USE OF THESSES

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Sitting in canoes

Knowing places and imagining spaces among the Gogodala of Papua New Guinea

Alison Dundon

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University

May 1998
Except where reference is made in the text, this thesis is the result of the research carried out by the author. This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or used for the qualification of a degree or diploma.

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For Charles
# ABSTRACT

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to a growing literature on nation-making in Melanesia through an analysis of Gogodala experiences and perceptions of the landscape. It explores Gogodala connections to the environment through the process of ‘sitting in canoes’, a local idiom which emphasises embodied links between people and places. In the swampy lowlands of Western Province, Papua New Guinea, canoes are essential everyday vehicles; for the Gogodala, canoes link each person with a clan allocating them land, sago and names. Ancestral stories explain how the first ancestors, who travelled to the area in canoes, created and named the landscape. I focus on the ways in which local understandings of food, bodies, clan designs, development and Christianity are constituted through canoes. By sitting in canoes, Gogodala people engage diverse aspects of their ‘way of life’.

It is through these canoes that Gogodala imagine the nation, albeit in fragmentary comments or partial stories intertwined with local interests and concerns. Village people in this area of Papua New Guinea experience the nation-state primarily through state institutions like community schools, radio, newspapers, and Christian organisations and activities. The nation, however, features in narratives and images which emphasise bodies, places, lifestyle, Christianity and food. To encompass some of the ways in which communities in Papua New Guinea imagine and create their nation, then, we must look at local accounts of lifestyles, bodies and places. This thesis argues that Gogodala imaginings of the nation are based on perceptions of their landscape and their relations with it.
Acknowledgments

This thesis is the result of much encouragement and support, without which it would not have been possible. I will begin with those people who supported Charles and I when we first arrived in Papua New Guinea in January 1995. From the outset, Gogodala people and expatriates alike were overtly generous to us in our ineptitudes and inexperience. Karen and Paul Bickerton, and their children took us in to their home and gave us somewhere to stay, giving us the use of Ewa Saba's facilities and I am very grateful to them. While we were staying in Balimo in the first few weeks, Ricky, Amato, Tama, Kila, Handi and Gari were wonderful to us - looking after us in so many ways. Their friendship was special to us.

In Tai village, Sakuliyato was patient and caring, fitting us in to her already busy life with ease and laughter. I thank her greatly for these and other gifts that she gave us. Mala and Kukupiyato, Agi (mother) and Wawa (father), took me into their family, giving me the gift of a name. Although unable to communicate at first, they knew no English and I little Gogodala, they continually showed their commitment to us through gifts of fish, sago, coconuts and firewood. They and their family, Kukuwa, Giliwa and Kabiliyato, Muti, Websie and Igato were always caring and thoughtful and, although often deriving amusement from our various ineptitudes, managing to make us feel involved in the ensuing laughter. My mother's sisters, who also lived at Tai with their families, also always made me welcome as a daughter. To them and all the other families in Tai village, particularly Pastor Busu and his wife, I can only say a very big eso gai kabigibega - dae waelabega selena luma.

I would also like to thank Sakuliyato's elderly mother and family in Aketa where we spent many weeks. Yukama, Omato, and Kennsy were always generous and open to our periodic visits and questions. Yukamato, Sakuliyato's sister, who stayed with us at Tai for some time was a wonderful companion and older sister to Charles. I would also like to thank Busali's family at Dogono village.
In Balimo, Kamo and Genasi were always generous with us; welcoming us to their house, feeding us and caring about our well-being. With them and their children Bebe, Georgie, Kensy, and Grace we spent many happy hours, laughing about common problems and experiences. Their understanding and empathy was vital to our emotional stability during our stay and I can only extend my deepest and warmest gratitude to them. Nakeyo and Bibiyato and their family were also caring friends throughout our stay, opening our eyes to many things. I would also like thank Sawiyato, Nakeyo and Kamo’s mother and her brother-in-law Sanada; they both contributed greatly to my knowledge and understanding.

Others in Balimo contributed to our well-being in various ways; including Bege Mula and his family at Saweta, Iti Didiga and Nasa. Keith and Norma Briggs, senior members of the APCM, were always friendly, as were Keith and Rose, and Ernie and Marion and we were very grateful for their continued hospitality and goodwill. Alison Hall was a great friend in Balimo, as were David and Alison Learoyd and their children Zebedee and Claire. We spent many weary hours at their houses, and they continually offered companionship, support and sustenance for which I thank them.

I took up PhD studies at the Australian National University in 1994; I thank the ANU for the Postgraduate Award and additional fieldwork funds that made it financially possible. I wish thank to the National Research Institute for granting me affiliation, and the Western Province Government and Balimo District Manager for allowing me conduct research in the area. I would also like to thank the National Museum of Australia for permission to view and photograph certain Gogodala objects collected in the early 1900s, particularly Nancy Michaelis who was very helpful.

When I started, Michael Nihill was my supervisor, having seen me safely through honours the previous year. Although Mike left ANU shortly after I left for the field, he remains an inspiration to me and my work. I thank him for his continued interest in my work and general commitment to students. I extend that gratitude to Jeff Clark who always had time to laugh with Charles, Mike and I about the approaching fieldwork.
I would like also to offer my gratitude to Nicholas Thomas, who became my supervisor while I was in Papua New Guinea. He has been unfailingly generous in his support of me, and giving his time and comments about my work. His insightful remarks and readings of many drafts have inspired me to greater efforts. I have had the additional support of Chris Ballard and Lissant Bolton: Chris, despite his already overburdened workload, took me on and I have been grateful for that ever since. He has been supportive and honest, offering comments and friendship with equal generosity. His extensive knowledge of the literature on Papua New Guinea has greatly aided my own understanding of my own fieldwork experiences. Likewise, Lissant has continually offered support and critical insight since I met her soon after arriving back in Canberra. Her readings of my work have inspired me to rethink many issues and I thank her for that.

Since I first approached him about going to Western Province, Michael Wood has been an inspiration; his continued encouragement and interest have been vital to this thesis. I appreciate his generosity in imparting knowledge about the area. Likewise, Tony Crawford warmly offered an account of his own experiences and I deeply appreciate his time.

At ANU, there have been many other postgraduates and staff who have made it a good place to write a thesis and I thank them generally for their support, insights and comments. Salome Zhimomi, Ben Higgins and Mike Ward have provided both great discussions about anthropology and endless support and reassurance. Richard Eves has remained a constant source of enlightenment and information, and he has been overwhelmingly generous with his time, knowledge, books and articles. I thank he and Roe for their care and friendship. I also want to thank Shelley Mallet for the extended use of her PhD thesis and her friendship and understanding.

My family, as always, is a constant source of encouragement and love. Joy and Colin Dundon continue to support me in all of my projects and ideas. Their love and generosity is boundless and I am deeply grateful. We had a great time when Pippa spent six weeks living at Tai with us, and I thank her for continuing love and support. The Wilde, Dolby and Chalker families have
been ever supportive. David was generous with his time and medical skills, Elizabeth often sent packages of goodies from Australia to Balimo, and Les spent several days living at Tai with us. June and Pat listened patiently to our endless stories and offered help whenever necessary.

From the outset, this thesis and fieldwork experience was a collaborative effort. Charles has been an integral part of my choices and decisions since we first decided to go to Western Province in late 1993. His commitment to me, my work and interests is my primary inspiration and I cannot say enough to thank him. From the times that we slipped and slopped our way to Balimo from Tai village, grumbling at the mud between our toes, to the moment we left Balimo in a flood of emotion and tears, he has been there, sharing it all and giving so much. To him I dedicate this thesis. Eso gai kabigibega, ae selenapa lumagi naepe dalagi.
Glossary of Gogodala terms

List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APCM</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Christian Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHP</td>
<td>Broken Hill Proprietary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRA</td>
<td>Bougainville Revolutionary Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPI</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECP</td>
<td>Evangelical Church of Papua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECPNG</td>
<td>Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gogodala Cultural Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAF</td>
<td>Missionary Aviation Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>National Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTML</td>
<td>Ok Tedi Mining Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPM</td>
<td>Organisasi Papua Merdeka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>Special Support Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFM</td>
<td>Unevangelized Fields Mission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note on language

Throughout the thesis, I use the spelling of Gogodala words favoured by the people with whom I worked. In this typology, instead of using a: to denote the short vowel sound as in ‘cat’ (as in APCM literature), I use ae. In line with current usage, I use ‘l’ instead of ‘r’ which are interchangeable in Gogodala (hence early administrative reports talk about the Gogodara, Ibari and so on).

Other vowels and vowel combinations include:

- **ao** as in tao sounds like ‘toe’
- **ai** as in Aida sounds like ‘eye’
- **o** as in ato sounds like ‘or’
- **a** as in Segela sounds like the ‘u’ in ‘cup’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Glossary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aegae</td>
<td>a canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ae</td>
<td>• ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• leg or foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sugarcane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeibaiga</td>
<td>• the earth or world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kanaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeigutiti</td>
<td>lower living areas for women and children in the longhouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeimala</td>
<td>a canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeiswa Saba</td>
<td>Bani’s footmark at Buila Community School, Balimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agi</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida</td>
<td>• an ancestral hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a male cult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• rattle used in Aida ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida dala</td>
<td>Aida man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida gi</td>
<td>doing Aida, the Aida thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida lopala</td>
<td>Aida things or objects, masks, drums etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akali</td>
<td>place where the ancestors stopped during the ancestral migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akuna</td>
<td>place where the ancestors stopped during the original migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ame Sibala</td>
<td>mythical monster or ugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asipali</td>
<td>a clan in the (red) Segela moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aso</td>
<td>• sago leaf roof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sago pith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atima</td>
<td>woven mourning hat/ hood worn by both women and men in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ato</td>
<td>women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awala</td>
<td>a clan in the (white) Paiya moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awano</td>
<td>‘special’ things found in each clan and clan canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awila gagi</td>
<td>in-law names</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Glossary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babedae balago</td>
<td>black palm bark bag/ container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babo</td>
<td>cane fish trap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagubagu</td>
<td>Esanadae’s fish skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baidowa</td>
<td>place that original ancestors visited on migratory route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baiga</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baiyada</td>
<td>female ancestor, sister of Saida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balago</td>
<td>bark container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bani</td>
<td>male ancestor from Asipali clan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Baya  •  general word for food  
•  sago  
•  bread  
Baya bapi  plain cooked sago  
Baya i  sago palm  
Baya mo  precious type of sago depicted in canoe designs  
Bau  coconut  
Bebema  male ancestor who became the first Aida  
Bilidama  male ancestor  
Bishele ginadae  type of tree  
Bodolo  edible water lily seeds  
Bogela  male ancestor  
Boigu  place where the ancestors stopped during the ancestral migration (Torres Strait)  
Boiname  an ‘alive’ space, an island that, like Dogono, broke away from Wabila: current site is near Ugu village on the Aramia River  
Butalabega  fat or large (in relation to people)  

D  
Daelila tao  eye of the bird of paradise  
Daiyale  male ancestor  
Dala  men or people  
Daligi  •  a male ancestor  
•  the sun  
Dalogo  a female ancestor and the first person to die  
Dede  blood  
Dede Sasa  literally blood and roots respectively; Gogodala name for Jesus  
Diba  conical hats worn by men in early colonial contact  
Digidigi baya  a type of sago (without thorns)  
Dipalo  a turtle  
Diwaka  a very large carved and decorated drum which was used in the Aida ceremonies  
Dogono  village created by Ibali in the origin myth; the first Gogodala village  
Dubali  banana  
Dudi  the south side of the Fly River  
Dumaya  Gogodala name for Prince Charles; also refers to Jesus  
Dumutu  nose stick - not worn anymore  

E  
Egada saba  garden place
Elemowa: one of the first Gogodala Christians
Ema: betel nut
Emo: one of the first Gogodala Christians
Esanadae: a male ancestor who had two skins
Etawa:
  • a lagoon
  • semen
Ewa Saba: tradestore in Balimo
Ewano gawa: 'human canoe'

G
Gabale: a parrot
Gabi lapila: fighting club
Gaguli: the mother of the Gogodala people;
considered to be the same as Eve in the Bible

Gamaleya: a male ancestor who founded the village
  of Aketa on the Aramia River
Ganabi: head
Ganipala: 'head' section of the longhouse for
  initiated men
Gasit: brother-in-law
Gasinapa: a clan in the (red) Segela moiety
Gauba: wallaby
Gawa:
  • everyday canoe
  • clan canoe
Gawa maiyata: canoe ceremony followed by canoe race
Gawa saba: lit 'canoe place'
Gawa sakema: canoe carver or artist
Gawa tao: lit 'canoe eye'; canoe design
Gawaga: platforms along the top of the komo for
  men to sleep in the longhouse

Gegasi: a lagoon near Tai village
Gelege: female ancestor who was killed by Bani
  and made into a human canoe
Genagoba: the lower living areas for women and
  children in the longhouse

Genama: house
Genasi: evening star
Gi gawa: small, ceremonial canoe
Gi lopala: ceremonial objects and ornaments
Gi maiyata: first stage of the male initiatory cycle
Gibita: name of a pig (Dogono) in the Lalamana clan

Giliwa: a canoe
Gogo: north-west wind
Gogoya / gogoweya: namesake relationship
Gogowali:
  • a canoe
  • bee hive
Gosa  bones
Gubali  ghost of dead person
Gubali kaka  ghost skin
Gudibi  point of land
Gwaei saba  small house used by women and children at edge of longhouse
Gwaligwali Dumaya  Gogodala name for Prince Charles; also refers to Jesus

I
Ibali  the father of the Gogodala people; considered to be the same as Adam in the Bible
Ibowa  south-east winds
Ikewa  small headdress
Iniwa ela gi  lit. ‘ancestors way of doing; ‘ancestral ways’
Iniwa olagi  ancestor stories
Iniwa Sakema  name of Kini Cultural Centre (lit person skilled in ancestors)
Iwalela  power of thought, thinking
Iyapo  • vagina
        • seed

