a sinak. This mud heap was as high as a fully grown sago palm. Deep in the mud was his house. The dog barked 'hah, hah' as if it was barking at a big pig.

Nanew looked intently. "But that's not a pig! There is no reason why you should bark at a mud heap, and dig into it," he said. He looked. There stood someone with beautiful long strings of braided hair. "Oh, it's a man! What kind of man are you, a spirit man perhaps? Who are you?" he said.

"What do you want? Tell me your name first," said the mud man.

"No, you should tell me your name first. I came here to hunt pigs." He came out of the mud heap.

"Such a man should not live under the ground," said Nanew. "Such a beautiful man! Come, come outside!"

He came out of the mud heap.

"All right, now come with me to the canoe," Nanew said.
They were all in the canoe: Suru, Ewer, Kamkai, Yepem, Yownukap, Akayir. They had left the others behind.

"There's our Nanew bringing a man with him," they said when they saw him. "Who is that man?" they asked.

"Oh, he is your elder brother Kaimes." The dog barked at him as if he were a pig. He made his house of mud. 'That shouldn't be so,' I said, and I took him with me. I am taking him to the canoe," he said.

"Ah, such a man shouldn't live under the ground," they said.

They took Kaimes and gave him a place in the canoe.

They went to the mouth of the Bow and there they began to spear fish. They speared fish for a while and then they said, "That's enough! We've got plenty."

Then they entered the Bow River. (212) (The owner of the Bow is the woman Samawerokos). Quickly they paddled upstream, but there was no river; Samawerokos had closed the Bow's entrance, she had obstructed its course. Instead, they entered the Yow. Nanew, Ewer and Kamkai entered it, with Yepem and Kaimes also in the canoe, and Uwusakap standing at the rear. (Those who now live on the Bow River are Uwus' people. The people of Uwus are our people, they are of the same ancestral canoe).

At the mouth of the Yow it was full of dog-magic vines which hung down from the trees.

"There will always be plenty of dog-magic vines here," said Nanew.

They went into the forest where no one could see them. They had left the main stream of the Bow. There was no water in the main channel; it was wholly covered by forest. They went to sleep and slept the whole night till the sun rose.

First they relieved themselves. Uwusakap, too, went further into the forest to defecate. When he sat there the sun shone on his back. When Uwus felt this he said: "Hey, there is no river here, and yet, now you are rising, you are shining upon my back! The main stream must be where the water is shallow; the river must be where that open space is."

In a hurry he went to the open spot. There was the Bow, its water stretching upstream. There were the mouths of the Tatema, the Bisnawer and the Demser.

"Ah! we spent the night next to the main river! We entered a side river, a small creek [by mistake]. This is the big river," he said.

"Where is our Uwus?" the others said that morning. "Oh, Uwus went out to relieve himself and he hasn't come back. Let him stay where he is, we are going to the mouth of the river," they then said. (213)

They paddled to the mouth of the river, all of them: Nanew, Ewer, Yepem, Yownukap, Kamkai, Suru — the owner of the canoe — and Kaimes. Then they turned the canoe and came to our area.

Yepem said, "Take the canoe over there for me," and he jumped ashore at the mouth of the Bendi. (214)

Only Kaye and Minipir used to live there, and also Omen. Yepem joined them. Then they paddled up the Asewec and they put Yownukap and Sawakap ashore at the mouth of the Cemnes. Having dropped them there, they returned downstream.

"Let me enter the Ba over there," said Kaimes. (215)

He went ashore at the place where the Aitep flows into the Ba.
Yowun entered the Fayu. The Fayu river was still empty. Yowun left the mouth of the Cemnes. He went upstream and entered the Fayu. Then he went across to the Undir. He reached the river Pi and there, by the mouths of the Tewer and the Eksaman, he settled.

Sawa, too, went up the Undir, and he went to live at the mouth of the Wasannak. He went ashore in the outer bend by the Batamururu — quite near to where the people of Komar are living now. That is his old village site. (Watepakap came from across the sea. He entered the Yindiu. However, that is another story. Now I am telling the story of the people of the same canoe, the story of our people and their children).

Nanew, Ewer and Suru again paddled up the Bow river till they had reached the mouth of the Yow. Uwusakap had removed the masses of vines and yowop trees which obstructed the course of the Bow. He let the water run out, and it forced its way to the sea, carrying along a stream of sago fruit. The water came rushing out. Nanew's and Ewer's eyes nearly popped out of their heads!

"That confounded river! So its course was next to where we were, but it was covered with reeds and yowop trees!"

Quickly they paddled up the river, but Uwus had already taken his belongings and had gone to live farther upstream at the mouths of the Demser and the Cia.

"Where is our Uwus?"

(Oh, I've left out another part of the story; I didn't tell how they met Cimsipsimit.)

Well, they did not stay on the Bow. They went back up the Sirec.

(216) Ewer, Yepem, Sinewakap, Kaimes, Yowun, who descended too, became our first ancestors. They gave their names to all the people.

Endnotes

1. Each son is the mythological ancestor of a yew group of the same name. The group Kamkai died out in pre-contact days. Suru and Nanew are yew of Suru village, Ewer and Akayir of Ewer village. Sinew is a yew of Ayam village. Yepem, Yowun, and Kaimes are yew in the villages of Yepem, Yowun, and Kaimo respectively. Warsekommen forgot to mention Uwu, the ancestor of the yew Uwu in Uwu village (see 21). The diminutive suffix -akap ("small, junior") in some of the ancestors' names probably refers to their status as younger brothers.

21: Nanew and Kamkai were born from the urethra; Ewer, Akayir, Yepem, Uwu, Yowun and Sirew from the thigh.

2. Children being born from a body part of the father is a recurrent theme in Papuan mythology. In the Asmat myth of Ufiripec, two daughters are born to a man from boils in his arms. Segwaard mentions a Mimika myth in which a child is born from the calf of a man's leg. The Kebar in the Bird's Head have a myth in which the hero Pentora is born from the scrotum of his father (Miedema 1984:161).

3. Yakafo was the leader of the yew Setmot in Suru village who was present.
at the recording session. In Zegwaard's version of the origin myth the name of Baitep's son-in-law is given as Buripic.

4. The pig's arrow, (firkom), is a long arrow tipped with a sharp bamboo blade.

5. "South" is the translation of the directional term piri. The main directions distinguished within the Asmat area are oriented towards the courses of the main rivers and their tributaries. Piri refers to the downstream side of a main river, or to the direction of the sea (south to southwest). Aran refers to the upstream side of a main river or to the direction of the mountain ranges (north to northeast). Bren and sen respectively refer to the upstream and downstream sides of a tributary.

6. All of these are deformed people who live in the sky world.

22: Mentions two more names: Diriw and Owzacak (bad-man).

7. When a new canoe is to be made, first a suitable tree is chosen and felled. Then the rough outline is hewn out of the trunk on the spot where the tree has been felled. Next a track is cut through the forest from the roughly-shaped log to the nearest river or creek. Across the track young saplings are laid down at regular intervals of approximately two meters. Over these sleepers the log is then hauled to the water, where it is lashed to a canoe and transported to the village where all the rest of the work is carried out.

8. Part of the esoteric knowledge of the Asmat is the view that the world is a hollow sphere on the bottom of which live the Asmat people. The mouth of the large Sirec River is at the lowest point. From there, one goes upwards in all directions. The main rivers such as the Sirec have their source near the top of the sphere. If, from the mouth of the Sirec, one follows the coastline to the southeast, one will eventually end up on the Mimika coast northwest of the Asmat. A tale about such an odyssey is told in the myth of Peyur. The world sphere is likened to a huge coconut. The three eyes in the top of the coconut shell form the entrance from the 'sky' world outside to the human world inside. They correspond to the three holes made by Baitep by digging up the yen, mambu and mimakam plants. Yen and mambu are wild tubers; the mimakam is a kind of vine.

23: Mentions four plants: yen, mambu, mimakam, and kamak (ginger).

9. The removal of the two tubers and the vine and the subsequent descent into the forked tree may perhaps symbolize the birth on earth of the ancestor Baitep. This was pointed out to me by Don Tuzin, now Professor in Anthropology at the University of California, who commented that in the Arapesh area of the Sepik District forked trees have feminine symbolism. I did not obtain explicit information on this point but there are indications that it may hold for the Asmat as well. For instance, the crown of a sago tree (in origin a girl put upside down with legs and arms stretched out, see Voorhoeve 1965:221) is said to be female and its stem to be male.

10. The usual way of cooking sago is by roasting lumps or balls of moist sago meal on an open fire or in the hot ashes. When the sago has acquired
a brown skin, it is taken out of the fire with bamboo firetongs (yokmen). The cooked outer layer (acin), a crust of approximately one half inch thick, is peeled off for consumption. The remaining raw core is again put on the fire to roast.

11. i.e. She is both a tortoise and a human being at the same time.

24: The episode of the killing of Buciauwa is told after the one in which the brothers meet Yepem and their father on the bank of the Sirec River. It is also richer in detail, see 25.

12. When saying this, Warsekemen demonstrated how Buciauwa moved her hands.

25: "After dragging the tortoise-woman onto the river bank, they cut her up with a bamboo knife. First they severed the head, then they cut off the arms and legs. Next, they opened the trunk in the following way: on both sides they made an incision running from the anus to the neck. Then they cut the ribs and lifted the upper part of the trunk off the lower half. They are the meat. The hairs of the head were singed over a fire and the ashes rubbed on the heads and shoulders of the men. Then they emptied the skull [through a hole made in the temple], and put it into Ewer's bag]."

13 The bag with the skull of Buciauwa was a very sacred object, and in 1953 still in the possession of the yew Ewer (ZAO: 11).

14. The reference is to the sound of the bamboo signal horns (fu) which are blown after a successful headhunting raid.

26: "Nanew felt that his younger brother had got the better of him and was ashamed. He wanted to prove himself and went away, determined to kill somebody. After some time he discovered the bird-woman Okomberawu in the top of a tree and shot her."