J
Jaeti  poison used to kill fish

K
Kabiginapa gagi  big names
Kabiginapa gawa  big canoes
Kabili  lagoon near Balimo
Kabiya  ‘wild pussy’; scrub wallaby
Kaeso iyapo  glands of the groin
Kaka  • older brother
        • skin
        • bark of a tree
Kaka wibapi  healthy skin
Kaka wibeganapa  healthy person
Kaliya  male ancestor whose head became the first coconut
Kanaba  • powerful orator; fight leader
        • clan canoe
Kane  sago grubs
Kane baya  sago grub cooked with sago
Kelaki  a male ancestor
Kesa  type of tree
 Kiama  sweet potato
Kitakitaiyabogosa  place where Sawiya first made sago
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiwalema</td>
<td>a canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokae</td>
<td>taro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komo</td>
<td>central male hall of the longhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuku</td>
<td>carved figure placed in gardens, near coconut trees or outside longhouses to protect against malign ugu or stop others from approaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulumusu</td>
<td>tree; seed pods used for Aida rattle</td>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>a clan in the (white) Paiya moiety</td>
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<td>Lapila</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lekeleke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ligaele</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Limo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lopala</td>
<td></td>
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<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabi</td>
<td>ground from which sago came</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madulabali</td>
<td>the other canoe of the original migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maimiya</td>
<td>ancestral hunter who was killed by Dimagi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maiyata</td>
<td>dance, ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mala</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malebe</td>
<td>general word for snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaka</td>
<td>a kind of mask worn in precontact ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masanawa</td>
<td>the canoe place of the ancestral migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menebega</td>
<td>heavy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menekata</td>
<td>fish spear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mewa baya</td>
<td>fish wrapped up and cooked in sago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mewa kaka</td>
<td>fish skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miluli</td>
<td>a type of bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mipi</td>
<td>sister-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miwasa</td>
<td>male ancestor, Dalogo’s husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miyale</td>
<td>diwaka drum which carried some ancestors to Kerema in the Gulf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moto lapila</td>
<td>‘inside names’; see ‘big names’ kabigina gagi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muda</td>
<td>a place where the ancestors stopped during the ancestral migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukusanada</td>
<td>light-skinned, or white-skinned person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musili</td>
<td>floor joists for the longskinned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabudu</td>
<td>breadfruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagala baya</td>
<td>‘thank you’ food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagala pokō</td>
<td>‘thank you’ feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakenake</td>
<td>type of fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naya</td>
<td>older sister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**O**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obaya</td>
<td>alone, by him/herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obe</td>
<td>body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oko</td>
<td>work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oko kalakalabega</td>
<td>hard work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ola baya</td>
<td>type of thorny sago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oleke</td>
<td>female ancestor, wife of Kelaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osama</td>
<td>island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otokoko</td>
<td>a canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owame tao</td>
<td>fish eye</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**P**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pagawa</td>
<td>a canoe made from Waya’s leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paiya</td>
<td>the white moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paiyale</td>
<td>a canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasiya</td>
<td>a male name; a goanna; an early Christian convert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedaeya</td>
<td>creek followed by the first ancestors until they reached Masanawa canoe place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilipili</td>
<td>small fish caught in nets at certain times of the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pino</td>
<td>Gogodala woman created by Shirley Horne in <em>Out of the Dark</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**S**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saba</td>
<td>place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saeiya</td>
<td>a large fish trap made and used by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saege</td>
<td>good sago, a precious substance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saida</td>
<td>male ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saida dala</td>
<td>‘Saida men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saida genama</td>
<td>longhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakema</td>
<td>master carver and knowledgeable man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salago</td>
<td>clan plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salago lapila</td>
<td>clan plant ornament for front of racing canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salona</td>
<td>place where the ancestors stopped during the ancestral migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoso</td>
<td>• month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasagawa</td>
<td>prawns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawiya</td>
<td>female ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawiya ato</td>
<td>‘Sawiya women’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawiya gawa</td>
<td>racing canoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sau</td>
<td>sago pounder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segela</td>
<td>the red moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekewa</td>
<td>type of bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniwa</td>
<td>green leaf used when young in cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniwa tao</td>
<td>string made from the bark of the seniwa tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si</td>
<td>floor of house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibala</td>
<td>crocodile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siboko</td>
<td>a clan in the (red) Segela moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikila</td>
<td>sleeping areas of women and children in the longhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sika</td>
<td>kava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silila</td>
<td>female ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sogowa</td>
<td>male ancestor who had thorns all over his body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solosolo</td>
<td>• green leaf vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• long legs (sometimes Bani was called this)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sosola</td>
<td>kanaba of early contact; man who opened the door for white people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suliki</td>
<td>the name of the one of the canoes used in the ancestral migration; white moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>a clan in the (white) Paiya moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tao</td>
<td>• eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• bellybutton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taodanapa gawa</td>
<td>personal canoes bearing the owner’s gawa tao; not common today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatatata</td>
<td>new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tepa</td>
<td>• time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the middle of something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timi</td>
<td>house posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiya</td>
<td>fishing baskets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tudi</td>
<td>metal hooks for fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>clans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udaga</td>
<td>• a Gogodala village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugu</td>
<td>• spiritual force associated with the ancestors and canoe designs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sometimes translated as ‘monsters’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uwa</td>
<td>male ancestor who taught Bebema about Aida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagenama</td>
<td>small house used by initiates at first initiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabada</td>
<td>a canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabadala</td>
<td>a clan in the (red) Segela moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabeya</td>
<td>younger brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabila</td>
<td>the first place; the beginning for all things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waewa</td>
<td>a male ancestor; Bani’s son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>a clan in the (white) Paiya moiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waie</td>
<td>general term for pig (sometimes covers cows as well)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waidi</td>
<td>ancestral place on the way to the Gogodala area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiko</td>
<td>tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waisa</td>
<td>yams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waisa Owala</td>
<td>a canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waliwali</td>
<td>ancestral hero; stopped Dogono from being a special place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waliya</td>
<td>a white breasted eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wapeta</td>
<td>small sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasikola maiyata</td>
<td>first initiation ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wokali</td>
<td>black palm steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaebi Saba</td>
<td>same place as Wabila, similar to heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaebuwa wai</td>
<td>Wagumisi pig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1
Introduction: the canoe place

The race
It was close to 5:30 in the morning, dark and stuffy in the small room in which we had uneasily slept the night before. Hearing our hosts stirring outside the doorway of our room, my husband Charles and I packed up our bed mat, mattress and mosquito net and paused uncertainly before entering the main room. Sometime in the course of the previous night’s events, we had become separated from Sakuliyato, our mentor and interpreter, and had been directed to sleep in someone else’s house. After leaving the house, although unsure of our immediate movements, we started walking down through the dark village on the central path which wound its way along the main island, finally stopping at the gawa saba or the canoe place. Several women and children, already starting to gather, glanced somewhat pityingly at us - either too shy or unsure to approach us. Instead we chose the least muddy part of the hillock to sit on - one from which we could be afforded a reasonable view of the river. Once ensconced, a vision of some amusement to others, we sat and waited.

After an hour or so, during which time the crowd of women, children, and some men had swelled to several times that of the early morning group, a distant booming came floating down the opaque water of the Aramia River. This river passes directly alongside perhaps one third of the Gogodala villages and is a flat body of water, only several metres in width at Aketa village. The water was still and, at this time of the morning, dark. As the noise grew louder, the sense of anticipation and the voices of the watching women grew in intensity and we stood in order to gain a better view of the approaching canoes. In moments, the canoes swung into view around the bend of the river. My own pulse quickened in surprise and delight as the young men became increasingly visible and differentiated as the leading canoes ploughed smoothly through the water, belying the sweaty effort of the straining paddlers.
Several of the women began to wave their arms above their heads, moving their hips sensuously in time with their hands, while others shouted the name of the leading canoe. All too suddenly the massive racing canoe had charged past the watchers at the canoe place, brown and muscular bodies wet from the spray of their brightly decorated paddles which dove into the water with amazing rapidity. We were almost close enough to touch them and...
certainly to catch the smell of closely packed bodies, both in the canoe and on
the shore. Then they were past and had reached the finishing ‘line’, marked
some way down the river by two lapila or large fishing poles.

I begin with this story because it evokes many of the experiences,
tastes, smells and sounds of a particular moment in 1995: in this case, a canoe
race held in collaboration with celebrations for the opening of a new
community school at Aketa village. It raises issues which are germane to this
thesis; presenting an image of a canoe in and around which people are
mobilised and involved. In the racing canoe, men are standing, paddling, and
shouting words which allow the ugu or ‘spirit’ of the canoe and surrounding
landscape to imbue them with corporeal strength. Around the canoe, women,
in particular, urge on and celebrate the achievements and the beauty of the
paddlers.

This story also introduces outsiders to the water, mud and land which
constitute the swampy environment of the Gogodala communities of the
Western Province of Papua New Guinea and the significance of the junction of
canoes and human bodies. (See Map 1) For up to nine months of the year the
lagoons and waterways which encircle the smaller tracts of land, on which
villages, gardens and sago swamps are situated, are inundated and full of still
or sluggish water. Floating grass and large pink and purple water lilies abound.
In this environment, canoes not only enable travel and communication between
villages; they are also the primary social group into which people are born.

Canoes are essential for both daily movement and for belonging to a
specific clan and thereby having access to certain places, trees, and stretches of
river or lagoon. Unlike Alfred Gell (1995:236) who expressed his frustration
with his inability to ‘ever obtain a decent view of the country’ of the Umeda in
West Sepik, I was initially struck by the panoramic nature of the Gogodala
environment. From many vantage points in Balimo it is possible to see and
hear across the lagoon to the land, the coconut trees, and the sago-palm thatch
houses of Saweta village several kilometres away. Canoes wending their way
through often dense clumps of floating grass and people greeting each other
across the water, are also clearly audible. To traverse this landscape is to walk or paddle in a canoe.

Gogodala people ‘sit inside’ metaphorical canoes as they do in the racing canoes, or in the more narrow and useful everyday canoes. The common expression ‘sitting in canoes’ is the primary metaphor used to encompass the myriad ways in which canoes mediate between Gogodala people and the surrounding land, water, ancestral and other human beings. Through these metaphorical canoes (hereafter referred to as clan canoes), a person is born into a particular clan and is given specific names. Names initiate an intimate and specific relationship with the landscape and with the other people who belong in these clan canoes. In the ancestral stories, these clan canoes were created by the original ancestors who travelled to the area in two large canoes in the distant past. The ancestral canoes found or constituted particular places and spaces, on the land and in the water, incorporating them into clans and moieties as they travelled. Through sitting in these canoes, then, people become attached to these areas in various capacities and degrees, although lived experience is vital to the maintenance of this relationship.

In the following discussion, I explore the relationship between people, landscape, and canoes to demonstrate some of the ways in which the link between them is embodied and expressed in local communities. Idioms of clan canoes being ‘on the skin’ - through names and in the form of the gawa tao or ‘canoe designs’ - and in the blood, are commonly used to talk about the connection between bodies and canoes. Everything smelt, tasted, eaten, or stepped upon belongs in clan canoes in intimate association with the people also ‘sitting’ there. Young men in football teams playing in the local Balimo competition call upon this relationship when they cry out the name of an animal or bird that sits in their mother’s clan canoe so that their bodies may be empowered and their team win. In the next section, I employ an approach that seeks to encompass the fluid ties between people, canoes, and places in the context of local imaginings and narratives about the nation.
Sitting in canoes

In this thesis I suggest that the Gogodala expression 'sitting in canoes' is a comment about the nature of being and belonging, of bodies and lived experiences, which delineates the contiguity of local people and their environment. Gogodala people do not, however, live in isolation - they interact with other people, institutions, and places either through first-hand experience of them or through narratives and imaginings about them. As Edward LiPuma (1995:42) has noted, in Pacific nation-states, it is "no longer possible to live an apolitical coexistence". It is from the position and experience of sitting in these canoes that Gogodala people engage with wider influences and issues: with the nation and the state, with white people and other Papua New Guineans, and with other countries and lifestyles.
Gogodala people are concerned with the types of relations they have with others, whether expatriate missionaries or men and women from different provinces in Papua New Guinea. Although the majority rely on a subsistence lifestyle, are unlikely to receive more than a grade eight education at a local community school, and few can boast of visits to Moresby or even Daru, they constantly talk about and imagine other people and places. These images of others emphasise the similarities and differences in body shapes and sizes, skin colour, blood, names, Christianity, food, places and lifestyle.

Relations with others are not simply the result of colonial and post-colonial experiences, however. Early administrative accounts note that Gogodala villagers had close associations with neighbouring groups. Recent literature explores some of the material, linguistic, and ceremonial links between groups on the south coast of Papua New Guinea and the Torres Strait (see for example Laba 1996; Wagner 1996; Lawrence 1990; Ayers 1983; Swadling 1983). Interest in wider concerns been accentuated by a close colonial relationship with expatriate missionaries and administrators. Early post-independence experiences with the new nation-state have also shaped these perceptions.

The Gogodala have been valorised in various contexts in the past twenty years as an example of the Papua New Guinean national project of creating ‘unity through cultural diversity’. Indeed the only substantial literature written on the area since the administrative accounts of the early 1900s is Anthony Crawford’s 1981 monograph Aida, Life and Ceremony of the Gogodala which outlines in some detail the events surrounding a ‘cultural revival’ that took place in the 1970s and in which Crawford was an integral player. Although I analyse this revival in some detail in Chapter 6, it is important to introduce this issue here as it was part of my own perception of, and later interaction with, Gogodala people as it was a factor in their dealings

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1 Since independence, political elites and intelligentsia in Pacific countries have produced ideals and images of nationhood which have often been generated and couched in terms of grounding national distinctiveness in local ancestral and ‘traditional’ ways (Foster 1995:1). Henry Rutz (1995) has suggested that in Fiji, for example, the narratives of nation revolve around the notion of ‘tradition’ and this has been the site of a ‘rhetorical battleground’ (see also Lawson 1997). He argues that Fijian national narratives try to “occupy the headwaters of tradition” (Rutz 1995:72).
and relationships with me. As a result of this revival, local people have been perceived by many to be participants in an explicitly nation-making project, their efforts at building a cultural centre and reviving a certain type of carving financed by government agencies. The relationship between national agendas and local events like the cultural revival, however, is never straightforward. As Eric Hirsch (1995a:185) has pointed out, local ‘cultural projects’ exist and are produced alongside national ones while not necessarily being compatible with them.2

What nation, state, and nationalism are has been the source of much debate: more recently, interest in Pacific nations like Papua New Guinea has meant an examination of these concepts and institutions at a more specific and ethnographic level (see for example Anderson 1983; Foster 1991, 1995, 1995a; Jackson & Penrose 1993; Fox 1990; Otto & Thomas 1997). The concept of nation is ambiguous and there are many different ways and contexts in which it is invoked, imagined and valorised. Although it has been suggested that nationalism holds little sway in Papua New Guinea, particularly for rural populations like the Gogodala, nation-making is a significant force (Foster 1995; Hirsch 1995a; Clark 1997; Jacobsen 1995).3

In this thesis, I argue that Gogodala people locate the nation in certain narratives and imaginings which are based on their perceptions and experiences of their own, and other, lifestyles and landscapes. The nation is a contested category; an ‘imaginative construct’ (Foster 1995:5). As Robert Foster (1991:252) argues, “[n]ations, and national cultures are artefacts - continually imagined, invented, contested, and transformed by the agencies of

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2 National projects often seek to reconfigure these local concerns so that they conform more appropriately to an imagined ideal. Jacobsen (1995:229) has gone so far as to suggest that these local cultural projects are actually bringing the process of nation-making in Papua New Guinea to a halt and are undermining its validity to these communities.

3 Foster (1995:2) defines nation-making as distinct from nation-building: nation-making, he suggests, encompasses both the production of a collective definition of ‘peoplehood’ as well as the construction of ‘individual personhood’ within the terms of the collective peoplehood. Nation-building, on the other hand, indicates the processes by which newly independent governments intentionally attempt to move from ‘tradition’ to ‘modernity’ via large scale social engineering on the part of the state (Foster 1995:3).
individual persons, the state, and global flows of commodities".\(^4\) What the nation is and what it means to be a member of a nation is not a unitary phenomenon: it can be understood, as LiPuma (1995:35-6) argues, as a “genre of claims, understandings, and grounds for recognizing, promoting, and legitimizing peoplehood, identity, and sovereignty”.

John Kelly’s (1995:257) proposition that narratives constitute nations, especially in cases like the Pacific where states came into existence some time before nations, is a particularly salient one.\(^5\) Similarly, in a recent discussion about national narratives in the South Pacific, Ton Otto and Nicholas Thomas (1997:1) argue that nationality or national consciousness (rather than ‘nationalism’) is becoming more significant in the Pacific context; the former referring to a ‘collective imagining’ (see Anderson 1983) as opposed to the more encompassing ‘affirmative patriotism’ of nationalism. They suggest that although this ‘collective imagining’ is perhaps too dilute or insubstantial to constitute an ‘ism’ it may be vital to the ways in which local people articulate and conceive of their locations, practices and actions (Otto & Thomas 1997:1-2).

I argue that this type of imagining does intersect with local concerns and practices: despite the events of the revival in the 1970s, Gogodala people have had little direct interaction with national institutions or their representatives. They live in an area of the country that is very difficult to get to and, once there, equally as hard to travel around.\(^6\) Yet narratives about the nation, or images of what it means to be Papua New Guinean, are concerns of local people, albeit secondary ones.

\(^4\) Foster (1995:4) notes that current anthropological discourses on nation and nationalism perceive the nation to be fabricated - a ‘cultural product’ (see also Jourdan 1995:127).

\(^5\) Homi Bhabha (1990:2-3) focuses on the ‘Janus-faced ambivalence of language itself in the construction of the Janus-faced discourse of the nation’; investigating the nation in the process of its construction and reconstruction through narrative.

\(^6\) At least eighty-five percent of Papua New Guinea’s population live in rural areas and, like the Gogodala, practice a subsistence lifestyle. Jacobsen (1995:228) has noted that despite the fact that there is movement between the rural and urban domains, there does not exist a “general sense of oneness or nationhood among Papua New Guineaans” or a distinctive set of characteristics which set them apart from others in the region and outside.
These images and articulations are often integral to other issues and concerns. Michael Young (1997:91) has asserted that often national or state-organised celebrations 'ride on the back of' other intentions and events, particularly that of Christianity. Christian narratives and celebrations are often interwoven with national subtexts and images (Young 1997:92). Taking these insights further, I suggest that national images ride on the back of many different local agendas.

The canoe race I described above was an event that operated at several levels of experience and intention. It was held to celebrate the official opening of Aketa village's new school and was the first activity on the two day program. Gogodala canoe races are often held on these types of occasions, as well as at the building of new tradestores and Churches, New Years festivities and national or provincial occasions. As such, these races are usually held in conjunction with other activities.7

On the day after the canoe race, then Deputy Prime Minister Chris Haiveta arrived at Aketa and declared the school open bestowing upon it his own name. That this last action was highly appreciated by local people present was surprising to me as their oft-repeated opinions about national or provincial politicians were hardly complimentary. It transpired that Chris Haiveta, from Kerema in Gulf Province, had spent some of his earlier years living in Aketa village working with the mission-based company, Pasuwe. In that period, he had been adopted into one of the prominent families in the village and been given a Gogodala name. He was also seen to be related to Aketa villagers through ancestral ties which delineate a close connection between the ancestors of the Gogodala and those of the Kerema people of Gulf Province.

Occasions like the opening of Aketa school, although seemingly a local concern and celebrated in this fashion, incorporate aspects of national and regional issues. For national politicians and provincial or local administrators, the opening of Aketa school may have been part of a larger project: whether increasing a political profile or espousing the advantages of an educational

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7 In Chapter 8, I look at the ways in which local celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of Papua New Guinean Independence, the Balimo Show, incorporated many elements of local, expatriate, and regional or national considerations and influences.
system funded by the state. For Chris Haiveta, there was a combination of personal and political reasons for opening the school. Local people also had various agendas, as did the expatriates, a few of whom had travelled across from Kawito and Awaba Stations to attend the canoe race and subsequent celebrations. This group of missionaries explained to us that they liked to watch canoe races as they were Gogodala 'cultural games'. Charles and I were the only other expatriates at Aketa and we too had travelled there primarily to see the canoe race, the first one we were to see.

There were very few other Papua New Guineans there, but perhaps two hundred Gogodala people were present. Many came simply to watch the canoe races: but even more turned up later in the day to participate in or simply watch several games of rugby, netball and basketball. The majority of them came from Aketa or neighbouring villages, although several groups had travelled from the more central villages of Dogono, Balimo and Tai. Sakuliyato, our friend, was eager to take us to Aketa as it was her own village before she had married and moved to Tai several years before. Others used the opportunity to visit family and friends or to play in their village sports team. The weekend offered a distinct and enjoyable break from daily activities and was a time in which people sat around talking, preparing and eating feast food, like meat and rice.

Much Gogodala imagining of the nation is based on experiences with the state and it’s representatives, with whom even the most administratively-remote villagers have had some contact. Through these interactions, and celebratory occasions like the one held at Aketa in 1995, people are aware of certain types of relationships and institutions which they, as members of the nation of Papua New Guinea, have become a part. Kelly (1995:262) has

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8 John Kelly (1995:256) defines the state as the institutions which defend and enforce property rights, organise and control access to the division of labour, thus regulating the capitalist markets in a particular area. Jeffery Clark (1997:77) argues that in the rural highlands area there is little imagining of the nation: however, imagining of the state, directly experienced through state institutions, is widespread. LiPuma (1995:45-6) says that the state is both “a means by which a nation objectifies its independence and establishes its place among nations, and the means by which specific classes or groups instil, impose, and sometimes force a particular definition of the nation on a diverse populace”. He points out that Pacific states had the problem of trying to render a colonial state, an adversarial state, into an “an institution and instrument of participatory nationhood” (LiPuma 1995:46).
suggested that, as Papua New Guinea has a relatively ‘weak’ state, the regularising institutions of the state are often perceived by its members to be either distant, peculiar or vaguely disturbing. Communities, like the Gogodala who live in ‘remote’ areas of Papua New Guinea, have not often been the focus of discussions about the state; partly because they have had little productive interaction with it and primarily perceive their own chances of ‘development’ deriving from white people and transnational oil or logging companies. Most village people in the Gogodala area have had contact with community schools, state-funded institutions, either as pupils or as parents and grandparents of students. Other less direct institutions and activities also play a significant part in the making of national narratives or images in Papua New Guinea: particularly Christianity, health centres and hospitals as well as television programs, consumption of commodities such as Pepsi and tinned fish, educational and legal institutions and facilities, and even in some cases, ‘custom’ (Clark 1997:72; Jacobsen 1995:228; Kelly 1995:262; Foster 1995; Errington & Gewertz 1996; Sissons 1997). 9

Yet even ‘weak’ states like Papua New Guinea play a crucial role in delineating the significance of links between people and places (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:12). Chris Ballard (1997:48) has recently noted:

‘[l]and’ - as a shorthand for ties to locality, whether terrestrial or marine - is the basis for membership and nationality for most Melanesians; a claim to land, rather than some abstract notion of citizenship, is how the majority of Melanesians secure a foothold on the political stage and gain the attention of the state.

No public comment about identity by a Papua New Guinean politician is complete without reference to land (Ballard 1997:49-50).

In a recent insightful discussion of national imaginings in the Highlands communities of Papua New Guinea, Clark (1997:77) has suggested that local people often talk about their relationship to their nation in terms of skin colour, bodies, movement and behavioural mannerisms and, occasionally, language and Christianity. The embodied sensing of places, in terms of

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9 Nancy Sullivan (1993) argues that, in Papua New Guinea, television has become a source of national images and unity.
ancestors, names, Christianity, canoes and food, forms the basis of a Gogodala village lifestyle. It informs their perceptions of other people, places and experiences. Inscribed in the original journeys and actions of ancestral actors, the results of which are embedded in bodies and places, these practices and perceptions are learnt and understood through the difficult process of making or collecting food. Consuming and producing such foods create certain types of able bodies. Relations to local landscapes through canoes are sometimes expressed through the performance of certain dances, canoe races, and the making of a particular style of carvings.
The red and white people

 Sending the spirits away

 The Gogodala live between and along the Aramia River, a tributary of the Bamu River, in the north and the Fly River in the south. The villages and stations that make up this language group have been divided into local and district regions, and incorporated into provincial and local administrative distinctions between West Gogodala, East Gogodala, and Fly Gogodala areas. According to the census conducted in 1996, Gogodala speakers number some 20,800 people situated in about 28 villages and five mission or government stations. The environment which these villagers inhabit is dominated by water in the shape of lagoons, creeks, and rivers. Because of the difficulties of travel between villages, communication and movement between them on a regular basis is unusual unless people are related through marriage and land.

 The Gogodala are situated on the southern coast region of Western Province, the main cluster of villages located some fifty kilometres inland from the Fly River. (See Map 2) The area south of the Fly River has exercised some fascination over anthropologists and has been associated with ritualised homosexuality, moieties, low status of women, restricted exchange, and 'great men' as opposed to the 'big man' leadership, clanship, heterosexuality, and forms of competitive and elaborate exchange more conventionally associated with the highlands (Knauft 1993:8; see also Lindenbaum 1984, 1987; Whitehead 1987; Feil 1987; Herdt 1984). Gilbert Herdt (1984:18), for example, wrote in a volume of papers on ritualised homosexuality in Melanesia that the lower Fly river groups were once 'fierce warriors' and that all males were initiated into a secret cult in which sodomy was an integral part. Throughout this area, he continued;

 we see a set of general themes which extend throughout the Western Papuan Gulf: a ritual cult feeding into warriorhood; ritual seclusion and separation from women; and homosexual practices instituted through initiation to spur boys' masculine development (Herdt 1984:20).
Quoting F. E. Williams’ 1936 study of the Keraki people of the Trans-Fly at some length, Herdt (1984:20) argues that Keraki homosexual practices constitute the most famous cross-cultural instance of these practices. He proposes that ritualised homosexuality is a ‘lowlands phenomenon’ and characteristic of non-Austronesian language speakers such as these southwestern Papuan societies (Herdt 1984:48-50). Similarly, Shirley Lindenbaum (1984:340) sets up ideal types of Highland and Lowland, suggesting that the production of men is the intention of the latter and the production of big men the focus of the former. In ‘semen-based’ lowland societies there exists an overwhelming ritual emphasis on bodily substances, whereas in the highlands populations, the surface of the body is more significant.\(^{10}\) Highlands groups also greatly outnumber the small populations of the lowlands and rely on the cultivation of sweet potato and domestic pigs. Lowlands people, on the other hand, depend upon crops like bananas, taro, sago and coconut. Further, in lowland groups homosexual relationships overlap with those of marriage exchanges which are primarily arranged along the lines of sister exchange. In this type of arrangement, married sister and initiate brother often have the same inseminator or sexual partner (Lindenbaum 1984:342-4).\(^{11}\)

In a recent regional analysis of the southwest coast of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya, Bruce Knauft (1993:8) has noted that although the south coast has been characterised in these ways, most groups did not practice ritualised homosexuality: rather, he argues, ritualised heterosexuality was much more prevalent. The Gogodala are only mentioned as one of the groups found inland from the Trans-Fly populations in Knauf’s account, the bush people for coastal communities (Knauft 1993:38). They do, however, share in many of the designated characteristics of these south coast people as described in the accounts of van Baal (1966) for the Marind-Anim, Williams (1936) for

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\(^{10}\) Lindenbaum (1987:221-2) argues that ‘semen’ has a particular geography in Papua New Guinea. What is common to semen-based societies, she argues, is that semen gifts are seen as the “sole physical and psychic path to manhood” (Lindenbaum 1987:224).

\(^{11}\) In a later article, Lindenbaum (1987:222) continues this analysis suggesting that ‘heterosexuality’ and ‘homosexuality’ can be tied to certain spatial categories: that is, lowlands (particularly southwest New Guinea) and highlands.
the Trans-Fly and Elema, Beaver (1920) and Landtman (1917, 1927) for the Kiwai and, more recently, Mary Ayers (1983) for the Morehead people. They form part of the wider non-Austronesian speaking group of communities who stretch along the south coast and share the swampy environment endemic to this area.

Southern Gogodala villages on the Fly River were first contacted by the Reverend James Chalmers in 1899 as he was trying to establish himself and the London Missionary Society (LMS) on Kiwai Island at the mouth of the Fly River. Although he purchased land at Gaima, Gogodala land on the bank of the river, Chalmers died shortly afterwards and the land was purchased by the Resident Magistrate of Western Division, Jiers, for a police station. It was not until three decades later, in 1934, that the Unevangelised Fields Mission (UFM) decided to station itself amongst the inland villages of the Gogodala.

These villages were originally referred to by various early administrators as the Girara or the Kabiri people, words which in Gogodala mean 'language' and the 'Kabili lagoon' respectively. It was not until the 1920s that A. P. Lyons (1926:329) reported that the 'real' name of this group of people was Gogodara. The name Gogodala or Gogodara and how it came to represent a fairly diverse, widespread group of villages is somewhat unclear. When Paul Wirz, a Swiss ethnographer who lived in Dadi village for three months in the 1920s, asked the Gogodala where they came from some of them pointed to the north-west. Wirz concluded that the Gogodala originally came from that region, gogo meaning the 'north-west winds' and dala being the general term for 'people' (Crawford 1981:34). Neuendorf, a linguist and missionary with the UFM, has argued however that the name Gogodala was the equivalent Gogodala word for the Kiwai name for them, signifying that the

12 When Lyons asked the villagers at Balimo what their group was called, he gestured with his arms to take in the area which encompassed the Kabili lagoon near the Balimo longhouse. The Gogodala person to whom he spoke consequently replied 'Kabili'.
13 W. N. Beaver (1914:411) estimated that in 1914, there were 6000 or 7000 Girara people. Lyons (1914:99) suggested in the same year that there was twenty two villages in this group of people, and these villages were divided up into three geographical groups: six villages in the "Southern or Giama group", four in the "North-Eastern group" and twelve villages in the "North-Western or Barimo group". 
‘North-west people’ simply meant that the Gogodala inhabited the northwest area of the Kiwai people (Weymouth 1978:8).

All contemporary Gogodala people belong to one of two moieties: the ‘red people’ or Segela moiety, and the Paiya or ‘white people’. In each moiety there are four clans or udaga and each clan is coloured red or white according to the moiety to which they belong. These clans are further divided into gawa, ‘canoes’, and each person belongs to a canoe, a clan, and a moiety. Essentially, in a system which underlies the basis of contemporary practice, red people and white people cannot marry within their own red and white clans. Red marries white, providing their children with allegiances to both moieties. As each village contains families from both moieties, people either marry within their own village or (usually) a neighbouring one, cementing interests in and ties between these villages. As a result, a person tends to have close relationships with perhaps two other villages than the one in which they reside. Children inherit their clan and canoe membership from their father but also acknowledge a debt to the clan canoe of their mother from which they were born. Wawi Wabadala, a senior high school teacher at Awaba Station on the Aramia River, used the metaphor of a woven pandanus bed mat to describe the sets of complex relationships that belonging in these different clans and canoes entails; each separate strand touching several others at various points.

Each clan canoe has a distinctive design or gawa tao. This term literally means ‘canoe eye’ but I will use it interchangeably with ‘canoe design’ as this was the local English gloss for it. In the past, these gawa tao were painted on the side of canoes, drums, dance masks, ancestral figures and inscribed on men’s bodies during ceremonial occasions. Today they are usually restricted to paddles, shirts, jeans, some carved objects, like the racing canoes, and woven grass bags.

In the pre-Christian past, the gawa tao was the place from which all strength and power derived, for the canoe eye was the site in which ugu

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14 Pastor Busu from Tai village suggested that C. G. Murray named the Gogodala in 1916 as written in Church records at Mapodo, the APCM Bible College on the Aramia River.