15. Every main river (yo) has its own guardian or owner, who can be male (yo armatipic) or female (yo armatcowuc). These beings belong to the same category as the mythical ancestors: they are all yi ow, 'yi people,' the primeval beings who populated the earth and the sky before the origin of mankind. The term yi refers to one of the two basic principles of life, yi and bi, which are to varying degrees present in all objects and living beings of this world (see Schoot, 1969:69-71;246).

27: "Nanew added: 'I don't mind; let my progeny be as I am: foolish, reckless, and foolhardy!" Then he saw that Ewer was carrying a bag with a skull in it. At once he went to the river, took a large round stone, put it into his own bag and slung the bag over his shoulder."

16. This illustrates the foolishness of Nanew. A man's small bag (ese) is normally carried on the back, the strap worn around the neck. Successful headhunters are allowed to carry their bag on the chest, but never will a man carry his bag with the strap over the shoulder. The ese is a woven bag made of grass leaves or the fibers of pandanus roots. A small ese is used by the men to carry their few personal belongings, such as matches, tobacco, a razorblade and a knife. Large ese are used by the women for
carrying all kinds of things such as firewood, sago, and fish. The carrying strap is fastened around the forehead and the bag is carried on the back in the same way as the net bag is carried in other parts of New Guinea.

17. The last stage of the making of a canoe is the charring (ci ses). During this process, bundles of dry leaves are burnt under the canoe till the bottom is covered with a thin layer of charcoal. The charcoal is then scraped off with shells. This treatment seems to serve three purposes: it kills any borers in the wood, it hardens the wood, and it creates a very smooth surface, making the canoe easy to propel. The charring is repeated several times in the lifetime of the canoe. It is done before setting out on a major expedition or when the bottom of the canoe has become overgrown with weeds.

18. The yufuy is a small, vessel-shaped wooden trough used for mixing paint (lime, red ochre or charcoal mixed with water). This stereotype comparison indicates that the canoe is beautifully shaped and extremely well made: strong, light and fast. Such a canoe is said to vibrate when it moves.

19. War canoes often have richly carved prows. The making of the prow carvings is done by an expert woodcarver (wowipic).

20. Before a war canoe is charred, the sides are painted in a pattern of white and red stripes running from top to bottom. Near the rim of the canoe small holes have been drilled at regular intervals. In these holes tufts of rattan leaves are fastened. A very big canoe, however, is treated differently. First it is painted all white and then narrow red stripes are painted on it at wide intervals. The rattan leaves are not cut to short tufts but are used in their full length so that their strands hang down. This kind of decoration is called yipi tosow. The painted pattern is said to be the pattern of the ringed watersnake (ambernak).

21. This sentence was probably added as an afterthought, since the painting always takes place before the launching and not after it, cf. note 20.

22. enet means 'slime,' in particular the slime of fish skins and of vaginal secretion. When a new canoe is taken out to sea on its first fishing trip, the inside is made slippery by rubbing it with the slime of fish. This is called "to feed the canoe enet". The link between this custom and the introduction of mortality is unclear to me.

23. Presumably Suru, the owner of the canoe.

28. The whole episode in which the ancestors cause man to be mortal is missing in Zegwaard's version.

24. The reason for this is obscure. In Zegwaard's version (see 29) they make waves while paddling, which are curved like the tusks of Baitep. Perhaps their removal gives the men the power to cause such waves.
25. That is, he clung, legs upward and the snout pointing forward, to the underside of the prow of the canoe.

29: "While paddling down the river the men sang the sacred headhunting song (e so) and Baitep taught them how to attack an enemy. He would give the sign for the attack by grunting and baring his teeth. The men then should yell and throw lime in the direction of the enemy. They should paddle in such a way that they made big waves, curved like the tusks of Baitep. Baitep would make the waves so strong that they would cause the enemy canoes to capsize. He himself would always accompany the men on their raids. The canoe was full of men. In the front half stood the ancestors of all the coastal villages near Flamingo Bay except one. Near the tail end stood all the ancestors of the inland villages on the Sirec."

26. Asmat men paddle while standing. Their paddles (po) are up to ten feet long. The way of paddling prescribed by Baitep is called po cic. It consists of short, heavy strokes of the paddles which are thrust deep into the water. At each stroke the canoe is pulled deep into the water and let go again. This propels the canoe forward with a bouncing motion which causes large waves.

27. Namen, or Namun: ancestors of the yew Namên in Namen village.

28. Sumuy, or Simay, was a yew of Ayam village as late at 1938. However, in Drabbe's list of yew the name does not appear (Drabbe 1954). The name Simay, is commonly used as a cover term for the people of Ayam, Warse, and Amborep. Sumuyakap probably is their common ancestor.

29. The people of Serev formerly lived on a small tributary of the Sirec near the village of Biwar. In 1949, under the pressure of inter-village warfare, they fled to the mouth of the Digul River where they have been living since.


310: "One after another the ancestors of the following yew went ashore [each name is followed by the name of the village, if known]: Dayiw, Tiao, Utip, Becow (Becow), Yipir, Onar (Biwar), Yimes, Yuno (Yuni), Tawor, Biwar (Biwar), Damen (Damen), Kaimo (Kaimo), Koi, Os (Os), Fos (Fos), Awok (Awok), Yop (Kawet), Yao and Sokor (Yaosokor), Serev (Serev) and Sinew (Warse)." Zegwaard notes: Serev went ashore at the Beyir, the creek which connects the Sirec and Mec Rivers, and which is still a sacred river. Sinew joined Kambe, of Warse village.

31. Sawakap is the ancestor of the yew Sawa in Sawa-Erma village.

311: The explanation of why the village of Suru is named after Suru, the younger brother of Nanew, is missing in Zegwaard's version.

32. The Seper and the Usmatewer are tributaries of the Sirec River near Cape Koser on the north side of the mouth of the river.

33. Men fish either with a pronged spear (kamem) or a harpoon with a
34. Dogs are kept to assist in the hunting of pigs. They track the pig down and bark at it, drawing its attention away from the hunter, who has to come quite close in order to be able to shoot or spear the animal.

35. That is, in the direction of Suru village, north of the Seper creek.

36. The *sinak* is a crayfish living in fresh and brackish water. It digs tunnels in the mud of the river banks. The entrance to the tunnel is marked by a heap of dug-out mud up to 20 cm high.

37. Long strings of braided hair (*ondes*) are considered beautiful, especially if they reach to the shoulders. To braid the hair, a small piece of a pig bone shaped like a crochet needle is used.

38. This is a fixed procedure in Asmat myths. The man who is on his home ground has to mention his name first, but he begins by asking the newcomer for his name. The latter then returns the question.

39. Kaimesakap is the ancestor of the *yew* Kaimes in Ewer village.

40. Kaimesakap is on his home ground; he is the owner of the land near the Seper. By virtue of this fact he is classified as the elder brother of Nanew and his brothers who are the newcomers.

212: "The men were thirsty and went ashore to look for a freshwater swamp. They found a sago swamp where they came upon two women who were busy making sago: Sipicin and her daughter Yirmak. The men made themselves known and asked for water. Sipicin urged her daughter to hurry up with her work so that they could offer the men some sago. However, she told the men not to drink out of her water hole lest she might not have enough water to finish the sago making. The men then dug a small water hole with their hands and drank. While he was drinking, Ewer deliberately dropped his dagger into the water hole. Then the men returned to their canoe.

41. This could be interpreted as an invitation to have sexual intercourse.

42. The pith of the sago palm is beaten to pulp which is then soaked in water and kneaded by hand to extract the starch. The water is obtained by digging a hole in the swampy soil. For a detailed description of the sago making process, see Voorhoeve 1965:211 sqq, and pp. 366, 367.

43. The dagger (*pisua*) is made of the thigh bone of a cassowary or a person. It is carried in the plaited armband on the left upper arm. A successful headhunter is entitled to carry his dagger with the hollow side turned towards the arm; others carry it with the hollow side turned outside.

44. The dropping of the dagger in the water hole undoubtedly has some meaning, but Zegwaard does not give an explanation. It is possible that this episode has not been told in full.
45. See note 15.

46. Nowadays the Yow is called Bowakap (Little Bow). It is a small river flowing into the sea near the mouth of the Bow.

47. The explanation is added because Warsekomen introduces Uwus whose name he overlooked in the earlier part of the story.

48. This is a kind of plant used for making the charm that makes dogs excel in the pig hunt.

213: "Uwus was very pleased with the good fresh water and with the many sago trees, coconut trees and breadfruit trees growing on the upper course of the Bow. He decided to stay, and at once began to clear the river, cutting and removing the shrubs and trees which obstructed its course. The dirt and cuttings were washed away by the stream and were noticed by the other brothers when they came back from their fishing trip. "Uwus has found the Bow," they said, and paddled up the Bow. But Uwus had moved further upstream and avoided them. Then they settled at the mouth of the Yow. After some time, however, they departed and went northwest along the coast, leaving Uwus behind at the Bow."

49. That is, they went northwest towards the north of the Asewec.

214: During the trip along the coast they spotted a pig, and Yepem tried to kill it with the help of his huge kokopuc dog, but he failed. Ewer and Nanew then tried it and killed the pig.

50. Kokopuc is the name of the dogs the mythical ancestors brought with them from the sky world. It is said that they were of enormous size.

51. Kaye and Minipir, now extinct, had their own origin myth. They claimed to have come from overseas on a raft or vessel made of pandanus leaves (epnem).

215: "KAIMES went ashore by the Yomot river." Zegwaard comments: KAIMES quarrelled with Yepem and moved to the Ba. Later they went to live on the Pek river and still later moved to the Was, a tributary of the Undir (Lorentz) river. The group was almost exterminated by the neighbouring Yamas and Kapi groups and at the beginning of this century was living on the Homac (Cooq d'Armandville) river, where they were contacted by the first Military Exploration (1908). The few remaining people of KAIMES are now living in Ewer village.

52. That is, there were no people living on the Fayo river.

53. The story of Waterpakap is not know to me. Possibly Warsekomen referred to the origin of the Kaye-Minipir group, cv. note 51.

54. The following episode is told earlier in the story, in Zegwaard's version, see 213.

55. This was a sign that there was an abundance of sago trees in the swamps upstream.
56. By doing this, Uwus remained the owner of the river and of the rich sago swamps at its upper course.