15 In English, gawa tao are generally referred to as canoe designs, although literally they are ‘canoe eyes’ or ‘eye of the canoe’.
resided. *Ugu* was interpreted by early missionaries to mean ‘monsters’, evil and fearful creatures who threatened travellers. The nature of *ugu* seems more complex, however: *ugu* could take the form of many animals, not having a specific shape of its own, and often appeared in the guise of a crocodile or a similar type of underwater creature. These so-called monsters attacked unwary travellers, those who passed through the specific spaces belonging to the *ugu* and were unknown to it. *Ugu* was not confined, however, to these mysterious monsters in the waterways: Crawford (1981:50) writes that *ugu* was the ‘spiritual force’ of the canoe, a force that was perceived to be either in control or aware of most events and that was embodied in the *gawa tao*. The strength and capacity inherent in all *gawa tao* arose from the *ugu* which was transmitted to ceremonial objects, canoes, and people’s bodies through the efforts of a skilled *sakema* or carver. Without such spirit, these objects were useless. *Ugu* was also instrumental in keeping villages free from illness and warfare, as old men in a trance-like state could be entered by an *ugu* who would warn those gathered of impending danger.

When the missionaries came and ‘sent the spirits away’ (as the period of missionisation is often described), however, many of the *ugu* monsters disappeared or were rendered ineffectual and travelling between places is now less problematic or dangerous than in pre-Christian times. The *gawa tao* and the ceremonial objects on which they were painted were targeted by the UFM missionaries in the 1930s and 1940s and the practical and ceremonial significance of the designs was undermined, their capacities weakened by claims that *ugu* were little more than evil spirits. Nonetheless, the *gawa tao* were still being inscribed on paddles, clothes, village windows, and some carved objects when Tony Crawford arrived in Balimo in 1972. Canoe races, like the one at Aketa, were also still being held in the early 1970s at celebrations like New Years Day, openings of trade stores and schools and the *gawa tao* remain primary.

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16 Weymouth writes that *ugu* were thought of as malign and were commonly referred to as ‘evil spirits’. He said that *ugu* could assume corporeal forms, like that of a crocodile or human, or it could exist outside of a bodily expression. These *ugu* dwelt mostly in the mouth of a creek or swamp (1978:26-7).

17 Although various well known *ugu* still lurk under the water at particular places on the river-ways of the area as I explore in the following chapter.
elements of local claims to land, names, trees and stories. Canoe eyes are integral to the contemporary mediation of land disputes, as each clan design contains information about the canoes and ancestors who found, created, or named the piece of land or section of water.

**Placing the Gogodala**
The intimate connection between Gogodala people and their canoes is a central concern of this thesis. Canoes, as both everyday, practical mediators of movement and the primary space of belonging in a clan, are simultaneously the vehicle and metaphor for the connection between people and their places. In later chapters I will explore in more detail the ways in which canoes inform and transform peoples’ lives, actions, bodies, and places. To be a Gogodala person is to have a Gogodala name and sit inside a canoe. Being or sitting inside a canoe is being somewhere, a secure space defined by the name of the canoe and the place from where it came. A person who does not belong to a clan canoe and therefore has no *gawa tao* is often described as being like ‘floating grass’, a local analogy which emphasises erratic and unpredicted movement. Floating grass has no roots in the soil, and consists of clumps of grass which sit on the surface of the water and obstruct the movement of canoes. To be called floating grass is derogatory and it is usually applied to people who are unable to substantiate claims of belonging to a clan canoe, and hence having a link to land, sago, and lagoons. Floating grass has no control over its own movement and actions, and it is always destructive, sweeping away carefully laid fish traps and nets constructed across river and creek mouths.

The environment in which these people live is perceived, by both locals and outsiders alike, to be a difficult one and Gogodala people are aware of their own capacity to survive in it. This experience of the surrounding landscape is, as in many areas of Papua New Guinea and Melanesia, a defining
Ballard (1997:50) has commented that for the Huli people of the Haeapugua Basin in the Southern Highlands, for example, a sense of the local landscape pervades every aspect of social life in Haeapugua, in clan and personal names, as a subject for speech and song, as the source of the materials for clothing and decorations, and in the type or quality of foodstuffs (see also Kahn 1996; Jolly 1991; Feld 1990; Weiner 1991).

For Gogodala village people, in particular, the experience of their environment is constitutive of their ‘way of life’ and underlies expressions about work, bodies, places, and Christianity amongst other things.

Although places are vital to human communities, places and landscapes have been little conceptualised in anthropological terms and, as Margaret Rodman (1992:640) argues, have until recently (see for example Hirsch & O’Hanlon 1995; Bender 1993; Feld & Basso 1996) tended to be seen as little more than locale in which the people studied live (see also Kahn 1996). Landscapes, places, and spaces have tended to be part of a larger analysis of people embedded in their systems of meaning and knowledge. In his introduction to a recent volume on the anthropology of landscape, Eric Hirsch has argued that the concept of landscape, like the body, has been largely unproblematised in anthropological discussions. Likewise, Rodman in two

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18 Mary Ayers, in her 1983 PhD thesis on the Morehead area (the area Williams called the Trans-Fly) of the south coast, also draws attention to the significance of place and landscape. She writes: “it is in the visible land and landscape, the ordered, meaningful segmentation of the countryside into actual places that the richness and elaboration of Morehead culture lies” (Ayers 1983:43). Each place in the local landscape is known and named; created by ancestral beings (Ayers 1983:44).

19 Geographers like David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (1985:2) have used a phenomenology of place to conceptualise the complex relationship between the world and people. There have been many papers written on the phenomenology of place, many of which acknowledge a debt to Martin Heidegger’s formulations of being-in-the-world and dwelling (Tuan 1977; Relph 1976,1985; Grange 1985; Schafer 1985; Violich 1985; Buttmer & Seamon 1980; Godkin 1980; Seamon 1980). In a paper entitled “Building Dwelling Thinking” (1977:324-5), Heidegger defined dwelling as “to remain, to stay in a place ... To be a human being to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell”. Jadran Mimica (1993:81) has noted some of the potential problems of the unproblematic application of Heidegger’s notion of being-in-the-world in ethnographic contexts: situating Heidegger’s philosophy in the project of overcoming ‘Western Metaphysics’ and questioning the transcultural nature of his basic precepts. While not encompassing these concepts in my analysis I nevertheless find them useful ways in which bodies, places and the fundamental relationships between them are brought to the fore.

20 Hirsch (1995:1) does acknowledge that landscapes are an underlying proposition in ethnographic texts as a framing convention which informs the anthropologist and brings her or his analysis into ‘view’; as it has been used to refer to local level meanings attributed to indigenous people and their interaction with their environment. Hirsch (1995:2) notes that the term landscape came into use in the late sixteenth century in the context of painting, becoming associated with an ideal or imagined world depicted in such a genre of art which was also associated with the desire to improve or otherwise
articles (1992:640, 1993) dealing with the ‘problem’ of place in contemporary anthropological and geographical writings, has asserted that, as anthropologists and human beings, we are situated in place as well as time and culture. She suggests that, although volumes like that edited by Arjun Appadurai (1988) in *Cultural Anthropology* have began to deal with questions of place and landscape, studies still tend to privilege culture or language. “Rarely is place problematized”, she writes, and even those ostensibly interested in place have portrayed ethnographic places primarily as locales or backdrops for human life (Rodman 1993:244).

Places and spaces are fundamental to human communities and people respond to them in a myriad number of ways. Throughout the thesis, I present some glimpses of daily movements and actions of Gogodala people in their processes of interacting with and constituting their landscape. In order to do so, I explore the notion of places and spaces and the construction of the landscape through the sensing of places, focusing on what David Howe (1991:3) has termed ‘bodily ways of knowing’. Keith Basso (1988:100) suggests that people engage with their landscape in three ways: through observing it for a variety of reasons; through utilising and engaging with it in the activities associated with work and movement; and through articulating certain things about it. Unlike Basso, who finds the last of these three processes more useful and easily accessible than the others, I will concentrate on all of these interrelated aspects of interacting with the landscape.

transform the local countryside. As a result, the word landscape implies a relationship between the everyday and the ideal of social life as well as that between place and space, inside and outside, and image and representation (Hirsch 1995:3-4). Positing landscape as a ‘cultural process’ which exists somewhere between these two poles of experience, he suggests that it is in this type of movement that the most fruitful analysis can be achieved (Hirsch 1995:5).

21 Looking at how people live is a very difficult and problematic exercise and David Saile (1985:178) has acknowledged that even when we attempt to explore other peoples’ dwelling, we can only glimpse what they experience in their ‘taken-for-granted’ world and perhaps experience shared feelings.

22 Howe (1991:8) suggests that as anthropologists we need to conceptualise cultures as ‘ways of sensing the world’ rather than as texts to be deciphered. In the same volume of papers, Constance Classen (1991:239) calls for the redefinition of concepts such as worldview and cosmology (which are often used interchangeably). Such an association assumes that cosmologies are about seeing and vision, and that cultures are able to be encompassed and observed by ‘someone with the correct vantage point’. Such a conception denies the significances of the sensory complexities of any cosmology. She suggests that cosmologies are not detached ‘views’ of the world: they are “wet and warm, fragrant and foul, full of sound, colour, and feeling” (Classen 1991:254). A more useful way of defining cosmology then would encompass not just the visual aspects but all the ways of ‘sensing the world’ (Classen 1991:239).
A central aim of my discussion is to encompass the numerous ways in which local people talk about, sense and experience their places. I suggest that they do so by sitting in canoes. It is the embodied and experiential dimension that I wish to emphasise. In recent years much has been written about the body, based on the premise that the body is not a constant: rather, it is produced quite distinctively at different moments of human existence and history. Instead of being imagined as an object which can be known from a distance, the body has increasingly become talked about as an agent - an experiencing agent (Csordas 1994:1-3; Lyon and Barbalet 1994:50).

For this purpose, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962, 1969) phenomenology is useful as it allows us to orient ourselves towards our own bodies and our human situation. Phenomenology is predicated upon the acting and perceiving body, but it also points to a crucial relationship with the 'world', the surrounding environment and the context of every human being. It emphasises the fundamental link between humans and the world, focusing on the foundation of knowledge as a concrete 'inheritance in the world' (Langer 1989:xv). This living body is also important because it is enmeshed

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23 However, Thomas Csordas (1990) has proposed that the body might play a more radical role than has previously been envisaged in the literature loosely collated as the 'anthropology of the body'. Although Marcel Mauss outlined the idea of the body as the 'ground of culture' as early as 1950 in an article called 'The Techniques of the Body', this conceptualisation remains largely unexplored in discussions of social and cultural practices (Csordas 1994:6). In this article Mauss (1979:104) argued that the 'techniques of the body' form the basis of all social life, as bodily habits are different in distinct social groups. All modes of action are 'techniques of the body'. Margaret Lock (1993:133) suggests that despite such a proliferation of material on the nature of the human body and its centrality in the constitution of all reflection and action in the world, it remains largely unproblematised in anthropology.

24 Merleau-Ponty (1969:27) wrote in the preface to The Phenomenology of Perception that phenomenology was the 'study of essences', a philosophical position in which these essences are put back into existence and which does not "expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of the 'facticity'". Taking Merleau-Ponty as the basis for a theoretical position based on phenomenological presuppositions, Csordas (1993:135) has advanced the argument that "[e]mbodiment as a paradigm or methodological orientation requires that the body be understood as the existential ground of culture - not as an object that is 'good to think' but as a subject that is 'necessary to be'."

25 As Merleau-Ponty (1962: 203) writes, the 'theory of the body is already a theory of perception' in which the body and the world are mutually implicated to the perceiver. Movement of the body is the way in which we access the world and the objects in it (Merleau-Ponty 1962:140). It is the medium through which our perceptual field is organised into figure-background and the means by which the body establishes its relation with the world (Langer 1989:87). Merleau-Ponty argued that, in order to really understand what it is to see, feel, and hear, we have to abandon the notion of the external world existing in itself. Instead he suggests that we need to return to the 'pre-objective' realm of perception, before reflection (Langer 1989:5). He seeks to reinstate the body as our 'point of view in the world' rather than as an object; for our body can never become an object to us as we can never move outside
in its relations with other people at the preobjective stage and perception always involves a field or context: the perceiving subject is always and already influenced by and influencing 'cultural factors' (A. Strathern 1996:37).

It is as the arbitrary and specific context for interacting and perceiving humans that I wish to employ the notion of landscape. As Barbara Bender (1993:1) has pointed out; “[l]andscapes are created by people - through their experience and engagement with the world around them”. I emphasise the fluidity of the landscape for, as Hirsch (1995:23) has argued, there is no absolute landscape; instead, the relationships between its constitutive elements (space and place, inside and outside, image and representation) depend upon historical and cultural contexts (see also Relph 1976, 1985). Landscapes which we experience in daily life are always particular scenes, Relph (1985:23) writes, “such as the landscape I see through my office window ... Landscapes include trees, lawnmowers, garbage bags, trucks, people and clouds in all their particular manifestations”. There is no such object as a landscape distinct from these particular moments. He writes: “We know them [landscapes] because they reveal the state of the weather and the passage of the seasons, because they harbor the places of our memories, because they are the visible matrix of where we live” (Relph 1985:24; see also Cosgrove 1984).26

Human existence is essentially and necessarily spatial and people attach many different meanings, practices and significances to spaces and places in their landscapes. As Miriam Kahn (1996:167) suggests: “[p]laces are complex constructions of social histories, personal and interpersonal experiences, and selective memory”. Through the conflation of places and bodies, meaning and value emerge.27 Places and people are inseparable, as places can only exist in relation to people and the meanings of places are only

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26 They take on the character of human experiences and, as a result, can be dull, joyful, exhilarating or just the opposite (Relph 1985:23).

27 While place is not immanent in our bodies, it arises from the ‘felt’ phenomena through our body’s participation in it (Grange 1985: 83).
revealed in the actions and preferences of the people who constitute them (Violich 1985:113).

To be human, argues Relph (1976:6), is to live in a world that is replete with significant places, to have and to know your own place - we “live, act and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places”. Although place is closely related to space and landscape, the experiential dimension of space and landscape are immediate and part of the everyday encounter with the world. Place, on the other hand, is constituted through and in memories and affections in various types of complex relationships. “Place experiences are necessarily time-deepened and memory-qualified” (Relph 1985:26).

Sitting in canoes is the means by which Gogodala people come to know their places and imagine their spaces, through their movement across the local landscape. Places and spaces in this water-logged environment are replete both with ancestral significance and more personal, immediate meaning and value: formulated by ancestral intention and action, as well as colonial and post-colonial experiences. The environment was created by canoes, ugu, and bodies, it is the way in which local people perceive and sense the passing of time and movement. It is also the situation in which local people came to know white people and is central to local understandings of Christianity, development, and the state. When missionaries ‘sent the spirits away’ they transformed the landscape of local peoples’ experiences and imaginings. Ruminations about the lived experiences of sitting in canoes reflect refashionings of past and future significances, many of which I explore in following chapters.

Throughout the thesis, I use the notion of places rather than that of place in order to emphasise the embodied movement which is so essential to the constitution and experience of the landscape in this part of Papua New Guinea, and to avoid essentialising the concept of place. The local landscape is both static and mobile, fluid and capable of sudden change. I also make comparative remarks about other places and issues; in Papua New Guinea and further afield, throughout the
thesis. Despite the problems associated with cross-cultural analysis, of making 'partial connections' between different places (Strathern 1991:51-2), I do so to suggest "a resemblance, rather than a relation".  

The anthropological figure in the landscape

It is not just a question of 'placing' the Gogodala people in this analysis, however: my husband and I were integral players in the whole experience, firmly embedded in the landscape of those Gogodala people with whom we lived for fifteen months. I also remain the primary author of this text, representing this experience and environment in a particular way. Certainly, the perception and experience of this environment is definitive for an outsider and the everyday relationship between local people and their surroundings is the very thing that people like myself are confronted with and can never hope to engage with fluency. Basso (1988:99) has noted that "[a]n unfamiliar landscape, like an unfamiliar language, is always a little daunting, and when the two are encountered together ... the combination might be downright unsettling". Neither language or landscape, however, can be ignored as they are emphatically 'there' (Basso 1988:99) and the experiences of the anthropologist are always embodied. Kahn (1996:167) poses the question: why, if anthropology is based on the anthropologist experiencing other people in their places, does the notion of place remains such an undeveloped one in anthropology? She remarks that it is indeed 'curious' that it is while anthropologists are 'out of place' that they attempt to discover the significance of places to others.

28 I draw on material from a diverse group of ethnographers to punctuate certain points; many from Papua New Guinea but several not. I am not trying to bring these distinct cases, all situated within their own times and places, into a unified analysis but rather aim to emphasise the significance of the issues raised in the thesis.

29 Diane Bell (1993:1-2) in a volume called Gendered Fields, points out that ethnographers do fieldwork "by establishing relationships, and by learning to see, think and be in another culture, and we do this as persons of a particular age, sexual orientation, belief, educational background, ethnic identity and class ... we do it also as women and men" (See also Wafer 1996; Mallett 1996; Macintyre 1993).

30 Miriam Kahn (1996:167) poses the question: why, if anthropology is based on the anthropologist experiencing other people in their places, does the notion of place remains such an undeveloped one in anthropology? She remarks that it is indeed 'curious' that it is while anthropologists are 'out of place' that they attempt to discover the significance of places to others.

31 She writes: "[m]y understanding of Wamiran place lies most profoundly at the juncture of Wamira biography and my autobiography. Places blossom, along with my understanding of them, where Wamirans and I connect" (Kahn 1996:168).
commented on to a great extent by Gogodala people and was a significant way in which they communicated particular notions of the intimate relationship between their bodies and places to me. The transformation of my body over time paralleled the different personal experiences which shaped it and in turn influenced those around me. My interaction with the landscape and the people who constitute its significances became the site of my partial understanding. Consequently, I have attempted to incorporate these moments into the analysis as they were integral to the generation and context of fieldwork knowledge.

Charles and I spent the fifteen months living in Tai village, some twelve kilometres walk from Balimo town which is the main urban centre for central Gogodala villages. We travelled often between Tai and Balimo, particularly when the weather and therefore the road was fine, spending time with different families in these places. Tai is a relatively small village by Gogodala standards (about two hundred people) and had undergone a split in the last decade in which almost half of the population moved about one kilometre away and created Oseke village.32 Having been in contact with Karen Bickerton, an expatriate businesswoman living in Balimo, before our arrival in the area, we had somewhere to stay when we first arrived. Karen was a missionary, although not directly involved with the Asia Pacific Christian Mission (APCM) at the time of our arrival, and she and her husband Paul ran the local Ewa Saba trade store in Balimo.33 Shortly after we arrived, the business was liquidated and Karen and Paul returned to Australia. Before she left, however, Karen introduced us to one of her Gogodala friends, Sakuliyato, who had spent some time many years before as their 'housegirl'.
I use the names of people with whom we lived and spoke so that I can attempt to avoid glossing individual statements as somehow representative of ‘the Gogodala’. By doing this, however, I do not seek to undermine the validity of their perceptions and expressions of what constitutes Gogodala lives and things, expressed as they were to an overtly interested outsider. Rather, I want to try and bring in to this account some of the people who formulated and shaped our experiences as it is specifically about these experiences and perceptions that I am writing.

To this end, I want to introduce several of the people with whom we had the most interaction in our time there and whose expressions, details, and experiences frequent the pages of this thesis: Sakuliyato was our first friend and through her we became attached to her husband Kukuwa’s family in Tai village. Sakuliyato was in her early to mid-thirties and her husband was several years younger. Kukuwa’s parents Mala Sogowa and his wife Kukupiyato adopted me as their daughter and gave me a Gogodala name. Sakuliyato, in lieu of her mother and brothers who lived in another village, adopted Charles and similarly gave him a clan name. After spending three weeks with Mala and

Figure 3. Kamo and Genasi and their children
Kukupiyato and their extended family in their home, we asked about securing a small house for ourselves. Promptly we were presented with the option of a small house near the entrance to the village which belonged to the village pastor. He was currently living in the large house constructed recently by the village people for the pastor and his family. We stayed for the majority of our time in that small house, moving to a newer house built by Kukuwa only months before we left the area.

While most of our daily experiences necessarily revolved around Tai village and our extended families there, we also became attached to a different group of people in Balimo. Kamo and Genasi Bagali became our haven in Balimo, in whose house we could sit and rest after the long walk into town and through whom we spent much time in Saweta, Kini and Balimo villages. Kamo had spent many years in Port Moresby working for the Papua New Guinea Defense Forces and was in his early forties, while Genasi was some years younger. Both Kamo and Genasi spoke English with ease and were vital to my own understanding of Gogodala stories as well as more general expressions. Kamo’s younger brother Nakeyo, his elderly mother Sawiyato
and his father’s brother Sanada Giliwa were vital to the process of gathering information about ancestral stories and so on.

Although the ancestor stories (iniwa olagi) were recorded on tape in Gogodala, by prior consent of the story teller, and then translated into English by either Sakuliyato, Kamo or Nakeyo, most of the other comments and daily observations were spoken in English or Gogodala. As my grasp of Gogodala became more accomplished over time, these latter statements became increasingly decipherable. More complex explanations and stories, however, were translated for me. Many of the younger people spoke in English, having spent several years at community schools, and their expression primarily utilised local idioms and concepts in English such as ‘sitting in canoes’, ‘canoe designs’ and ‘floating grass’. Most of the older people, however, spoke only Gogodala and we initially relied very heavily on the younger members of the families we encountered. Neither Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea pidgin, hereafter referred to as TP) or Hiri Motu were spoken much by any age group. Consequently, unless indicated otherwise in the text, the ancestral stories quoted in some length both in the text and appendices were recorded in Gogodala and then translated into English by a Gogodala person.
The fight

I want for a moment to resume the story of the Aketa canoe race with which I began for it brings into focus some of the contestations which result not only from these canoe races, but also from more everyday disputes about canoes that figure in people's lives. For the excitement and the ramifications of the race did not end as the canoes sped past us, the watchers, in June 1995. Several metres past our position on the bank of the river, the canoe which was leading was deliberately rammed by the canoe behind it. Men from both canoes were tipped into the suddenly frenzied water and women on the shore had already begun to move, screaming their deprecations as they, almost in a body, sped away from the scene of the upturned canoes. As we stood, suddenly stripped of the celebratory and delighted aura and feeling increasingly vulnerable and visible, dripping men ran past us on the narrow pathway wielding paddles, hastily acquired axes and branches. Trying to follow the rapidly disappearing women and children, we only succeeded in getting ourselves entangled in a knot of impassioned men and became increasingly alarmed. Until Giliwa, one of my brothers, stopped and reassured us we were unsure what to do. Soon after, older men gained control of the situation, exorting the paddlers and other men to calm down and stop fighting. It was a salutary lesson in the kind of activity entailed by these canoe races which were once the basis of male initiation ceremonies and an integral part of warring and head-hunting raids.

It also illuminated the point that canoes are the vehicle of dispute and resentment as much as belonging, and disputes about metaphorical or real canoes often demarcate specific areas of disagreement and conflict. The terms of belonging in canoes are being constantly reconceptualised and can be a source of some bitterness, particularly in the context of land disputes, races between village canoes, and perceived differences in access to money or education. The rancour which succeeded this fight between the two villages represented by the canoes and their associated families, was carried over into the next canoe race held less than a week later at another village on the
Aramia. These canoe races can be a source or a focus of some discontent between villages, or between particular families within these villages.

The issue of belonging or sitting in canoes, thereby having claims to land or water, names and ancestral links, permeates all of the chapters in this thesis as it is a central preoccupation for local people. To be dismissed as floating grass in such a context is damning, as sitting in canoes enables people to participate in their daily activities. In the following chapter, I look at some of the images and narratives through which people express a shared sense of the past in the context of public and increasingly unitary articulations about the ancestral origins of Gogodala people, villages, canoes, and places. The iniwa olagi, ‘ancestor stories’, detail the migration of the Gogodala ancestors to the area in several canoes, the subsequent creation and naming of places, and the constitution of certain practices. These stories posit close moral and spatial relationships with white people, particularly missionaries, laying the basis for a distinctive indigenous Christianity. Recently, the phrase ‘our customary ways’ has come to denote a particular version of the ancestral and colonial past which resonates with interests in ‘custom’ in Papua New Guinea. Overwhelmingly, however, these ancestor stories are replete with references to the practices and experiences of the first Gogodala people and underline the significance of the places and spaces of the immediate landscape.

The experience of places through senses, food, and spatial dimensions of everyday life is also a feature of Gogodala perceptions of themselves and others. Chapter 3 brings together some of these issues and shows how this experience of place, space and time underlies contemporary claims about customary ways, the past and the future. It is in the landscape that the movement of time, through the passing of the seasons, becomes apparent. Local Christian and missionary notions of gendered spaces have been a very significant factor in this self-conscious and self-reflexive look at the past and its significance for the contemporary context.

In Chapter 4, the ways in which corporeal metaphors are used to show the connections between people and places are discussed. Names and naming practices are central to this process. People are linked to land through their
membership in their clan canoes, often equated with owning and using a Gogodala name. Possessing a name, however, is only a part of this process as names are substantiated and embodied in people through blood and skins. People are rendered Gogodala by sitting in their canoes, by having and using names, and by demonstrating these associations through their bodies and practices. I relate the experiences of one particular child, who was adopted by Sakuliyato and her husband Kukuwa, as the processes by which he came to sit in Kukuwa’s canoe and bear a specific name, paralleled my own understanding of naming processes and bore an intimate relation to my Gogodala name.

In Chapter 5, I explore images of body shapes and sizes posited as central to an intimate association with the landscape. Today, as in the past, sago is the primary food that is consumed. The environment is ideal for the growth of sago palms in the swamps that surround the villages, and women are those who bear the responsibility of providing sago for their extended families. But despite the increasing availability of trade store goods like rice, tinned fish, sugar and tea, village people have little access to money and sago remains the adjunct to, if not, the meal. Through the necessity of daily village life, people’s bodies are rendered strong and capable. Urban and white people are increasingly characterised as soft and heavy, bodily images that are associated with the ambiguities of development and ‘living on money’.

In Chapter 6, I explore the processes by which, through the development of an indigenous evangelical Christianity, certain practices and objects were objectified and vilified as ‘un-Christian’. Carvings painted with gawa tao, canoe designs, imbued with ugu were targeted by Christian converts and expatriate missionaries as ‘idol worship’. In the 1970s, there was a movement to rearticulate the significance and nature of these carvings and practices for contemporary Gogodala people. Spurred on by Tony Crawford’s interests and contacts with markets for the types of carvings previously produced by Gogodala sakema, or carvers, several villages in the Balimo area became involved in this process.

From this ‘revival’ emerged a type of carving which, although based on the ancestral canoe designs and former ceremonial costumes, is produced
primarily for the consumption of tourists and other outsiders. In Chapter 7, the different types of carvings made in the 1970s and the 1990s are discussed and the significance of the canoe designs, as embodied connections between Gogodala people and their places, is brought to the fore. Chapter 8 then deals with one particular moment in 1995: the twentieth celebration of Papua New Guinea’s Independence held in Balimo in September, and suggests that the intertwining of the local, regional, and national issues and concerns in the 1995 Balimo Show are indicative of the experiences of many local groups. I discuss the way in which Christianity, ‘culture’, and ‘development’ are being brought together in a local effort to redress the limited access of the Balimo community to employment, education, money and the means to travel. The idea and practice of sitting in canoes is central to this initiative.

A few days before we were leaving I was approached by a person who I had not talked to before who asked me about my ‘project’ and what I had found out about the Gogodala people. I was unprepared for the question and didn’t know how to answer as the conversation was being conducted in a secretive manner. The person asked whether I was aware that the son of a prominent local member of the community, a professional living in Moresby, was currently researching the connection between the original migration of the ancestors and a particular ‘tribe’ of Israel. This person had been to Israel in order to find out the precise relationship. I was then asked did we not find it peculiar that the first missionaries had known where the Gogodala were living, and had followed the route of the original ancestors to their place. “How did they know we were here? Why did they come?”

In the next chapter, I will look in some detail at the iniwa olagi, or ancestor stories, that outline this journey of the Gogodala ancestors who came in two large canoes from somewhere south of their current location. I also explore the connections that many local people are positing between this original trek and the coming of the early expatriate administrators and missionaries to the area. At the time, though, the conversation was very puzzling and disquietening as it brought up something that until this moment had been only hinted during certain moments in the telling of a particular story
or incident. The person was interested in the extent of my knowledge about this question around which many discussions had been initiated throughout the area.

As the conversation continued it became obvious that it is not simply with white people, and the Biblical history of the tribes of Israel, that historical ties have been uncovered. The person confessed to being instrumental in warning others not to inform me of the suspected link between a ‘tribe’ at Mt Bosavi (to the north east of the Gogodala) and the Gogodala families who sit in a clan of the same name. It was also suggested that the police were investigating a link between the techniques of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), the OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka) in Irian Jaya, and the secret ceremonies of the Gogodala; specifically the special medicine associated with the *Aida* ceremonies which enabled the dead to be brought back to life. It was not the first time that such a concept had been mentioned in conversations about other people. The OPM and BRA in particular are seen to be very effective in their use of such techniques.

The question was simple - had I discovered the link between all of these events and issues, had I an answer to the questions which are being asked and debated amongst local people about the types of relationships which they have with other people and other places? My presence in the area only seemed to confirm that the Gogodala are substantially connected to others, white and Melanesian. These questions appear throughout the following discussions as they constitute the negotiation of Gogodala interest not only in their own communities, lifestyles, and places but in wider issues and links; I will return to these in more detail in later chapters. But first, I want to turn to the ancestor stories and the coming of the original people to the places and spaces of the Gogodala landscape.
Chapter 2
From the first place

Two canoes
The iniwa olagi, or ‘ancestor stories’, are narratives which resonate with Gogodala experiences and memories of colonialism, missionisation, and postcoloniality. Local people, living both in the area and further afield, posit certain links between white and Gogodala people and places, as well as between them and other groups in their own or neighbouring countries. Connections made between the past of local communities and that of white people are made in explicit comparisons between biblical stories and events and those contained in the iniwa olagi. There are many instances in both ancestral and Biblical narratives which demonstrate this relationship.

The iniwa olagi relate the actions and journeys of the original ancestors, the iniwa luma, who migrated to the area in two large canoes from somewhere south of the Torres Strait. These stories express what Margaret Jolly (1991:48) has called the ‘indissoluble identity of indigenous people and place’, through the articulation of the ancestral construction and mapping of the landscape. Ancestor stories are considered to be fairly general knowledge; indeed, this original journey was acted out by school children at the Balimo Show in 1995. Although the iniwa olagi belong to particular clans, and specific details are known only to a few in those clans, local people claim a common link to these stories; through their public recitation the stories constitute a common ancestral heritage and landscape. As is often the case in Melanesia, these stories are replete with place names and details of topography.