57. The Cimsipsimit episode is not told in Zegwaard's version either, unless Cimsipsimit is to be equated with Sipicin.

216: "Ewer and Nanew now returned to the sky world. Suru stayed behind on the Bow as the guardian of the sacred bag containing the head of Buclawuc and Nanew's round stone." This contradicts an earlier comment by Zegwaard, that the yew Ewer has the bag, cf. fn.15.

Other variants

Four more variants of this origin myth were recorded by Zegwaard, in Ewer, Yaun, Warse and Amborep.

In the Ewer version (ZAO:148), Nanew shoots a large python (bindiw). When he cuts it open, he finds a piglet in the stomach. He takes it home where it is named after Nanew's father Baitep, and reared by Nanew's mother. The piglet takes only one day to grow up. Sometime afterwards Nanew's brother Ewer accidentally shoots at the tame pig, which then runs away and descends to the earth below, followed by Nanew and his brothers. The story then runs parallel to Warsekomen's version.

In the Yaun version (ZAO:22) the ancestor-pig leaves the sky world while eating fruit off a liana which hangs down from the sky. Once arrived below, it does not want to return and the brothers now decide to follow it. They go down the Sirec in a canoe and one by one the men are left behind on its banks.

In the Warse version (ZAO:23) the sky-man Bitsimbil shoots a python. The wounded snake flees and descends to earth through the hole of a yen tuber. Bitsimbil follows the snake, kills it, and cuts it open. He returns to the sky with a variety of fruit found on earth which he offers to the men of his yew. Then follows the exodus from the sky towards the earth.

Finally, in the Amborep version (ZAO:22-3) a sky-man, Bitsimbil, sees a snake crawling in front of his house and shoots it. The wounded animal flees; the man follows the blood marks and arrives at an unknown river. There he catches fish and prawns, and collects lots of fruit. With this heavy load he returns to the sky and offers the new delicacies to the other men. They decide to move to the earth. The skin of the snake -- killed by Bitsimbil -- changes into a canoe, its bones into paddles. The first of the men went to stand at the rear. He stood "amber ep," at the snake's tail. He is the ancestor of Amborep.

According to Zegwaard, the snake figures in the esoteric versions of the origin myth; in the exoteric versions it is replaced by a pig.
Comments

I believe that this origin myth contains an echo of a historical event, i.e. the descent from the central ranges of prehistoric tribes and their subsequent migration to the coast. This belief is supported firstly by the geographical distribution of the languages of the Central and South New Guinea Stock (see Map). Their distribution suggests that in the far past, people speaking a language or languages ancestral to those now spoken in most of the southwestern plains descended from the mountains somewhere between the headwaters of the Digul and Strickland rivers. Secondly, it finds support in oral tradition which not only in the Asmat but also in the upper Fly river and Strickland river areas, points to the highlands as the place of origin.

When they arrived in the lowlands, the newcomers must have found them already inhabited by the people whose descendants now are the Boazi, Marind, Yaqay, and Kayagar tribes. These effectively blocked the way to the coast in the eastern part of the plains. In the western plains, perhaps because they were less densely populated, the migrants could push towards the coast. They probably followed the Sirec river, whose source is very close to the sources of the Digul river, and spread from the Sirec in the northwesterly direction until they had occupied all the lowlands up to Etna Bay. After they had reached the coast and mastered the art of travel over sea, a group split off and settled in the south of the Bomberai peninsula. Another group travelled southeast, padding along the coast till they reached the southern shores of the Kolopom island. From the mouth of the Sirec, the migrants also spread some distance southeast along the coast, settling the area now known as the Casuarina Coast.

It is not unlikely that the migrants came into contact with speakers of Austronesian languages when they reached the southwest coast. Papuan loan words in the Austronesian languages of the Aru islands, and the presence of old Austronesian loan words in the languages of southwest Irian Jaya, show that in prehistoric times interethnic contacts existed between the two regions (Collins 1982:128-9). Such contacts could perhaps account for the oral tradition of the Kaye-Minipir group (cf. fn.15) which tells of their ancestors' arrival from overseas in a 'pandanus canoe' -- possibly a canoe with a sail made of pandanus leaves.

Myth II: The Story of Pimbiriw

Preliminary remarks

The myth was told to me by Oscowak, a middle-aged man of the yew Bait in Suru village. In contrast to Warsekomen, Oscowak was a small man of no special prominence. He did not have any of the stern authority of Warsekomen, but was a friendly and likeable fellow who liked to drop in for a chat and, once I knew I was interested in folk tales, voluntarily told me quite a few of them. He was an accomplished storyteller and the printed text does scant justice to the quality of his narratorship, his expert use of voice modulation and mimicry to convey the atmosphere of a story, and his fine singing of the songs in them which he accompanied by drumming his fingers on the floor. When I revisited the Asmat in 1970 Oscowak had died.
The story of Fimbiriw had earlier been recorded by Zegwaard who noted different variants told by people of As (ZA0:63-4), Yufere (ZA0:64), Atat (ZA0:162) and Suru (ZA0:69-72). His Suru version, probably told by Warsekomen, is the most detailed but lacks the long introductory part of Oscowak's story in which Fimbiriw woos first Tezewawuc and then Bis. In the footnotes to Oscowak's story I have indicated where and how it differs from the Suru version noted by Zegwaard. The variants will be given after the main text, and I conclude with a discussion of the current interpretation of the Fimbiriw myth.

The text

The ancestors of Serew and Epm1 were holding a feast, the imbu feast. But Fimbiriw did not take part in it. They held the feast without him. He would go up to Sirec by himself, paddling a long way up the river to visit Tewerawuc.

"Hey, what do you want?" she would ask him.
"Don't say 'What do you want?,' I'm just dropping in here."
"Don't say that; speak up!"
"Well then, I want to stay here on the river with you." This is how he spoke every time he arrived at her place. Over and over again it went this way.

"Bah!" he said at last, "For a long time I have been going up the river to visit you, but all for nothing!"
He picked up a triton shell lying there and took it with him down the river, but he did not take it up to his house. He put it downstream from the village in a tree fern, high up in a tree. He arrived in the village without it.

The next day the people started to beat the drums for the imbu feast. Fimbiriw and his young papis partner were dancing together, back to back.
"Enough, my friend, I've been dancing all night; I want to leave again this afternoon," he said.
"Ah, stay here! You shouldn't go away all the time," his friend told him, but it was no use.
"I want to go my own way," he said and quickly he paddled up the river.
At night Pupuripic4 was sitting in the top of an ironwood tree blowing his bamboo horn.
"Hey, where are you blowing from?" Fimbiriw said, and listening intently he paddled in the upstream direction. All night long Pupuripic was blowing his horn.
"Ah, you are Pupuripic on the Ser river; you are trying to call Bis with your horn, that's why you are blowing," he said.

Every day from the afternoon on Pupuripic was busy blowing the horn. Bis, too, made her way to where the horn was sounding. When she had arrived, he came down and sat with her in his house. She came to him, following the sound of his horn.

When Fimbiriw arrived in the night, Pupuripic said "What do you want?"
"Oh, I'm Fimbiriw," he said.
"I am Pupuripic; I've been blowing the horn to call my wife. She is in the house," he said.

She cast amorous glances at him [Fimbiriw]. Every day in the afternoon her husband went up the ironwood tree and, astride the fork of a branch, blew his horn for his wives elsewhere.

Fimbiriw in his turn made eyes at Bis, but he went home without her. He went back without her, and in the morning he arrived at his village. Throughout the day they beat the drums. Fimbiriw and his young friend danced all day long from before dawn.

"Every time that man comes back he immediately begins to dance! What could be the reason?" some people said. "Wait, our son should reveal of his own accord what it is there on the river that attracts him," they said.

The triton shell, brilliant as the whitecaps of the sea, was still there at the downstream side.

He stayed the next day, and the day after, and another day, and another. At last, in the evening, he went up the river again, following the incoming tide. Pupuripic had been blowing his horn from the middle of the day, and Fimbiriw paddled in that direction, listening to the sound of the horn. Bis was in the house by herself. The other wives had all gone to the sago swamp to make sago. Slowly he walked to the house and poked through the wall. The girl cautiously went outside.

"Is that you?"
"Yes, the time has come," he said.
He took her with him and stealthily led her to the canoe. He made her sit down in it and then, as fast as he could, he paddled down the river.
"m, 'm, 'ml He took her down the river in his canoe.
"A girl like you shouldn't live so far up the river, it's a shame," he said while he took her down the river, keeping close to the river bank.

On and on he paddled, and at night he landed near his house, making some noise when going up to it.

"What do you want?" [his mother asked him].
"Mother, tonight I've fetched your wretched daughter-in-law; she is not beautiful, she is ugly! It was to get a wife that I went off so often."

"Tut! You're always doing things you should not do!" she said.
"Come, your friends and your fathers are holding a feast, you should join in too!"

Bis was not at all like a woman! Everything about her was beautiful and soft. But all he did was to take the beautiful girl to the house and make her sit down. Then he went away to dance with the other people, who were singing and drumming. He danced and danced all night until dawn.

Then he called out: "Serew, Epe! I went away so often to get myself a wife. Now Bis is there in the house!"

The people of Serew crowded together [to see her]. "Fine, let her dance too, let her dance the imbu dances," they said.

She wasn't Bis anymore, so delicate was she!
"Well, that's it; you have been travelling up and down the river all the time, now you should stay here," they said to Fimbiriw.

"All right, I've only been away so often to get a wife," he said, and after that he stayed on his home ground.
When the sun came up Pupuripic called: "Bis, are you there? Bis, Bis!" but in vain. He looked inside the house. "Alas, she's gone!" he cried.

That morning he went down to the river, wailing:

aya Bis ndewayipa: 13  Ah, Bis, alas  
Bisawaya faimaci: Beautiful Bis  
ndewayipa waïsaru ndewayipa:  Alas! so beautiful, woe!  
Bis mainawa: yipi  Bis who came here  
yaka ndewayipa: fin ndewayipa:  Oh, her belly, oh her hair  
fina ndewayipa: yo:  Alas! her hair...  

He sang this lament for her. And all his papis wives threw themselves into the river. 15

Fimbiriw, the man who had taken her away and carried her, just stayed there on the Sirec, at the mouth of the Aw river.

"This is what I always wanted to do," he said.

The imbu feast was nearly finished now. All night long they danced, and in the morning they began to drum and sing. From the early morning they sang about the Bow river:

sayita, sayita: On the way, on the way!  
Pewic epemburipa: To the upper course of the Pewic  
Pewic epemburip i yownama: the upper course of the Pewic, at daybreak  
sayita, sayita On the way, on the way! 16

(This is the pirpir song of the imbu feast. 17) They sang it from early morning on. All the time food was brought into the ceremonial house. Again and again they quickened the beat of the drums and yelled, "m! Plenty of large parcels of sago grubs were brought into the yew; plenty of small parcels were brought in -- there were big heaps of them. "That's enough, now we must go and fetch nipa fronds," they said. In the afternoon they cut many big nipa fronds and they tied the sides together. When the red clouds of dawn appeared they went to fetch sago grubs. They took bags of pandanus leaves and filled them to the brim with grubs.

The next morning they put on their decorations; they dressed up Bis till she was very beautiful.

"Ah, it's because you wanted to do this that you were always going off in search of a wife," one said.

All the canoes were taken to the waterfront of the yew. The women from upstream stood to the upstream side of the yew; those from downstream to the downstream side of it. 18 The grown-up men were in the large space in the middle. Then they boarded the canoes and began beating the drums.

Fimbiriw, however, had this plan in mind. He didn't give a thought to his wife, but departed alone in a small canoe. The others drifted down the river, drumming and dancing all the while. There below stood Fimbiriw's young friend Biwirpic on the river bank.

"Friend, let me go with you," Biwirpic said.
"Come," Fimbiriw answered.
"You stand at the prow, I'll stand at the stern," Biwirpic said and he went to the tail end.
"Come on, let's both paddle quickly down the river, ahead of the others," Fimbiriw said.

At the spot where the triton shell was he said, "Set the canoe ashore."

When that was done he went up the tree and got the triton shell. Then he fastened it round his waist.

"Hah! That's what he always aspired to do! Look there, it's as if he is holding a huge whitecap!" the people said to each other.

The man and his young friend now paddled down the river in their own small canoe, dancing. They paddled until they were out of the side-river and then sat down in the watch-house. The watch-house was crowded with men, many in the upper half, many in the lower half, and so they stayed there.

The women's canoes were going crab hunting. They spread out and crossed the Sirec river to our side. The women of Epem all at the same time crossed the river to the island on this side. There were lots of canoes with women scattered upstream and downstream.

Fimbiriw's sweetheart was Tewerawuc. In the morning she went aboard a big canoe together with her younger sisters — they all were his sweethearts.

He took off his triton shell when he saw that the women were crossing the river. When he had taken it off he gave it to his father.

"Keep an eye on that shell," he said, and then the two friends went around the corner on the upstream side, following the bank of the Sirec as if they were looking for ba fish.

For some time they kept this up, and then they quickly paddled across. They went across upstream from the island. The current carried them further and further down and put them ashore on the seaward side of the island. From there they went upstream as if catching ba fish, meanwhile looking at the canoes the women had left behind after crossing the river. When they had reached the very last canoe they said, "Here it is, here is the canoe of Tewerawuc."

When the two men had reached the canoe at the upper end, they didn't consult each other.

"Which girl would you like? Let's talk that over," he suggested, but no, the other wouldn't listen.

Tewerawuc was by herself in the middle, busy with her work.

"Let's put her between us, and when you have taken her first, then I'll have her," Fimbiriw said.

They also took the other girls; not far from there he made love to one after another, and his friend also took one girl after another... But now Fimbiriw got busy on Tewerawuc first.

Just as he was with her, Biwirpic saw him.

"Ah, this morning you made it appear as if we had agreed on this! Do
you think I'll take you with me in the canoe now?" he said and he went back without him.

Quickly Biwirpic went down to the canoe, and hastily he paddled away. The other went on and on making love...finally he let her go. Then quickly he went to the river to get into the canoe -- but it was gone! Left without a canoe, Fimbiriw stood there at the waterside.

"Hey, friend, friend, come to me, here I am! Friend, it's me. Friend, take me too!" he called, but in vain.

The other crossed the river without listening to him and left him behind. Without success Fimbiriw tried to make him come back to him. He waited and waited. Everybody else had already gone home from their fishing trips. After they reached home it suddenly become quite choppy on the river. 27
"Tewerawuc," he said to the girl, "My friend left me without a canoe, what shall I do? Could I perhaps lie down in your canoe?"

"Oh no!" she said, "Wait here!"

She went away and cut fronds off a big nipa palm standing there. When she had split them lengthwise, she chopped off another one and another one. Then she plaited a big sheet out of two frond-halves and another and another. She finished plaiting the frond-halves.

"I'm not ready yet," she said, and she went away looking for pesnim creepers which she cut off in order to use them as binding material. She collected a lot of pesnim.

"Come, lie down here," she said, and on the ground she laid some of the big sheets of nipa leaf.

He then lay down on these leaves and she put other sheets on top of him to cover him. Then she started to tie him up; from his head down to his feet she tied him all up.

When she had tied him up completely she called out, "Girls of my canoe, would you mind if I put a large bundle of ants' nests in the canoe?"

"Don't say 'Would you mind the ants' nests!' Put it in the canoe," they said.

The waves were already high as houses! They put him down by the stern of the canoe with his head at the rear and his feet touching the back of the skirt of the hindmost girl. Then they set out to cross the river with him.

As they rounded the island, she urged them on: "House-mates, pull hard!"

"You should have put the ants' nest in our midst," they told her.

"No, I have put the ants' nests in a long row; it is not possible to put them in the middle, there are too many girls in the canoe," she said.

They pushed on...when they were in the middle of the river a high wave rolled towards them, but it only pushed them off course.

"Oh bother!" she said.

After that, a huge breaker hit them! The first wave didn't do any harm, but the second, the breaker, was very high. It hit them and swept the bundle at the stern away into the water. It only swept him out [without doing further damage] and he sank.

"Hey Tewerawuc, what was that you had put at the back of the canoe? What was it?"

But the girl didn't answer. She just sat there, lost in thought.

"Come on, the thing has already disappeared into the water, now what did you have with you?" they urged.

"Younger sisters, papis' friends: you'll certainly be angry with me in a moment! *Rimbiriw,* whom you perhaps made love to, has drowned! The two of them made love to us, only I was left, and then he took me, but the other man saw us accidentally and he went away in the canoe leaving him behind."

"Ah, so that's what you did! You should have put him in the middle! We could have crossed the river with him hidden on the bottom of the canoe. Then, at the last bend, we could have set him free!" they reproached her.

"Oh, you shouldn't have caused his undoing by doing like that! Tewerawuc, it's terrible! Oh Tewerawuc, you shouldn't have done this! Our poor man, our poor boy!"
Under water the man tried and tried to free himself, but no, she had tied him up too well, and he sank to the bottom, a trail of air bubbles escaping from him.

That evening there was wailing in his house. "Tewerawuc put Pimbiriw at the stern of the canoe and the water has carried him off; he has drowned!" they shouted around. And there was much wailing.

The man now was swept from the middle of the Sirec, where he slid into the water, towards Embariw. Further and further he was carried towards the Owop... closer and closer to the Owop, and there at last the large bundle was washed ashore.

At home his people were wailing, and they shaved their heads.

There he lay on the sand bar in the early morning, looking like a huge log. And the birds which used to come there in the morning, many set, warat and bisinset, perched on him and let their droppings fall on him.

Yicemenawuc and her sister (they lived in the forest on the Owop) were coming down to the sea in their canoe.

"You there, on whom the birds are perching, are you a big log? Were you washed ashore last night?" they asked while paddling seawards.

Slowly they paddled seawards, coming nearer and nearer. The birds who were there in great numbers on the landward side and the seaward side of the sand bar flew up with great noise.

"Hey, Yicemen," said the younger woman, "look over there, who would that beautiful man be? Look, they have tied him up, they wanted to kill him!"

"Oh, we have no husband: Come, let's undo the bindings. He'll have to stay here," Yicemenawuc said.

One after another they removed all the bindings with which he was tied. Shining white, like the pith of the ambuw reeds was he! His body was covered with slime and the birds had been defecating on him.

"Alas!" One of the women went to his feet, the other to the other end of his body, to his head. "Who are you, beautiful man? Poor fellow, how we'd love to revive you," they said while they were walking around him.

Then reluctantly they went back to the forest.

"Come," Yicemen said to the younger woman, "Let's both go home."

In a hurry they went to their house and entered. The house was a bit inland.

"Listen," said Yicemen to their brother Owosimbit, "Early in the morning you should go to that sand bar! There is a man...people must have been jealous of him! The birds are perching on him. Look," she added, "Many set, yuwut, bisinset and warat are sitting there. The man was tied up in nipa leaves and thrown into the water. My sister and I removed the wrappings. He's still there."

"Oho!" he said.

Then the big man stood up and left. With his two sisters he went to the sea. The birds flew up with a great noise.

"Oh dear!" he exclaimed, "Who are you, beautiful man? Poor fellow!"
Wait, if there is some magic they can use on you, you'll come back to
life!"

"What shall we do with this beautiful man? Where shall we get a charm
from, from whom?" the two sisters said.

They went back to the forest with their brother, and the birds then
settled on him again, one after another, many bisinset and warat; they
perched all over him from his feet to the top of his head.

They reached their house in the forest and there they stayed again for
some time.

"Ah," the two girls said, "We've got no husband, we are lone! Come,
let's bring this beautiful man back to life!"

Thereupon they went back to the beach, walking one behind the other.
On the beach they made the masses of birds and herons fly up with a great
noise.

Then they said, "But what shall we do now? He's such a handsome man.
Let's bring him back to life, this beautiful fellow!"

"Birds, come! Come here, all of you." Owopsimbit now called out to
them and he beckoned them with his hands.

One after another they settled again: the herons, the set, irit,
nenvar, bisinset, ewawer, warat, the borwot and tamnam ducks, in great
numbers.

"Now what about you? Do you have courage, or are your wings heavy?
Is our brother the asi bird present or not?" he asked them.