1 Klaus Neumann (1992:295) has noted that, prior to colonial and mission interaction in the area, even groups as large as the Tolai had little conception of themselves as a united ethnic and linguistic category. It is unclear, as I suggested in Chapter 1, whether Gogodala speakers considered themselves a united group of people. It seems more likely that particular villages were close and had primary ties through marriages and common land, and other villages were the source of conflict and war. Even today, village people have close ties with about three villages which are (usually) their neighbours which they prefer to marry into, from which their mother or father came, or in which they have some claims to trees, land or water.
and, through them, the environment is rendered known and knowable. There are other categories of ancestral stories, mainly concerned with the establishment of the villages after the initial creation and naming of the landscape, and these stories belong to specific villages, families, and clans. I will look at several examples of these later in the chapter and explicate some of the ways in which they relate to contemporary claims for land in the context of logging and oil drills.

There are several levels at which these stories operate and are experienced now, as there are various contexts in which they are told. Those elderly men and women who know the details of the stories can be called upon to give specific information about the travels of a particular ancestor or canoe, or about the ancestral significance of a place name, in land disputes which are held either at the Council Chambers in Balimo or the local village Church. It is here that these stories are heard, contested, and in which one version is credited with more veracity than another. Disputes about land ownership erupt over various issues and incidents, from the surreptitious removal of coconuts from someone else’s coconut palm to bitter family struggles over the control of garden lands, sago or fishing areas. The construction of a test drill by Phillips Petroleum, between the villages of Yau and Adiba (near Balimo), in 1995 precipitated several days of heated argument about land ownership. I will discuss this issue later in the chapter but suffice it to say that the ancestor stories remain the final arbiter of such ownership claims.

The context in which these stories are presented and discussed is increasingly a public one. Before European contact, these ancestor stories would have only been heard within the men’s section of the longhouse. Now women participate in the expression of and knowledge about the ancestors and rearticulations of these narratives within the context of Biblical stories. Old

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2 Jolly (1992a) has suggested that notions of tradition have been differently constituted and expressed according to certain colonial and postcolonial experiences. For Vanuatu and Fiji, on the one hand kastom (pidgin) in Vanuatu was seen to denote a quite dramatic break with the past which needed to be revived; while Fiji’s vakuvanua (pidgin) as the ‘way of the land’ expresses an explicit and smooth continuity of past and present. Jolly (1992a:330) attributes this difference partly to differing colonial and postcolonial experiences. Ben Burt (1994:5) also notes that expressions about the past and references to customary ways are inextricably bound up in preoccupations with the concerns and issues of the present.
men, however, are acknowledged as the main repository of ancestral knowledge, particularly in the case of public presentations of the iniwa olagi. At the Land Mediation meeting held at the Balimo Council Chambers for claimants to the land around the site of the oil test drill, women involved sat around and underneath the building shouting their opinions and disagreements to the men inside. They were not asked to present stories or offer their representations of the land dispute.

The iniwa olagi form the basis of local introspection about the past and ‘customary ways’. Discussions about iniwa ela gi or ‘customary ways’ foreground the actions of ancestral beings, emphasising those practices coterminous with local constructions and experiences of Christianity. These ancestral narratives have become a common arena in which Gogodala people are incorporated into a public discourse on the saliency of a Christian ‘community’ and lifestyle.

Local people come to know about the ancestors, their actions and their canoes, however, through moving around places which still resonate with ancestral events. This was reinforced to me when Kamo Bagali, Charles, and I travelled along the Aramia River following the path of one of the original ancestors. Kamo argued that learning about these events through simply listening to the stories was not sufficient, and he took us on a canoe journey that traced the route of Miwasa. Later in the chapter, I follow this trip as it is definitive in constituting how ancestral action is inscribed in places and spaces open to human interaction.

Early administrators and missionaries came to Gogodala villages from the Fly River in the south. Local understandings of white people focus on this aspect of their arrival. As I was asked before I left the area in 1996, how did the missionaries know where to locate Gogodala villagers when they first came to the area; how did they know they were there?

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3 White (1991:13) has suggested that "narratives of shared experience and history do not simply represent identities and emotions. They constitute them ... Especially in communities where people profess a sense of common identity and subjectivity, that sense is often produced in jointly constructed stories about the past". Errington and Gewertz (1996:114) argue that discourses centred on culture and cultural difference have permeated Papua New Guinea. They suggest that for the Chambri of East Sepik Province, specific aspects of tradition and past practices were invoked while others were abandoned.
Opening the door

Sosola, our Gogodala person, he went and he opened the door for the white people to come here. So you people are here, you’re now here. Twyman, Wade, Sexton and Drysdale, these white people [missionaries] first came here. Sosola went and opened the door for them. He opened the door for you white people so you have got a white track, [which is] still open from the beginning to here Papua New Guinea.
Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village September 1995

Sosola was a kanaba, a ‘war leader’, from Balimo village who invited the Resident Magistrate of Western Division, C. G. Murray, to visit the area in August 1900. Although not an ancestor, from the original journey from Wabila to the Gogodala area, Sosola is talked about as a very important actor in the initiation and subsequent establishment of the relationship between white and local people. Sosola left the area some time after meeting Murray, possibly working at Daru for some time, and he never returned to Balimo. For many, especially those from the Balimo area, Sosola and his mediating relationship between white people and villagers is a powerful image. Through Sosola’s actions, particularly opening the door, local people have become primary agents in their interactions with white people. It was Sosola who initiated

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4 Ross Weymouth, an expatriate missionary whose 1978 PhD thesis documents the relationship between the Unevangelised Fields Mission (UFM) and the Gogodala people, has suggested that Sosola’s ‘prestige and power’ as a kanaba were further consolidated by his appointment as a village constable or mamusi (TP). “According to local tradition he was given a length of white calico, coat, long trousers and hat” (Weymouth 1978:43). Sosola’s younger brother became the mamusi (TP) and kanaba about 1910, and Sosola seems to have disappeared from the area around this time (Weymouth 1978:43).

5 See Charles Wilde 1997 thesis, Waiting for Jesus, for a detailed examination of the ways in which contemporary Gogodala people talk about Sosola’s agency in opening the door between white and Gogodala communities.

6 Marilyn Strathern (1990:25-6) has suggested that perhaps surprise was not the emotion most evoked in the people of Melanesia when confronted with Europeans for the first time. Instead, as they were used to being presented with certain images/performances during ceremonial revelations and activities, she suggests that they were more concerned with what sort of image these Europeans were or constituted (see also Strathern 1992). Ballard (1992) also argues that when first confronted with Europeans, in the form of the Fox brothers, Huli people in the Southern Highlands accord this event this little significance. First contact experiences have been the focus of many anthropologists (see Schieffelin & Crittenden 1991; Errington & Gewertz 1995; Keesing 1992).
contact with Murray for, upon hearing about Europeans from relatives on
Daumori Island, he invited Murray to travel to Balimo to visit him. W. N.
Beaver wrote of this meeting in 1920:

it was originally through the good offices of the Daumori that C. G.
Murray ... seems to have heard of many villages living inland from the
Fly, and received through the medium of the Daumori chief a message
from a powerful and renowned chief named Sosora that he had heard
much of the Government and would like to received a visit from it ...
Murray’s trip was a most successful one. He made friends with every
village, although the people were in many cases naturally startled at the
apparition of a white man and a uniformed escort. At Barimo, over
twenty miles inland he met Sosora the chief who sent him the message,
a fine, tall middle-aged man with a keen-looking face. Sosora, of
course, received the party hospitably, but there was much excitement at
the first (Beaver 1920:190-1).

Contemporary Gogodala narratives suggest that when the white
administrators came to meet Sosola at Balimo, they found him to be very tall
and proceeded to measure his body. On finding that he was satisfactory (for
what purpose local people are still unsure), the white people wrapped his body
up and took him away overseas in a plane. He was taken first to Port
Moresby, then Australia, and finally to England. In England, Sosola met and
married a white woman who subsequently gave birth to Queen Elizabeth.

Sosola’s role in the establishment of a close relationship between
Europeans and local villagers has become an image around which people talk
about a connection to white people and their places. On several occasions it
was drawn to my attention that the first missionaries to come to the area did so
in a similar fashion to the original Gogodala ancestors. This latter group
travelled in two large canoes along the Fly River, up Pedaeya Creek, and on to
Balimo from there. (See Map 3) The Unevangelised Fields Mission (UFM),

7 At Tai village, there is a coconut tree which is marked with the height of Sosola who was said to be too
large to enter a normal village house with ease. I will discuss further corporeal assertions of strength
and power associated with tall and fat people/ non-humans in Chapter 5.
8 The Pastor at Tai village suggested that the Europeans were looking for men to be kings and they had to
be very tall. Sosola was obviously tall enough to qualify for such a selection.
9 Sanada said that “they sent the word back to Balimo village: ‘Here is Sosola’s daughter - she’s now a
queen, Queen Elizabeth’. They [Sosola’s family at Balimo] gave her a name and they sent that name
[to England]”. There have been several references to the King and Queen of England in indigenous
conceptions of relations with white people (see for example Errington 1974:256; Toren 1988)
established at the Madiri plantation on the opposite side of the Fly river, also travelled up Pedaeya Creek to make their way inland to Balimo and neighbouring villages. Although neither of these two journeys was a single moment in time, nor did either the first missionaries or the original ancestors necessarily all travel together or by the same route; nonetheless comparisons between them are made and discussed in various contexts. 10

Reverend James Chalmers and William MacGregor, missionaries with the London Missionary Society (LMS), were two of the first white people to come into contact with villages speaking what has become known as Gogodala. 11 In January 1890, as they were travelling along the Fly River, they were informed by Daumori villagers that a group of people lived on the north bank of the river, although some distance inland (Weymouth 1978:40). The Daumori referred to these people as ‘Madiarubi’, a name that the nearby Kiwai used to describe the Gogodala and which derived its meaning from the sexually provocative ceremonial dances for which these villagers were known. 12

It was not until the 1930s, however, when a UFM Station was established in Balimo by Albert Drysdale, that the missionary presence became a part of daily life. In 1932 Drysdale, who was working at the Madiri plantation on the Fly River, began perusing the area. Bernard Lea (1940:9), a fellow missionary and compatriot of Drysdale, wrote later of these excursions:

10 The similarities are speculated on in some detail: The missionaries are credited with foreknowledge of the existence of the Balimo group of villages as they had known the original Gogodala ancestors before they left Israel.

11 Wilde (1997:9) argues that local people throughout Melanesia remember first contact situations in different ways than those presented in administrative reports. Sosola is celebrated as a more significant agent in the establishment of contact with white people than these early explorers/missionaries. As Wilde suggests, this has a lot to do with local experiences and articulations of Christianity.

12 Beaver (1920:189-90; 1912) refers to the Gogodala as ‘Girara’ and suggests that these people inhabit the left bank of the Fly River to the Baru River to the north. He wrote: “I cannot find that any mention at all has been made of these people by the early explorers of the Fly. For one thing the eastern bank was left severely alone; in fact owing to the numerous islands it is doubtful whether anyone knew of the existence of the eastern channel. Sir William MacGregor never met them, although he saw the high clay banks and refers to them, so I take it that at that time (twenty odd years ago) Giama [village on the Fly river] had not then come out to the river bank. He, however, makes a mention of a tribe called Madiorubi (sic) living inland but which he did not see, and I should say these almost certainly refer to some of the villages of the Girara. The people as a whole are certainly too distinctive to have been overlooked and too interesting to have been ignored”.
canoes were requisitioned for a wide survey and after weeks of tramp, camp and canoe through one of the most enervating climates anywhere, they returned to the plantation. The ‘sunny fountains’ and ‘golden strands’ of the children’s missionary hymns lose their sparkling hue around the Fly River and become just maddening incessant rains, dirty swirling streams and acres of the blackest mud ... Reaching out from the Fly delta, the missionaries ere long emerged into the populous Gogodala region.

By 1935, three mission stations had been established at Balimo, Wasua (on the Fly River near Giama), and Pisi on the Aramia River to the north. Drysdale was joined by more missionaries, several of whom were women. These missionaries recognised the strategic location of the Gogodala people and openly spoke of them in terms of providing a ‘gateway’ for evangelisation of the people further along the Fly River.

Kalobali, an old man in Wasua village on the Fly River, recalled that his parents and grandparents had been living at a place called Imata village, inland from Giama and Wasua, and had moved to a new village called Akali shortly before Drysdale arrived at Wasua.

The first missionaries came and then Mr Drysdale, he cleared this place. And then the people from Imata and Akali [villages] came and spoke to Mr Drysdale. From there Mr Drysdale went to Balimo and cleared a space at Balimo, then Awaba, then Morehead [river]. [At] that time, Mr Sexton was the big man [at Wasua] and Mr Drysdale went to Balimo. Mr Sexton brought the [other] white people Wade and Twyman and some ladies (Kalobali, Wasua village October 1995).

The UFM mission believed that the most effective method of evangelisation included living among the people. The mission’s conservative theological stance, “stemming from the implications of accepting the original scriptures as divinely inspired” formed the basis of mission practice (Weymouth 1978:104). While most existing Protestant missions had become

13 Lea (1940:10) writes that Briggs, Twyman, himself and Wade were shortly joined by two women, Misses Smith and Harris. The pieces of ground at each of these places were purchased from the Gogodala by the Resident Magistrate of the Division on behalf of the mission.

14 Both Lea (1940) and Weymouth (1978) note this mission goal. Lea (1940:23) wrote that: “[t]he scope offered by the lower Fly river tribes is limited. It was never viewed as aught else but the portal to the extensive territories of the west. Its value is its strategic location, its utility as a base, and its facility of communication with the outside world”.
increasingly liberal in theology, the UFM was concerned primarily with ‘saving souls’ (Weymouth 1978:105). The Light and Life UFM newsletters of the time are replete with references to the process of bringing the word of God to those people ‘living in darkness’. They emphasised the importance of education and literacy, believing that fostering an indigenous Christianity based on the Bible as the primary text was all-important. Many Gogodala, in turn, saw the advantage of the missionaries who could teach them to read and write, dispense medical supplies and trade for local food supplies, steel axes, knives and material for clothes. The first and primary attendants of the mission school were young men who had experienced work on plantations or other types of labour in the Gulf District or even Port Moresby, and had, therefore, a grasp of Pidgin or English. These young men acted as interpreters for the missionaries and became the main participants in learning and translating the Bible into Gogodala (Weymouth 1978:130).

Of the many moments and images which remain as integral parts of contemporary Christianity, one particular event stands out as significant in the conversion of local people to the words and practices of these evangelical missionaries. In July 1936, Frank Briggs and Bernard Lea, the two missionaries at Balimo Station, were presented with a letter signed by thirteen people from Kimama village stating that: “sae paepae iwiminenae aida lopala sae iwiminae Jesus” (we don’t want Aida things, we want Jesus). Pasiya was

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15 For example, Leonard Buck, the Executive Chairman of the UFM, wrote in an article “[t]he Church’s world mission is also in revolutionary flux. In UFM our objectives are the same - to seek and win the peoples of New Guinea and to establish them in the faith of the gospel and the serenity of Christ’s Church” (May 1968:2; italics in the original).

16 Lea (1940:10) notes that local people were quite eager to have the missionaries visit their village.

17 Women were not invited to attend school until the arrival of the first female missionaries in the 1940s. Even then, men remained the primary focus of these schools. Lea (1940:10-11) gives a picture of the activities associated with the early Balimo mission as concerned primarily with education, through such schools, dispensing medical attention, attending daily Church services and translating Biblical verses into the vernacular, as well as a steady trade with the local village people for fresh food in return for steel axes, knives, calico and so on.