"Asi is over there in the forest," they said.

"Aha! Then call him!"

They flew to the forest and brought asi. He settled on top of the
man.

"Ah, he is such a extraordinarily beautiful man! What shall we do?
Let's keep him with us," the birds said.

"What about you birds? Are your wings heavy?" Owopsimbit said, "Go
and call Wor, my brother.".

"Ah, we are weak, we all fly round and about, but we really don't go
long distances!"

"Set, you!"

"Oh, my wings are muddy, I'm heavy with mud!"

"Heron, you!"

"Oh no! I have a long beak and I fly about with heavy wings!"

"Duck, you then!"

"Oh no, am I a long distance flier? I always circle around here."

"Alas, will we have to abandon this beautiful man? What shall we do?
He's such a fine man," Owopsimbit said.

Then asi stretched himself a few times and fft! in a flash he was
gone.

Eagle's house was high up in a tree at the mouth of the Minar river. Up
there, on the verandah, asi alighted, quick as lightning. The man came
cut of his house.

"Who is that, suddenly sitting on the verandah?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm asi."

"It's not often that you call on me like this. What's the matter with
you?"
"Well, come outside to hear what the matter is," said asi. "There's a man on the sand bar by the Owow. Perhaps because of a quarrel about a woman they tied him up and threw him in the water, wrapped in nipa leaves. My sisters Yicemen and Waku went to the beach this morning and found him. They have already removed the nipa leaves. He's shining like the sun and all the birds sit on him. Without success they are dropping their excretion on him." He's still there. They [my two sisters] repeatedly asked them to go to you but they didn't want to. So now I've come here to call you." Heavens! What must be the matter with him?" said Wor. "Wait, stay here," and he took a large carrying bag from above and then he flew down to the ground with it.

He filled it to the brim with charred roots. "All right, now go quickly back," he said, and in a flash the little bird flew away.

They were crowding around the man when asi arrived and settled on him. "How did things go? Tell us about it! We want to have this beautiful man with us," they said.

"Brother was feeling heavy last night..." Heavily? What kind of heaviness? The one which causes him to break the branches of the trees, for sure!" they retorted.

Then Wor came into view over the land point. "Look, you are crying now, but look, he is coming around the point," the birds said and they all danced for joy. "Wait, don't rejoice yet! He's been in the water so long that he is grown over with sea weed. We shouldn't rejoice yet," they said.

The huge bird, already descending from above, landed. "Dear brother, we have been calling for you!"

"Oh, what's this? He has been in the water for a long time; he's overgrown with weeds. What do you want me to do?" Wor said.

"Dearest brother, quick, bring him back to life! We are without husbands, he'll give life to many people," they said.

"Out of the way, you!" he ordered.

They all flew up. Screaming "kè, kè, kè" they circled around and then they settled again, crowding around him. He took the bag. He took it off his back and put it on the ground. A charred root...[he took].

"No, not this one," he said, and he took out another root and he touched Fimbiriw with it, everywhere.

But the man didn't move. He touched him quickly here, and there, and there but no, he didn't move.

"Not yet," he said and he touched both knees, but Fimbiriw didn't move.

He touched him here and there, but he did not move! Wor rested a while, tired. "Heavens, I'm sweating already! What the devil do you want! It's no use trying to revive a man in this state. He's already been in the water too long!" he complained.

"But what can be done then? He is such a beautiful man! We want him alive for ourselves!"

"Very well," said Wor.
He touched him there — he didn't stand up; he touched him there — he didn't stand up... Another root he pulled out of the bag. He pulled it out and pressed and pressed and pressed it on Fimbiriw to warm him up. Oof! All the time he did nothing but apply heat to him. On the ankles he pressed, making them hotter and hotter. The birds milled around him, dancing the buttock-dance. "It's not enough!" they said. Quickly he pressed again; oof! hotter and hotter... he took it off. Oof! he pressed it on the temple; oof! he pressed it in the back of the neck! As he did this, the man's two legs began to quiver!

All the birds were busily dancing the buttock-dance; all the set, all the herons, were wiggling their posteriors.
"Now we're happy, hurry!" they cried, dancing the buttock-dance.
"Hah, my dear girls! You came to me wondering if I had some medicine! Wor said. "Wait, out of the way, all of you," he ordered.
Oof! he pressed him in another spot: "Aah, ah!" the man called out and sat up.
"Ah!" they all cried out when he did that and they wiggled their behinds, the set, the herons, the irit, the borwot-ducks.
"It hasn't been enough yet," Wor said, and with the two roots, oof! he touched him again.
"Ha, ha, ha who are you, who are you?"
The crowd drew away from him, the herons, the set. They flapped their wings but stayed on the ground.

"Who are you? Stand up! How did you come to be lying here last night?" Wor asked him.
"Ah, ouch, oy!" the man cried out.
"Stop it, stand up! Why were you lying in such a state, stand up!" Wor said.
"Ohh! Who are you, who are you?" he said.
"Don't ask 'Who are you'? I am Wor! Those who have died I bring back to life again. Now, why were you lying here last night?" he said.
"Oow! Why was I here last night..." the man said.
"It's no good," Wor said, and all the birds went away to collect eggs. They went to collect eggs of the ewcakar and wurtiw lizards, and the eggs of the pus and everew birds. They took them out of the nests... 'm! "m!"

"It's not enough," they said, so they got a big ants' nest.
"Ayayahay, ouch, ow!" he cried and stood up. "Hey, what happened to me, what's the matter with me?" he said.
"What have you been up to? Come, stand up! What have you been up to?" Wor said.
Then they broke the eggs of the birds, of the everew, pus, and the manakam, and the eggs of the wurtiw and the ewcakar lizards, and they rubbed his body with the contents.

"What shall we do with our brother?" they said.
"Take him to the waterfront and bathe him," Wor said.
At the waterfront they washed all the dirt off his body, and there he stood, tall and shining!
"Hurrah, I'm alive! Who are you?" he said.
"Yicemenawuc went to the beach and found you. I am Owopsimbit, Owop. Yicemenawuc found you, she is my sister," he said.

"On, indeed," said Fimbiriw.

"Well, my dear friend, come, let's go home," said Owop.

They took him to Owopsimbit's house. There they gave him plenty of sago to eat and water to drink. Owopsimbit's children and grandchildren flocked together; the wide space in front of the house was packed with them. They kept crowding round him.

"Wait, stay near, I want to sleep first," he said and went to sleep.

The bird-people straight away all lay down contentedly. While they were lying down they wiggled their behinds as in the buttock-dance, every one of them.

"He's ours, our own man," they were saying while wiggling their behinds.

He slept and slept, and when the sun had sunk that far he said, "All right, I want to go on my way, come!"

On the spot where they had brought him back to life they thronged around him in a great crowd.

"What plans shall I make? What do you have in mind for me?"

"Ah, you are asking a good question! Go to the west, learn the language of Embar," they said.

The whole afternoon he was thinking of what he would do, and the bird-people with him yelled and cheered him all the time.

"Hah, Embariw nuru atimara uwu nuru yipiwa, hah, ayah, ooh, huh!" they shouted at him.

In the evening he made up his mind. "Tomorrow morning you must all come here, but now everyone has to go home and sleep," he said.

When the crowd had returned to their homes they were still calling out, "You are our brother, fine, we'll sleep well! We've been without husbands for so long, hurry, now he's ours!"

All night they stayed at home, and when the sun began to shine he said, "Come, I want to go on my way."

There they came, flocking together...."What might our husband want to do? We'll see," they said.


"Just as you say!" And they all went on their way.

When they had gone, the air rang with the noise of tree-felling. They cut and cut, and they piled the logs up on one spot, in a big heap.

"There's not enough yet," he said, and they began to work again in the afternoon.

He split the logs on the spot, put them down and began to carve them. In each log he carved out two legs, working all morning and afternoon.

"Enough, the sun is setting already. Stop now, more tomorrow," he said.

He slept all night, and the following day he was busy again from the early morning. He made the legs separate from each other, like this.

All day long from the early morning he was working at it. He gave them a pierced nose, and carved the necks, working till he had finished them all.
When he had finished he said, "Go and call Wor!"

"Fft! In a flash asĩ was gone...

"Who's that?" Wor said.

"I'm asĩ."

"What do you want?"

"Come, my brother has made something. If you have got any yindi leaves, he says, bring them — in a hurry, he says!"

"All right," said Wor.

The great bird went on his way carrying a large bag full of yindi leaves. At once he set out with it and he landed right on the spot where they all were collected.

"There is brother, there he is!" they said.

Fimbiriw planted the carved figures in the ground. One after another he put them upright on their feet, arranging them in a long row.

When he had set them up in this way, the logs of yuam and bawir wood, he said, "Look, Wor, I made them look exactly like people. What shall we do now? Shall we dance the buttock-dance?"

Quickly he rubbed the top of the drum with yindi leaves and began to drum. While he was drumming they began to dance, the bawir logs, the yuam logs, they all began to make dancing movements. How they danced! All afternoon they danced, till the sun went down, and while they danced they grew bigger. The figures of yuam and bawir wood all grew to life-size.

"Good, I've made them for you people here," said Fimbiriw. "You are alive now," he said to the figures.

The next day — the day following the one on which he gave them life at the Owop river — he ordered: "Cross the river and go ashore at the Minar river!"

That day he arrived at the mouth of the Minar. "Chop down trees! There on the Owop the people are already dancing! Now it's your turn, hurry!" he old them.

They felled the yuam trees which grew near the mouth of the Minar, one, and another, and another... They chopped the trees up into logs.

While they were still cutting the logs, he at once started shaping the legs and the arms, one by one, till they were finished.

"Bring the drum," he said.

When he had said that they quickly brought the drum to the mouth of the Minar and at once he began to drum. When he performed the drumming ritual the figures all began to make dancing movements; they all danced while he was drumming. They were shaking their heads. He made them come to life.

"No, that's not enough," said Fimbiriw, and the next morning he went to the other side of the Minar. "I've made them for [the women on] two rivers. Now it's your turn," he said. "Cut only yuam and bawir logs," he ordered.

Many trees they felled. They cut them up and they took the yuam and bawir logs to the village and piled them up there. The day after they had collected the logs he began to work. From the early morning he was busy, and he finished them all. The next day he put them in a row, from over there to here; he put them all in one row. When he had rubbed the top of the drum with yindi leaves, he began to play: kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ, kɔ... and they all began to grow. While he was drumming the man walked up and down,
from the upstream end of the row to the downstream end, and back, and he made them all grow up.

The day after he did this, Fimbiriw went to the Atmot where he went ashore. He went to stay on the Atmot. There, on the bank on the far side where there is a dense forest of casuarina trees, he went ashore amongst the trees.

"All right, you too, go out all together to fetch yuam and bawir wood," he ordered.

And everyone chopped yuam and bawir trees into short pieces and laid them down for him, in a heap.

When they had heaped them up for him, in the village, he began to shape them with his axe. When every log had been carved he put them in a row, in the evening.

"That's enough, let's go to sleep," he said. And they all went to sleep.

That night they all slept and the next day when the sun had risen he quickly rubbed the top of the drum with yindi leaves and began to drum. At once he began to walk back and forth inside between the upstream end and the downstream end, beating his drum. There they began to dance! Fimbiriw made them all come to life.

"I'm not satisfied yet," he said, and he went further and went ashore at the mouths of the Bakapom, the Omerpic and the Ana rivers. When he had done the same there he went to the Agewe, and afterwards, still not satisfied, he went to the Awucuwuc. There he stayed for some time, and when he went from there he moved on to the Puwsimbit. He did it on the Puwsimbit, and then he went to the Ombawit. (The Ombawit is the Kaperapuka river). All the way up he created the first men.

In Embariw there are the yuam-wood people, the yuam-log, the biwir- and the yowop-log people. Fimbiriw created the first men there. At last he settled on the Kokonaw river. All the way up he made ceremonial houses and carved figures. In Kokonaw, on the spot where he lived, stands a coconut tree, on the place where his house was. The open place is still there. That tall coconut stands in front of the site of his house.

All the time he carved figures — some he turned with their faces to the west, others with their faces to our side — some facing Embariw, others facing Safan. His house stood in the middle. He built houses and yew there on the Kokonaw. It was he who created the people of Embariw and he also who gave those people their names.

Now, two spirit women got hold of the iron axes and they scattered them in front of his house. And there was a thievish dog.

During the day its owner had asked it all the time, "Dog, please, fetch those things! Take them away in your mouth!" Thus they spoke, about the axes.

That night the dog came and one after another it took the axes and carried them to the house of its master and mistress, where it put them down in front of the house. Its owners then took the axes and brought them
into the house. The next day two Chinese traders arrived with a ship full of cargo.

When they had arrived with their ship full of cargo, Fimbiriw said, "Ah, the goods [axes] are gone! A dog stole them last night. All right, take your stuff back across the sea."

So they returned to the boat with the goods, the goods of the two spirit women, the goods [axes] they scattered about. They took them all to the ship and left.

"Well, where shall I settle now? Perhaps where the [trade] goods are," Fimbiriw said.

He stayed in Kokonaw for some time, but then he suddenly departed and went away to the goods. He's still there, Fimbiriw, where the goods are.

Endnotes

1. Serew (Sarew) and Ephem are two yew who for a long time shared one location with Amborep (ZOA:1). Later they formed the village of Serew which was situated on the Aw river, a southern tributary of the Sirec. In 1949 Serew moved to the mouth of the Digul river where it still was in 1970.

2. The imbu feast centered round the esakap relationship. This was a life-long relationship between an older and a younger man. The bond was emotionally very strong and involved the ritual use of each other's wife. This was called papis. It probably also involved a homosexual relationship as well but this is now vehemently denied in the face of the official attitude towards such matters. During the imbu feast the esakap partners ceremonially exchanged quantities of food, fish being exchanged for sago and other products of the forest.

3. The large triton shell is worn as a decoration by both men and women, fastened to a string around the waist. According to Zegwaard (ZAO) the triton shell was an object of special veneration. It was used in warfare and blown as a horn to promote the growth of plants. In a myth from the Mimika area, a dead iguana is brought to life by blowing on a triton shell. In an Asmat myth recorded by Bishop Sowada (ASB 1:92), the shell gives its bearer the power to be successful in fishing and hunting. Its role in this story remains unclear.

4. At this point the Fimbiriw myth interconnects with the story of Bis and the hornblower Pupuripic, also one of the stories Oscowak told me. In this story, the girl Bis is married to Dariw, who keeps her imprisoned inside a large bag. One day, when Dariw has gone on a headhunting raid, other women in the house let her out and she escapes up the Sirec river to the hornblower Pupuripic (also known as Piparipec and Pamapipec) whom she marries. Pupuripic then makes the first Bis pole. I shall return to this connection in my comments to the main text.

5. In Zegwaard's version of the Bis story (ZAO:66) Pamapipec has many wives who live in the tops of yewer trees. They are all called tewer-awuc 'tewer women'. Tewer is the bright-red flower of the d'Albertiz creeper which can cover whole trees with its vines.
5. The difference between high and low tide can be as much as six meters in the Asmat area. The incoming tide penetrates as far as 80 kilometers inland and when the Asmat have to travel upstream they prefer to use the reversed current caused by the rising tide.

7. Poking through the thatched wall of a house with a stick or the like is done to make one’s presence known if one does not want to call out for fear of being detected.

8. The interjection "m" (a glottal stop followed by an m) indicates a sudden strenuous effort, a sudden start, or the carrying of a heavy load. Here it indicates the powerful strokes of Pimbiriw’s paddling.

9. A standard practice if one wants to remain hidden from hostile strangers when travelling—When on safe waters, one paddles in the open and even makes one’s presence known by throwing water up in the air with the blade of the paddle.

10. He does this to let his parents know that a friend is approaching the house. An enemy would sneak up to it.

11. At least in myths, modesty requires that one says exactly the opposite of what one means, in a situation like this.

12. To express the idea that someone is exceptionally beautiful one uses expressions like: "She was no woman! He was no man!" About Bis one could also say: "She wasn't Bis anymore!"

13. The colon indicates that the last vowel is drawn out.

14. The same lament is sung by Dariw, the deserted husband of Bis, in the Bis story which Oscowak told me.

15. papis wives: the wives of one’s esakap (see fn.2) with whom one, on special occasions, spends the night. Throwing oneself in the river and rolling in the mud are ways of expressing one’s grief.

16. The song is about going on a headhunting raid to the upper course of the Pewic, a tributary of the Bow, where according to the Suru tradition the imbü feast originated. The attack usually took place just before dawn, taking the enemy by surprise in his deepest sleep.

17. The pirpir song is very long. One of the strophes is "When you eat human meat, throw away the bones." In the following strophes, names of various animals are substituted for "human".

18. Every time a gift of food has been received in the yew, the drummers, to show their gratitude, beat the drums in the following way: They hold the drums up in the air, chest-level, and start beating slowly. Then they quicken the beat while lowering the drums, top end first, as if they are pouring something out of them. When the drums nearly touch their legs (the drummers sit cross-legged) they cease the beat abruptly and give forth two short yells.

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19. The side leaves of a frond are plaited and their ends tied together, thus forming a kind of basket. At the end of the imbu feast the men make two of these large nipa-leaf containers and fill them with sago grubs. The containers are given the name of a killed person; the name-giving is called serwen. The grubs are ceremonially eaten by the men. The making of the containers and the eating of the sago grubs are activities from which women and children are excluded.

20. The women do not board the canoes, as the men are going to a spot outside the village for the ceremonial eating of the sago grubs. The women stand on the river bank watching the men depart, meanwhile making dancing movements. Side by side, the canoes flow down the river while the men drum and dance in them.

21. This watch-house was built at the mouth of the Aw river, overlooking the Sirec. It served as a shelter for the men who had to guard the women fishing on the river. Many other coastal villages had such watch-houses near their fishing waters.

22. "our side", i.e. the side nearest to Suru. In this context the northern bank of the Sirec river.

23. See the sketch map.

24. Sweetheart: the Asmat term is batamcowuc, meaning a girl with whom one has a love affair before or after one is married. She can be the future bride.

25. That is, the corner at the east side of the mouth of the Aw river, see the map.

26. The girls are spread out in a long line, looking for crabs and edible mud fish. Tewerawuc is busy in the middle. Fimbiriw starts from one end, having intercourse with each girl in turn; Biwirpic starts from the other end. They meet at the centre; the deal was that Biwirpic would take Tewerawuc first, but Fimbiriw breaks the agreement.

27. Opposite the Aw river the Sirec is more than two kilometers wide. When in the afternoon the sea breeze springs up, the river can become dangerously choppy, especially when the tide is low (as it is in this story, otherwise they wouldn't be catching mud fish) and the current in the Sirec is quite strong.

28. The frond is split lengthwise and the side-leaves of the two halves are intertwined to form a kind of sheet.
29. Nests of the edible white ant (damin).

30. On the seaward side, entering the Sirec from the Yec river; see the map.

31. The Asmat term used here is papis cem i.e. the wives of the papis friend of one's husband. In this context it possibly refers to the sweethearts of Biwirpic, Fimbiriw's esakap.

32. That is, Fimbiriw and Biwirpic.

33. That is, the last bend in the Aw river before reaching the village, just out of sight of the village.

34. Embiriw is the coastal area northwest of the Asmat, i.e. the Mimika area.

35. The Owop River (named the Kasteel river by the Dutch) forms the northwestern border of the Asmat territory. The river has at its mouth two sand bars -- on each side of the river one -- which stretch out far into the sea. It is on one of these that Fimbiriw's body is washed ashore.

36. In Zegwaard's version (ZAO:69-72) the birds drop their excreta on the body in an attempt to revive the man. Oskowak does not mention this explicitly here, but later in the story there is a hint that he assumed this to be the case.

37. Yicemenawuc and her sister Yicemenawucakap (Yicemen jr.), who later in the story is called Wakuawuc, are bird-women. They are water-birds. From this myth and other myths it appears that all water-birds such as the heron (yuwut), ducks (borwot, tannam), and wading birds (set, bisinset, warat) are classified as female. They have no husbands and are craving for sexual intercourse. Forest-dwelling birds such as the large white tailed eagle (wor, or war), and the small black asi are male.