18 Pasiya originally came from Kenewa village on the far east of the Aramia River but moved to Kimama, later becoming mamusi (TP) at Kimama village (near Balimo). He had experienced some time as an indentured labourer as a ‘cook boy’ on the Kotaki plantation before moving to Kimama. When Drysdale arrived at Balimo, he moved to the mission station. When Pasiya died in 1968, Len Twyman (1968:3) wrote an article in Light and Life simply called ‘Pasiya’ in which he wrote: “[w]hen Albert Drysdale first contacted the Gogodala tribe with the Gospel in 1933, he chose Balimo point as the first place to settle. Pasiya from nearby Kimama helped build the first house, and then a school.
one of the main instigators of this letter and he became a prominent member of the early Church, although was he never consecrated as a Pastor because he had two wives (Weymouth 1978:158-60). Several people in Balimo attributed the local acceptance of Christianity to the ‘vow’ that Pasiya took at this time. Kamo said that the debate continues to be whether to ‘go with Aida or Jesus’.

Aida was the fourth and final stage of a series of male initiation ceremonies into which initiated men were invested with the status of Aida dala or Aida men. In this process, they came to know about the ‘yam medicine’ which enabled Aida men to bring the dead back to life. Earlier parts of the initiation process revolved around teaching young boys the tenets of clan and canoe, the involvement of married women and men in sexually explicit dances, and a canoe race and ceremony. The first initiation ceremony was called Wasikola maiyata focussed on the instruction of young male novices away from the longhouses, and the creation of many carvings by the older men under the instruction of the carvers or sakema in the central hall of the longhouse. In the Gi maiyata, the second part of the initiation, the initiates watched as married men and women gathered in the central hall and became involved in sexual dances and activities. The Gawa maiyata followed, involving a pre-canoe race ceremony followed by the race. The cycle of male initiations were finalised by the admittance of married men into the Aida cult (Crawford 1981:246-52). It involved specific prescriptions about male bodily growth, enjoined homosexual relations between young and old, and introduced initiates to the story of Aida and his power over life and death (Crawford 1981:245-52). The last cycle of initiation ceremonies was conducted in the 1930s and even the elderly men with whom I spoke had no personal experience or recollection of these events. Yet, Aida remains a way of

What a fine physique he had! What a worker”. The UFM also made a film called Pasiya based on his life.

19 Pasiya’s children became prominent members of the Gogodala community, all had a good education at mission schools and several have jobs in the army or are teachers. Johnson Pasiya, one of his sons, lived at Oseke village. He was the only village person to own a generator and a video.

20 He said that when the missionaries first came to the area, they said to the local people: “You want Jesus or Aida? If you want Aida you have to burn the Aida lopala (things)”.

expressing local perceptions about Christianity and the experience of
missionisation.\textsuperscript{21}

As in other areas of the Pacific, missionaries and government officials
were agents of rapid change and turmoil for indigenous communities.\textsuperscript{22} The
Christian church in Papua New Guinea has brought in a wide range of values
and ideas at the local level (Barker 1992:145). Missionaries like the UFM
profoundly influenced Papua New Guinea societies not only in the area of
religion, health and education, but also kinship relations and structures,
marriage and residential patterns, the division of labour, and the care of the
sick and children (Jolly & Macintyre 1989:2). Papua New Guinea is certainly
one of the most heavily missionised country in the world, manifest in
thousands of village churches, theological schools, church businesses, trade
suggests, however, the process of missionisation was not one simply of
indigenous people, on one hand, and European missionaries on the other. The
Gogodala were crucial actors in the incorporation, modification or rejection of
the Christian message, as the story of Sosola suggests.\textsuperscript{23} And the
missionisation process was not a unilinear or unitary one even for the thirty or
so Gogodala villages.

By the 1930s, many local men had been involved in labour recruiting
programs on plantations as far east as Port Moresby, as well as being
employed in the pearling industry on Daru Island and oil explorations in the
Papuan Gulf. Many young men were hence absent for long periods of time,
and male initiations and canoe races had already become less frequent

\textsuperscript{21} Throughout the thesis, I will discuss the details of the ceremonies, carvings and other objects
associated with them as well as the story of Bebema, which outlines the coming of Aida to the
Gogodala, in terms of more specific contexts and issues. It is difficult to piece together what normally
occurred in these initiation and \textit{Aida} rituals and Crawford (1981:250) notes that he could only surmise
the order of events from the scattered memories of old men who had taken part and the diaries of
Bernard Lea.

\textsuperscript{22} Barker (1992:153) encourages anthropologists to rediscover the multiplicities of ways in which people
like the Gogodala experienced both the processes of missionisation and contemporary Christianity. He
writes that: "[w]hile the missions have had different receptions in different places, almost everywhere
today we find people making use of both Melanesian and Christian forms and ideas" (Barker

\textsuperscript{23} When the UFM missionaries left for the duration of the war, indigenous pastors and converts continued
the process of teaching and evangelising and destroying sacred objects.
Weymouth (1978:232) also tells of how Gogodala women became increasingly irritated with the recruiters who came to the area, continually recruiting husbands and sons for plantation work and at one stage, “took to pelting visiting recruiters with mud”. Significant increases in death rates of village children under eight were accredited to the lack of men to hunt and provide protein supplements for the sago diet of the village people.

It was also more difficult to maintain and build the enormous longhouses that were the basis of these villages (Weymouth 1978:230-2). These longhouses, spatially designed to promote the activities and ceremonies associated with Aida and other types of celebrations and dances, had also come under the scrutiny of the UFM missionaries. Several Gogodala women in Aketa village told me that during the war, the women of Uladu had rebuilt the longhouse on their own because their men were not in the village. However, by the end of the 1960s, communal longhouses had either been destroyed or generally fallen into disuse (Crawford 1981:44).

The experiences of the colonial period and close contact with UFM missionaries initiated debate about the nature of indigenous spatial relationships with other people and places, and these issues continue to define

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24 By the time that Frank Hurley, an Australian adventurer and photographer, travelled through the area taking pictures of Totani village in the early 1920s, men's caps (diba) has largely been discarded and most initiated men had bare heads (Specht and Fields 1984:126-7).

25 The Aida maiyata ceremonies were conducted in the komo or central hall of the longhouse. Many of the missionaries reasoned that the destruction of these longhouses would ultimately mean the end of the ceremonies. I will explore the spatial transformation associated with the abandonment of these huge longhouses in Chapter 3.

26 Kalobali from Wasua was one of the carriers on the Kokoda Trail during World war II and he recalls that all the young men travelled from Balimo to Giana and then Daru. From Daru, they travelled by ship to Moresby. “People hid in the cave there because that big boat came from Japan unloading guns”. He argued that the Japanese wanted to take over Port Moresby which was an island at that time. Quite a number of Gogodala men spent the war years in Moresby, both as carriers and as soldiers in the Papuan Infantry Battalion. Rhys Price (c.1944:8), a former UFM missionary who, during the war years volunteered as a Patrol Officer for ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit), wrote a short booklet on the contribution of Gogodala and other Western Division men in the war. He suggests that there were thousands of men from this Division, Gogodala, Kiwai, Bamus and Goaribari, who became carriers on the Owen Stanley Ranges. On the Trail, these Western men were collectively referred to as Kiwai (one of the most populous groups of the Western division). Gogodala, Suki and Kiwai were also involved in the Papuan Infantry Battalion which was the first force to meet the Japanese in Papua (Price c.1944:12). White (1995:534) notes for Solomon Islanders, “World War II is constantly present” in the rusting debris, the ceremonial occasions commemorating it or the numbers of visiting American, Australian and Japanese veterans.
The ‘white track’ opened by Sosola remains open but the way seems to be traversed in only one direction; that of white people into the Gogodala area. Many feel that this is not a reciprocal relationship and conceptualisations about future relationships between white people and themselves are based on the removal of material and spatial inequalities. After Sosola was taken to England, his wife gave birth to the Queen of England. When this queen grew up, she also married and subsequently had a son by the name of Prince Charles who has been equated with Jesus. The return of Jesus, which is a common theme in Church services, hymns, and discussions, is often conflated with the anticipated coming of the Prince to Balimo.

Local people often refer to themselves and their area as ‘Christian country’, a statement about contemporary experiences in the light of both their Christian and ancestral past, as well as a way of differentiating themselves from other Papua New Guineans. In 1966, the Evangelical Church of Papua was formed from the APCM and the separation of Church and Mission has been maintained albeit, early in the relationship, often in name only. However the Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea (ECPNG), as it became known later, has a large membership in local villages. The principles on which it was established have had a considerable impact on the constitution and articulation of Gogodala relationships with their places, practices, bodies, and ancestral past. Throughout the thesis, I will draw out some of the ways in

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27 This is not confined to Gogodala reworkings. In an article in *Light and Life* which celebrates the completion of the Gogodala New Testament in 1981, Dr Kath Donovan (1981:4) describes the service associated with the dedication of the Bibles: “‘How did the Word of God come to the Gogodala people?’ asked ECP chairman Pastor Danaya Baila. In the pause that followed, the unique note of the conch shell, traditional herald of important news, sounded close by. A little group of travellers came into view, obviously exhausted after a long journey and struggling under a heavy load - a large box carried between pole. ‘It did not come easily’, continued Pastor Danaya, ‘but with much hard work and pain’. This dramatic re-enactment of the arrival of Albert Drysdale, the first person to bring the word of God to the Gogodala people, began the service”.

28 All village people consider themselves to be members of the ECPNG and unlike other areas of Papua New Guinea, there are few other Churches or religious groups based in the area.

29 And not only the Gogodala and close neighbours - the ECPNG has had a tremendous impact on the communities up the Fly River and beyond, stretching as far north as Southern Highlands Province and west into Irian Jaya. Many of the first missionaries to these areas were Gogodala Pastors and their spouses. In a *Light and Life* article written in 1968, it was stated that thirty nine missionary couples and one hundred and fifty six Pastors and their spouses (mostly Gogodala) lived beyond their own communities and language groups (1968:8; see also Prince & Prince 1991:26-9). Edward Schieffelin (1976:7) writes that in 1964, the UFM had set up an airstrip at Wayue, a place of the Kaluli people of Mount Bosavi, and that the two mission stations opened in the area were run by Gogodala Pastors. He
which these relationships and transformations are talked about in specific contexts. In the following section, I will elaborate on the stories which account for the original migration of the Gogodala ancestors, and how these ancestors, their actions, intentions and misdeeds have made them an integral part of this relationship. The equation by many between Biblical narratives, about the creation of the Christian world, and those of ancestral stories, which map onto the landscape a distinctive past and present, is a primary context in which this relationship is debated. Expressions about the past and the ancestors invariably refer to the Biblical narratives. It is not a coincidence that when these stories express interconnections between Western and Gogodala places, they use Australia, New Zealand and England as these were the ‘home’ countries of most of the missionaries.

**Searching for Dogono**

For Gogodala communities, the land, lagoons, and swamps are marked and remarked by the actions and movement of their lives and those who came before them. This process institutes a sense of belonging to places and local involvement in ancestral actions and events. Christina Toren (1995:163) remarks for Fijian villagers, “[i]n this sense of belonging, space and time are

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30 This process of reconceptualising the relationship between Christianity and the customary ways of Gogodala people is not limited to local people: expatriate missionaries have variously defined this relationship through the years, utilising indigenous tropes of movement and travel, food production and gendered activities. For example, when the Evangelical Church of Papua was established in the 1960s, missionaries referred to link between Church and mission as like that of two canoes travelling together in the same direction. Barry Boundy (1981:3), missionary and Assistant to the ECP’s Executive Secretary wrote in June 1981: “In the language of Papua ‘we have viewed the relationship between ECP and APCM as a canoe or canoes...A simple story of two canoes, but herein lies the purpose of integration -to join the two canoes, not as a double hulled canoe, but rather as a single canoe - a new canoe”. In the Princes’ (1991:10) publication *A Church is Born*, they write that one of the missionaries talked about the relationship between Church and mission as ‘paddling side by side in two canoes’.

31 In his book *Identity through History* (1991) White describes a ceremony in which the Bishop of Santa Isabel, Solomon Islands, was installed as paramount chief: an indigenous designation that had not been used for twenty years.

32 Nicole Polier (1995:266) also points out that administrators also encouraged the idea that Australia was the ‘mother country’ for Papua New Guineans.
experientially dimensions of one another: the self is always placed in time, whether ‘here now’ or ‘here then’". Such an anchoring of the past in recognisable, named, and tangible forms in the landscape means that local people can access and utilise these past practices and narratives (Kahn 1990:52). The ancestors were the first people to come to the area, arriving in two large canoes. These iniwa luma or ‘old people or ancestors’ travelled across the landscape in canoes or by foot, mapping, creating and naming it as they went. The places where these ancestral canoes stopped, turned, or died became part of this experience and was named accordingly. In this way, the landscape was incorporated into the clan and naming practices of the ancestors which was to form the basis of the Gogodala moiety and clan system.

The lake of oil
Let me introduce the ancestral stories by relating in some detail an incident that had considerable effect on my understanding of the contextualisation of these narratives. In 1995, Phillips Petroleum signed a contract with the Western Province government in which they gained exclusive rights to mineral development in Western in return for the establishment of a minimum of ten test oil drills in the Province. A spot between the Gogodala villages of Yau and Adiba (near Balimo) was selected and a test drill initiated. Helicopters became a common sight in Balimo, dropping of or picking up boxes full of food and equipment. Several white men set up house in Balimo, working as advisers to Phillips. Balimo, Yau, and Adiba became a hive of activity and noise. There was talk of setting up a pipeline to propel the oil down to the Fly

33 A. P. Lyons (1926:354) talks about a story that he was told by ‘Barimo’ men in which they talked about ‘Ibari’ and the original journey of the ancestors from Wabira to the Balimo area. After Ibari had settled his children into Balimo, he told them to marry their sisters as there were no other women in the area, and then he left them and went back to Wabila. Interestingly, the Balimo men told Lyons that they came from the north west, down the Aramia River. Ayers (1983:46-8) notes that the people of Morehead have two distinct periods of ‘history’; that of the ‘mythical beings and events’, and the ‘present day society’. “The former refers to the time not so very long ago when storybeings journeyed across the land, when the events recounted in the myths were played out in the world, while the latter refers to the time since the finishing of the activities of the mythical beings, and the arrival of the first real people, just before the time of one’s grandparents” (Ayers 1983:48).

34 Roy Wagner (1996:285) notes that there are similar accounts of ‘travelling creators’ in Papua New Guinea, particularly along the south coast of Western and Gulf Provinces, Irian Jaya, southern areas of Simbu Province and Torres Strait islands.
River from where it could be taken easily to Daru or Moresby. Landowners names were entered onto lists: ‘oil is coming’ became a common statement and expectations about financial benefits were high.

Despite the fact that the site of the oil drill was a bush-camp between Yau and Adiba, many of the people in and around the villages of Tai, Dogono and Balimo were convinced that Dogono was the real place that oil would be found. Some Dogono villagers were convinced that they would eventually have to leave their homes and move to a different area so that the oil could be accessed. Preliminary tests had been conducted in that area several years before but nothing had come of it.