38. When making an observation to themselves about something, the Asmat do not refer to it in the 3rd person, but address it.

39. This is a standard comparison. Very light-skinned people are often compared to the white pith of the ambuw reed, a large kind of reed which grows on the surface of stagnant fresh water. The intertwined roots form a floating layer which can cover large stretches of water. The white pith of the stem is eaten.

40. Owopsimbit is the mythical owner of the Owop River.

41. The asi is a small black bird capable of flying very fast. In Asmat mythology it often acts as a messenger.

42. The large sea-eagle, Wor, is a sacred bird which has the power to give life to the dead.

43. The Minar flows into the sea approximately 15 kilometers northwest of the Owop.
44. See note 36.
45. Household items such as bags, sago pounders and digging sticks are stored on platforms under the roof in the loft. It is from there that Wor takes the bag.
46. The charm Wor is going to use is called yak. It consists of the roots of a certain tree which are charred over a fire and then applied. The name of the tree which can be used to make yak is revealed in a dream.
47. As in teasing the bird-women. In Asmat, dam vitur can mean "having a heavy body" as well as "feeling unwell" (here rendered by "he was feeling heavy").
48. Not in the sense that he will give them many children, but that he will create husbands for them.
49. While saying this, Oscowak pointed at various parts of his own body to illustrate where Wor was touching Fimbiriw.
50. In Zegwaard's version the roots are held in the fire before being pressed on the dead man's body. There is no evidence for this in Oscowak's version. Obviously the roots have been treated beforehand and carry their power (their 'heat') with them.
51. The buttock-dance (fa ndi) is danced by the women of a household when somebody in the house is seriously ill or dying. Its purpose is presumably to call the fleeing spirit back to its body.
52. cf. fn. 9. "m" here indicates that the birds are collecting large numbers of eggs.
53. That is, the water-birds.
54. At this point, Oscowak pointed out the place of the sun in the sky.
55. The "language of Embiriw" referred to here is not the Mimika language, but the Indonesian language, i.e. the language of the cargo-bringing people. In other words, they request Fimbiriw to supply them with western goods.
56. The meaning is not clear. A tentative translation is: "Hah, I'll go to Embiriw, I'll create people!" The sentence is spoken in an imitation of the northern dialect of Central Asmat.
57. Here Oscowak indicates the position of the legs.
58. A detail which is omitted here is that Fimbiriw made a yew into which he put the carved figures. This is explicitly mentioned in Zegwaard's version. Later in Oscowak's story it becomes clear that he took the building of a yew for granted. In Zegwaard's version Fimbiriw makes men and women; in Oscowak's version he makes only men.
59. That is, the side of the drum on which the drum-skin is fastened. Asmat call this end the bottom (fa) on the drum. The yindi leaves are another of Wor's life-giving charms.

60. Cf. fn. 43.

61. "them": presumably the water-birds living at the mouth of the Minar.

62. Again, Oscowak pointed out from where to where the row stretched.

63. This reminds me of a custom I witnessed in Yepem in 1962: when a new drum was made, the maker inaugurated it by beating it while walking up and down inside the ceremonial house.

64. On the old Dutch maps this river is named Atimet.

65. This is the first indication that the action is taking place inside the yew.

66. The location of the Omerpic and Ana rivers is not known to me. They probably are minor rivers between the Bakapom and the Asewec, mentioned below.

67. The Asewec, or Asewer, is called the Ipukwa by the Kamoro and Sempan people.

68. I could not ascertain the local name of the Awucuwuc. It could be either the Otakwa or the Inawka river.

69. Kaperapuka is the name the Kamoro give to this river.

70. On the Kokonaw river in the Mimika area a Dutch government post was opened in 1925. In 1927 the Roman Catholic Mission established itself there. In the years that followed several Asmat raiding parties came to the Mimika area to get hold of the much-desired western goods, especially iron. For the Asmat, Kokonaw must have been the most important place outside their area, as it was there that the "goods" from overseas reached the world of the Papuans. So it is understandable that Fimbiriw, who is so intimately linked to those goods, settles in that place before disappearing altogether.

71. Just as Embariw is the far-away region to the northwest of the Asmat, so Safan is the remote region to the southeast of the Asmat. Why Fimbiriw turns the figures with their faces in these two directions is an obscure point.

72. Oscowak avoided mentioning the name for iron axe in this context, but said "this kind of thing", pointing to an iron axe which lay on the floor nearby. The story implies that the iron axes were Fimbiriw's. In the Suru versions, noted by Zegwaard he possesses a rifle and his sons Batipic and Pinis each have a rifle. In a version noted in As, it is Wor who gives a rifle to Fimbiriw.

73. Chinese are called enci or tayu in Central Asmat. These names
originally referred to Chinese traders who in pre-contact days used to visit the Mimika coast in their sailing boats. They may occasionally have traveled as far east as the Asmat area. In 1923, Chinese crocodile hunters shot two men from Yamas and one from Erma.

74. That is, trade goods such as iron axes, knives, shotguns, clothes and tobacco.

Other variants

The oldest version of the Fimbiripic myth was recorded by Zegwaard in 1949 before he moved to the Asmat from his posting in the Mimika area. At that time thousands of Asmat people had sought refuge in the Mimika from the inter-village wars that had flared up in their homelands. Among them were men from Suru and Ewer who told the story of 'Fimbiripic' to Zegwaard. The Suru/Ewer version is the most detailed of the variants noted by him (ZA0:69-72). The story begins with the episode in which Fimbiripic and his friend Biwripic fall out because of Fimbiripic making love to Tewerawuc who is portrayed as the girlfriend of Biwripic. It runs parallel to the version of Osowak with some differences in details; the more important of these have been mentioned in the endnotes to the main text. From the moment Fimbiripic arrives in Kokonaw, however, the two stories begin to diverge. Fimbiripic himself puts the iron axes outside his house, and the newly created people take them away. Fimbiripic then travels east again to the Fai (Hellwig) river. There he appropriates the two rifles which were in the possession of his sons Batipic and Pinis, and returns to Kokonaw. He gives a big feast, and again his axes are stolen. In anger he shoots all the people except for one man and one woman from each river. "Now I am the Tuan (Master), I am the Kompani, he says. This version appeared in a free English translation in ASB 4 and 6, so I shall not go into further details here.

A slightly different version was recorded in As (ZA0:63-4). It also begins with the episode of Tewerawuc, but only the revival scene is given in some detail. After reviving 'Fimbiripic', Wor gives him a rifle and takes him to his home. Later, Fimbiripic leaves Wor's house and begins to make the wooden statues which he brings to life by drumming.

Very briefly Zegwaard mentions a version noted in Yuferi (ZA0:64). In this version Fimbiripic is already drumming before the affair with Tewerawuc -- an indication that the imbu feast plays a part in this variant too. Finally there is the variant recorded in Atat (ZA0:162-3). In this version 'Fimbiripic' is equated with the orphan boy Beworipic (in the Suru version of the orphan boy myth, the boy's name is Bunmatiwnkap), and the hornblower Piparipic (the Pupuripic of Osowak's story).

Beworipic is an orphan boy who lives in the mountains near the source of the Sirec river. He lives in the house of his grandparents. The three of them always go hungry because Beworipic's elder brothers and sisters neglect them and do not provide them with enough sago. One day, however, Beworipic "invents" the large spirit mask. He puts it on and waits for his elder siblings to return from the forest with their loads of sago. When they arrive he scares them out of their wits, and they flee, leaving the
sago behind. He takes it all and divides it between his grandparents and himself. Shortly after, he decides to go to the coast. He follows the Sirec, then the Bec, till he reaches the habitat of the Kaimo people. There he stays. Day and night he sits in the top of a tall tree and blows his horn, calling for Bis. Now his name is no longer Beworic but Piparipic. Some time after the arrival of Bis he leaves her and goes further down the river to where Biwar is. There he spends the days having sexual intercourse with a larger number of tewer women who are living there. One day, after he has made love to his sweethearts on the opposite side of the river, he is left behind without a canoe. One of the girls, Okmerawuc, comes to the rescue: she wraps him up and puts him in her canoe. On the way home, however, he is washed overboard and drowns. His body is washed ashore at the mouth of the Owpop, the abode of a man called Pumbiripic. Pumbiripic sends the little bird Asi to the eagle, Wor, and the revival scene follows. Pumbiripic now gives Piparipic a new name: he will be Pumbiripicakap (Pumbiripic junior). Pumbiripic jr. takes off his mask except for the part that covers his head. This part is the mask as it is used by the Mimika people.

The figure of Pumbiriw is also known in the Mimika area, where he is called Mamirima*. Mamirima has intercourse with the girlfriend of his partner Mamirima jr., is left behind, wrapped up and put in the canoe, and thrown into the water by a big wave. He drowns and is washed ashore and revived by Wor and his wife. He then makes the first feast house for the kawara ritual and teaches the birds the songs that go with it. He has intercourse with the bird-women and grows feathers himself. The people of his village have gone out to look for him. They find him and take him home.

Zegwaard notes that the Mamirima myth is owned by the coastal people at Tipuka. The inland people have a different myth, connected with the kiawa feast — the Mimika counterpart of the emake cen feast of the north Asmat. This is the story of Mirokoatayao (snake-child), see below.

Comments

The Pumbiripic myth has been interpreted as an origin myth (Zegwaard, 210) and as a creation myth (Gerbrants 67a,b; Konrad 1981). In the following I should like to dig a bit deeper into the significance of this myth for the Asmat people. Before doing this, however, a few comments have to be made on the way the myth has been paraphrased in recent publications.

In ASB and Konrad, Pumbiripic is presented as the creator of all Asmat people. This is simply a mistake caused by a faulty translation of one passage in Zegwaard's original. In ASB, this passage reads:

"Thus he peopled many villages (...). He made the Asmat people, the Papuan people (...) as far as Kaimana. Beyond Kaimana he made the Surabaya people."

In the original it is explicitly stated that Pumbiripic is not the creator of all Asmat people:
"In this way he made many different tribes (not the Asmat people, because he was an Asmat man himself) and also the Papuans as far as Kaimana and, further away, the Surabaya people." (translation mine).

In Oscowak's version it is also stated that Fimbiriw creates only the people outside the Asmat area. I shall return to this point below.

In the short paraphrase of the myth given by Gerbrands in 1967b, Fumbiripic is credited with creative acts which form no part of any of the Asmat versions of the myth, but belong to the exploits of the hero Mirokoatayao in the Mimika myth mentioned above. These are: the creation of feast houses by drawing their outlines in the sand and the creation of people out of the pieces of a gigantic crocodile which he had killed and cut up. Whether or not a link can be established between the Asmat figure of Fumbiripic and the Mimika figure of Mirokoatayao, it seems to me methodologically unsound to equate the two in the way Gerbrands has done.

Let us now return to Oscowak's version of the myth. Its most striking difference with the Suru/Ewer and As versions is the long introductory episode which leads up to the clash between Fimbiriw and his young friend Biwripic. This part raises several questions. What is the function of the imbu feast in it? Why does Fimbiriw steal the triton shell? What is the meaning of his wooing Tewerawuc, and later of Bis? Only the last part of the last question can be answered to some satisfaction, but let us take the questions one by one.

That the inclusion of the imbu feast is not an idiosyncratic addition of Oscowak is made likely by the Yuferi variant mentioned above, which states that Fumbiripic was already drumming before the episode in which he falls out with his friend. This can only mean that there was a feast going on. But why the imbu feast? Unfortunately we know very little about this feast, which centered around the esakap relationship. We know that it served to confirm and renew the esakap relationships and that it entailed the exchange of quantities of food between partners -- sago and sago grubs being exchanged for fish. We know that already at a very young age a boy was told whose esakap he would be; that once it became effective, the relationship was life-long and created a very strong emotional bond between the two men. We know that it involved the exchange of wives when the circumstances called for it: in times of stress or sudden danger, as when the Asmat had their first confrontations with the Europeans. The use of each other's wife, or papis, was thought to release forces which could protect the community against danger. What we do not know is what the criteria were for the choice of an esakap partner, what obligations went with the relationship and who gave what to whom in cases of food exchange. And what was the relation between a wife and her husband's papis-wife? From Asmat myths, in which the heroes always have lots of papis-wives, we can learn that it was a close relationship, almost that of sisters. For instance, in Oscowak's story, the papis-wives of Pupuripic roll themselves in the mud for grief because of the disappearance of his wife Bis.

All this does not answer the question, but it sheds some light on the scene in which Fimbiriw breaks the agreement by taking Tewerawuc first. That is not, as it might seem, the seduction of one's friend's girl friend. Tewerawuc is Fimbiriw's "number one" girl friend; when he promises her to
Biwirpic, he does this within the context of their esakap relationship -- Biwirpic will practice papis with Tewerawuc. By breaking his promise Fimbiriw violates a basic rule of the esakap relationship, with dire results.

The role of the triton shell remains unclear. The shell, as pointed out before, is thought to have enormous power, even the power to give life. It is associated with the moon (pir) as its name, pirkawor, suggests. There is a myth in which a pirkawor shell flies up into the sky and becomes the moon. The origin of the moon is also ascribed to the mythological Orphan Boy who, as we shall see, is but another manifestation of Fimbiriw. The two, triton shell and Fimbiriw, clearly go together. One can argue that Fimbiriw takes the shell away because, as we shall see, Pupuripic is only one more manifestation of Fimbiriw so that he takes what is his anyway. But why he hides it up in a tree, and why he gives it to his father before he goes chasing the girls remains unanswered.

Let us skip the wooing of Tewerawuc for the moment, and turn to Bis. The presence of Bis in this story becomes much clearer when we take into account the Atat version of the myth. In this version the Orphan Boy Beworpic (also known as Manema Tiw, Bunma, Tiwnakap) is transformed into Piparipic (=Pupuripic, Pamapipic), and later into Fumbiripic (=Fimbiriw, Fimbiriw). Beworpic, Piparipic, and Fumbiripic are three manifestations of the same mythological being. With each of the manifestations are associated a particular place in the Asmat cosmos, a particular name, and (the making of) a particular object, or particular objects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Object(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above: source of the Sirec river</td>
<td>Beworpic/Manema Tiw Bunma Tiwnakap</td>
<td>Spirit mask, moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle: middle course of Sirec</td>
<td>Piparipic/Pupuripic/ Pamapipic</td>
<td>Bis pole; bamboo horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below: mouth of the Sirec river</td>
<td>Fumbiripic/Fimbiriw</td>
<td>carved ancestor figures; triton shell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The equivalence of the three levels shows in several ways. Firstly, the name Fumbiripic can be associated with the bamboo horn (fu) as well as the kind of bark fibers used to fabricate the spirit mask (fum). Secondly, the spirit mask, the bis pole and the ancestor statues are all objects associated with the dead. Thirdly, the triton shell is a symbol of the moon and is also used as a horn. Finally, both Pipiripic and Fumbiripic are men of considerable sexual prowess.

In Oscowak's story we can, in my opinion, find echoes of the earlier manifestations of Fimbiriw. It is as if Fimbiriw cannot let the past rest. First he goes all the way up the river to Tewerawuc - as the Orphan Boy he married a girl Tewerawuc. But the echo is too faint, and his efforts come to nothing. Then he goes back to his former self and steals his own former wife. But, once back home, he does nothing with her, and leaves her to go after the girlfriends that belong to his present existence.

So far, our hero has passed through two transformations on his way from the top of the Asmat world (cf. fn.8 of this origin myth) to its bottom at the mouth of the Sirec river. Now his downwards journey is reversed and he goes up again. This reversal is accompanied by the crisis of his betrayal of the papis relationship and his subsequent death. Only when his body has reached the outer limits of the Asmat territory he is brought back to life. There he changes from a maker of objects associated with the dead to a creator of living people. But it must be added that he derives his life-giving power from the sea-eagle Wor. First he carves wooden statuettes of people in the sitting position of the dead: the knees drawn up, the arms bent with the elbows resting on the knees. Only when Wor has given him the life-giving charm can he drum them to life. In Oscowak's version he makes ow. This word can mean "people" as well as "men". From the fact that in this version Fimbiriw orders the waterbirds to cut the logs, and then makes ow for them, I conclude that he makes only men who then serve as husbands for the sexually starved bird-women. In Zegwaard's version Fumbiripic makes both men and women. Whatever the sex of his creations, the result is that Fimbiriw creates the people outside the Asmat. They are the "people of wood" in contrast to the "real people" of the Asmat. In all versions of the myth the emphasis is on the people to the west of the Asmat. The only indication in Oscowak's story that Fimbiriw created all people outside the Asmat is found in the episode in which he turns half of the statues with their faces to the west, the other half with their faces to the east. The preoccupation with the world to the west can perhaps be understood in the light of the linguistic and cultural affinity of the Asmat people with their western neighbours, and of the provenience of the much-desired western goods with which they came into contact during their expeditions to the Mimika coast. The Awyu people to the east were complete strangers to the Asmat.

During his trip upwards Fimbiriw undergoes his last transformation: he now becomes the "tuan", the "kompani", and the possessor of the western goods. This transformation which undoubtedly is a later addition to the myth, still is a logical extension of the role of Fimbiriw. From the beginning Fimbiriw is associated with the dead, not only through the objects he makes, but also because of his skin colour which is white. White is the colour which in New Guinea was commonly associated with the spirits of the ancestors. Over and over again, when Papuans met Europeans...
for the first time they thought that the ancestors had returned. So it is no wonder that Fimbiriw became associated with the goods the white man brought along, and even became the primordial white man himself, the possessor of all western goods.

The second part of the Fimbiriw myth then Does two things. It asserts the priority of the Asmat people over those in the rest of the world. It further tries to come to grips with the baffling fact that those outside were in the possession of so many goods the Asmat did not have.

Endnotes

1. For more than a century after the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) had ceased to be the major power in the Indonesian archipelago, the government of the day was still referred to as the "Kompani". "Tuan" and "Kompani" stand here for the European, the White Man.

2. I took the Mimika data from another unpublished manuscript of Zegwaard, Mythological stories of the Kamoro. The Mamirima myth was published by Drabbe (1946).

3. The kaware feast is the Mimika counterpart of the sago grub feast (tow pokmbu) in the Asmat. Pumbiripic was said to be the owner of that feast.

4. Surabaya: the harbour in east Java from where early Dutch expeditions to New Guinea left. To the Asmat, Surabaya ("Sarpa") was synonymous with 'the land of the white men'.

5. I witnessed an imbu feast during my stay in Yepem village in 1962. Unfortunately, not being an anthropologist, I did not use this opportunity to inquire into the details of the esakap relationship.

6. This is the interpretation given in Zegwaard's version of the myth.

7. In Asmat mythology the moon is male. He is Pirsimbit, and his two wives are Yow (the sun) and Yesir (the morning star).
IRIAN JAYA:
LANGUAGES OF THE CENTRAL AND SOUTH NEW GUINEA STOCK

I. ASMAT - KAMORO FAMILY
1. Kamrau
2. Sabakor
3. Kamoro
4. Sempan
5. Asmat

II. AWYU FAMILY

III. OK FAMILY
LEGEND TO MAP II

- Villages mentioned in the myth as descendants of the crew of the primordial canoe.
- Other villages mentioned in the text.
- Villages not mentioned in the text.

Village names:

1. Sawa-Erma
2. Yowun - Yuferi
3. Ewer
4. Ayam
5. Becow
6. Yuni
7. Suru
8. Yepem
9. Uwus
10. Amborep
11. Warse
12. Yaosakor
13. Damen
14. Biwar (hutan)
15. Kaimo
16. Awok
17. Fos
18. Serew (site before moving to the Digul river)
19. Biwar (laut)
20. Kawet
21. Kapi
22. Yamas
23. Per (Kaye-Minipir)
24. As-Atat

Precis:

Two important origin myths of the Central Asmat are presented in the translated transcription of tape recordings made by the author in 1962. The myths were told by two masters of Asmat oral tradition at a time when Asmat culture was still very much alive. They are supplemented by variants collected by Zegwaard and Drabbe in various parts of the Asmat region. The author has added numerous notes and comments.
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Abbreviations used


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