In October 1995, there was meeting held at the Balimo Council Chambers to determine the landowners of the site currently being worked by Phillips. There was some dispute about which clan canoe actually had access to this piece of ground and the meeting lasted three days. Adiba and Yau people from the Lalamana clan argued that Iyapa clan canoe had originally claimed that site, while families from Tabama clan argued that the land sat in Kalobali clan canoe. The three Land Mediation officers, one of whom was my adopted father Mala Sogowa, called upon several older men to verify the details of the ancestral stories which were germane to this particular dispute.35 As acknowledged mamusi (TP), or ‘big men’ as they are often referred to in English, they narrated and discussed the stories which related specifically to this section of ground. Mala and the other officers attempted to determine the extent and strength of the opposing arguments and although at the end of the three days no consensus had been reached, many in Balimo thought that Lalamana’s canoe had a much stronger claim and there was open criticism of the families sitting in Tabama’s canoe.36

35 Although Mala’s knowledge about the ancestral origins of canoes and the families who sit in them is considerable, as a lands officer he would travel around to the particular site under dispute and call upon the elders who pertain both to the canoe and the area.

36 The process of determining a land claim through this committee is complex and time-consuming. To add to the confusion, the demonstration of a direct link from the ancestors is often not enough to secure a claim against someone else, particularly if they and their parents and grandparents have lived on that land and looked after it for some time. Where there is a clear case of ownership, the Committee awards the owner a statement documenting the relationship. Land disputes do not always reach the Lands Mediating Committee, however, and are dealt with at the village level. Again, the procedure is similar if more informal: the elderly people who know the area and the stories present
By the beginning of December, it had become obvious that there was no oil. Several comments were made about disgruntled Tabama people having sent the oil away because they would not receive compensation for the land. Within weeks, Carson Pratt, the company hired by Phillips Petroleum to set up the drill, had dismantled the whole operation and the skies around Balimo were silent again. While sitting in Kamo’s house at Balimo as the last of the company packed up, we talked about issues of development and oil that such activity had raised. Kamo ruminated that although this test drill had proved in vain, the next one would not be as it would be situated at Dogono, the site of the original village. Under this village, there was a pool of oil which, when tapped, would make all of the Gogodala affluent as Dogono ‘belonged’ to everyone.

Why Dogono village in particular? Dogono was the original village which was sent from Wabila, ‘the first place’, by the ‘first father’ who sent the ancestors on their journey to find it. The narrative of this journey is well known and often repeated as the primary ologi, or story, about the initial traversal of the region. It was the first story told to me by Sawiyato, Kamo’s mother; as for an outsider explicitly interested in these things it was deemed that knowledge about the search for Dogono was essential. Nakeyo, Kamo’s younger brother, explained to me that: “all these village people from around this Balimo area, up that way [towards the Aramia River], [as well as] Tai village side, know these stories of how our ancestors came”. Nakeyo underscored the point that, despite some diversity and distance between villages, there is general acknowledgment of a common ancestral heritage between them based on these events.

The ancestors came from Wabila, a magical place from which all human beings derive. While at Wabila, Ibali, the first person, married his sister Gaguli. Soon after, Gaguli gave birth to several children.37 These male

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37 Lyons noted the use of names like Wabila and Ibali in his discussions with Balimo men in early contact with Gogodala villagers. The names of the ancestors and places have remained highly consistent from the reports of the early administrators to the current time.
ancestors and their sisters represent the eight clans from which the rest of the Gogodala people came. Mala explained that:

this family, big family [Gogodala people], the red [clans] and white [clans have] got only one father and mother. So their father and mother is Ibali and Gaguli. So this children, they didn’t come by themselves. When she had a boy, she had a girl at the same time, so they call them twins, boy and girl, brother and sister (Mala Sogowa, Tai village March 1996).

As they were born, each ancestor was ascribed a moiety affiliation according to the colour of his or her skin, red or white. When Bani came out [from Gaguli’s womb], his skin was very red - so he’s a red clan person. That’s why he [Ibali] call[ed] him Bani, because his skin was red. Waliwali came after Bani, his skin was yellow. Bilidama is after Waliwali; his skin was turning to red. Bogela [was] after [Bilidama], his skin was white [and so on] (Mala Sogowa, Tai village October 1995).

The colours of the moiety and clan groups were born along with the ancestors. The white or Paiya moiety was divided into four clans or udaga, two white and two yellow, and the Segela or red moiety was divided into four red clans. (See Figure 6) Each male child became the primary ancestor for each of the eight udaga, while the canoes which they were subsequently given by Ibali became the clan canoes through which Gogodala people trace their genealogies.

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38 When I asked whether ‘white skin’ meant like my skin, Mala replied that it was not ‘white’ skin but rather ‘light skin’ for Gogodala colour skin (like several half-Gogodala, half-European people in Balimo). These colours, red and white, constitute the most central colours of the canoe designs and other types of carvings. Along with black and yellow, they are the four colours which form the basis of Gogodala painting schemes.

39 There was some suggestion from Karen Bickerton that there used to be two black clans as well as two red clans in the red moiety but none of my friends had ever heard of this suggestion. The Segela or red moiety has the clans Asipali, Siboko, Wabadala, and Gasinapa while the other four clans, Wagumisi, Lalama, Awala and Tabama, belong to the Paiya moiety.

40 There is one anomaly: Dede Ibali was born representing Gasinapa-Wabadala, the only truly linked clans, although separately, both Gasinapa and Wabadala have their own apical male ancestor. Each of the eight clans have between six and twelve clan canoes but I will explore this further in Chapter 3.
Before the ancestors started on their travels, however, Ibali and Sogowa went first and claimed all of the places. Ibali wore the skin of Kanaba, his canoe design, and Sogowa wore a mask bearing the clan design called Otokoko. Ibali chased Sogowa around the area, going all the way to Dogono and then turning back again and returning to Wabila. Then Ibali sent the other ancestors to the places that he and Sogowa had just seen.

After the ancestors left Wabila, they walked to a place called Sagamu. Although the location of Sagamu is unknown it was suggested by several narrators that Sagamu could be the Gogodala equivalent of Israel, the original place of the Christian world as articulated in the Bible. Still on foot, the ancestors stopped at several other places until they reached Salonae gawa saba or ‘canoe place’ (a point of land where canoes are left). While travelling, they found that the sky was very close to the ground and the place was very wet. As the ancestors were very tall people, they had to crawl over the

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41 This has been equated with the east coast of Australia: “Sydney maybe?” was Sanada suggestion, primarily because he knew I was from this part of Australia.

42 Similar to the time of Noah.
ground. So Bani, an exceptionally large ancestor, lifted up the sky to his own height and tied it up with *duni tao*, a special type of string. The colours of this *duni tao* are still visible in the sky in the form of *ilabini*, the rainbow.\(^{43}\) (See Appendix A) Then, after lifting the sky, Bani wore that sun’s skin and then he started walking around. And then he walked so fast that some people went to make sago, fish or hunting, they couldn’t finish. They said ‘Hey! That was too fast, we didn’t finish’. So they took it off him. Then Sogowa wore the sun and was walking slowly, too slowly and people went to the gardens [and the day was] still going and people were too tired and said ‘Hey when are we going to sleep?’ So they said ‘Hey! It’s too slow’. Then Daligi wore it and went around, just in time and the people said ‘It’s your job now’. And they called it [the sun] Daligi. As a result, the time goes, the first one was too fast and the second one was too slow and the third one was right (Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village April 1996).

So the sun was created and placed within its appropriate context, in the sky, tracing the time of the day.\(^{44}\) The evening star was the sister and wife of Daligi, the sun, and she followed him when he wore the skin of the sun. Consequently she became the evening star, following the sun across the sky at the end of the day.

Animals and birds were also brought from Wabila with the ancestors, as was sago and other trees. Sanada Giliwa said that the ancestors were instructed by the first person to bring the animals, one male and female of each type of animal or bird; they were told to go to Dogono “and then stay there and look after them and then they will grow big”. Sanada pointed out that, like the Biblical story in which Noah brought male and female of every species of animal, plant and insect, many of the animals and plants of the Gogodala landscape were brought by the ancestors in their canoes.\(^{45}\) At some stage between Dogono and Salonae, the humans and the animals came across a ripe

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\(^{43}\) As Bani tied up the sky, he sang a song, mentioning several places. These places belong to Bani’s clan as a result of his activities and claim on them.

\(^{44}\) As a result, the sun and morning star belong to the same clan, Siboko.

\(^{45}\) Sanada said: “All these things, they [weren’t] just here, they brought themselves, no. They came with them [the ancestors], they brought them with them, two by twos, that’s the story” (September 1995). In another version, the animals followed the ancestors to the area.
sago palm which began to talk to them. In their confusion at this unexpected event, the humans and animals were transformed into their present bodies, languages, and skins. "By that time, they changed their languages because [when] they came from the place in the beginning [they had only] one language, the animals and the human beings".

At Salonae, the ancestors gained access to a large canoe called Suliki and travelled north towards the Torres Strait. Suliki canoe had eight compartments, one for each clan, in which the brother and sister of each udaga sat side by side. At one stage, Sanada drew my attention to the similarity between the ancestors coming 'two by two' and the Biblical narratives about Noah and the Ark taught in village Churches.46 Several other ancestors came a different way, alone, in their own canoes or by foot. (See Appendix B)

At this point the ancestors split into their moiety affiliations, the red people and the white people. Competing versions of the stories claim that the ancestors came in two different canoes, one carrying the red people and the other carrying the white people; others that only Kelaki, a red ancestor, came by himself in Madulabali canoe - the other primary canoe. Despite some dispute Suliki, the white peoples’ canoe, and Madulabali, the red peoples’ canoe, are generally acknowledged to be the canoes that brought the ancestors to the area. Stopping at various places along the way, including Daru and Kiwai Island, the ancestors travelled into the mouth of the Fly River and came to Giama, near the mouth of Pedaeya Creek, on the eastern side of the Fly River.47 (See Map 3) The ancestors then travelled up Pedaeya Creek until they reached Masanawa gawa saba (canoe place) where they left the canoes and continued the search for Dogono on foot.48

46 Nakeyo suggested that: "that is two by twos [how] they [the ancestors] came by Suliki. That is the one, the Ark its name is called Suliki. So that story is the same as Noah - its going right back to the Bible again. So you see this Bible side, you see our ancestors side, you will that it is similar [there is] no difference" (September 1995). Kamo explained that there were eight people who survived the flood in the Ark: Noah and his wife, their three sons and their wives just like the eight clans who came in Suliki canoe.

47 van Baal (1966:210-11) notes that the Marind-Anim have a story about the original migration of the ancestors (demai) from a place underground in the far west of Marind territory. In one story, the people are taken aboard two canoes, on moiety in each canoe.

48 It is believed by many that Suliki canoe still resides under the water at this canoe place and express fear that it could be disturbed. Such ancestral objects are still imbued with power and people are unsure about how to deal with their continued presence.
The alive place

After reaching the Gogodala area, it took some time for the ancestors to actually find and settle in Dogono. This original Dogono was different from contemporary villages because it was 'a light place', it was 'alive' and could move by itself. Dogono was part of Wabila before it broke away and was sent to the Balimo area by Ibali. It was large and encompassed the whole of the Balimo area and surrounding villages; as it could move of its own accord, the ancestors had to keep following it until it stopped.

Dogono is the place, this light place, Dogono. When you go towards Dogono, Dogono will finish [disappear] by itself. And then, when you go back [away], it comes up again like a monster/ ugu. It [the monster/ ugu] is in the water, [it] comes up, then it sees the person [and] goes down [again] (Sawiyato, Kini village April 1995).
Wabila and Dogono are part of the same powerful space from which the Gogodala originally came and to which, in death, they return. Wabila was the place where everything ‘was alive’: where people were able to change their skins when they grew old, and canoes and other objects had *ugu* (spirits/strength/power) and could ‘go by themselves’. The physical location of Wabila remains obscure and is essentially unimportant to the veracity of the stories because, given its nature, it has no fixed location. Wabila, like Dogono, was prone to move around.

Wabila is also called Yaebi Saba, the place where ‘all things are good’; where the spirits of dead people go and the original ancestors are still living. Yaebi Saba corresponds with the Christian notion of Heaven, and it is used in Biblical translations. Like Heaven, Yaebi Saba is related to the realm of the sky and represents the ultimate space in which all people are equal and materially fulfilled. Not constrained by the same temporal restraints of their Gogodala descendants, the ancestors and spirits of the dead live together at Wabila/ Yaebi Saba. It is, therefore, both the starting point and the place where all lives end. Death is not so much the result of the passage of time but instead movement into different spaces, from the local area to Wabila. It is the home simultaneously of the Christian God and the first person for the Gogodala, Obaya Limo Iwalela (which was translated as ‘source of life’ or more literally as ‘spirit; power of thought’).

The death of Dogono closed the way for contemporary Gogodala to reach the power and riches of Wabila while still alive. When the ancestors came from Wabila in search of Dogono, they brought these magical powers and objects with them: their instructions were to find Dogono and settle there. Canoes, drums, and masks had *ugu* or spirit to move around and interact with the ancestral beings and with the landscape. Suliki canoe, the vehicle of the ancestral migration, brought the ancestors to Masanawa canoe place by its own

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49 See also Macintyre (1990:86).

50 In the following chapter, I develop in more detail some of the connections between space, place and time in this connection between Heaven, Wabila, Yaebi Saba, white people, ancestors and death and look at how these relate to local Christian beliefs about the return of Sosola/ Jesus.
ugu. Black palm trees, coconut and sago palms moved around and spoke; canoes were created out of legs, arms, and intestines of ancestors. It was the time of a living landscape, in which all things had ugu and thereby access to potential intention, action, and creativity.

But Dogono died and the way back to Wabila was closed off. When the ancestors finally reached Dogono, they could not approach it as it was moving around. One ancestor by the name of Waliwali, however, travelled alone along the Aramia River and came in behind Dogono. Waliwali sang a song which calmed the Dogono creature (sometimes described as a giant pig, a twelve-storey building, or a turning propeller) and it sank to the ground and was still; then the ground made a terrible noise and died. The ancestors were scared and fled to the areas on which they set up the first villages.

There seem to have been several reasons for the death of Dogono and the surrounding landscape. Despite explicit instructions to the contrary, many of the ancestors had engaged in sexual activity with one another before they had reached Dogono. Busali from Dogono village said; “The place was first alive and when [the ancestors] stayed with [had sex with] the wife, it died or something like that. They broke the law”. The name of this place, Litamawama, is mnemonic of the event, meaning ‘they stayed with their wives at this place’. This was likened by Sanada to the original sin of Adam and Eve and their exile from the garden of Eden.

The death of Dalogo, the first Gogodala ancestor to die, also contributed to the sense of displacement and subsequent dispersal of people to the areas they now occupy. The story of Dalogo and Miwasa marks the end of the living landscape, replete with ugu, and indicates the settling of the second and third generations. These people, bereft of ancestral powers and the promise of the magical and lovely Dogono and unable to return to Wabila except through death, spread out and established other places. The original

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51 Steven Feld (1996) notes that place names among the Kaluli of the Papuan Plateau implement ‘everyday emplacement’: this anchors such everyday descriptions of where people are or have been going. These place names are also, however, significant for memory and biographies. He writes: “Some place names serve forcefully as shorthands, encapsulating stories about historical or mythical events whose magnitudes vary from mundane to cosmic” (Feld 1996:109).
ancestors left and returned to Wabila.\textsuperscript{52} Those who stayed travelled by foot and canoe to other places, naming them and building longhouses, making gardens, and planting sago.

And then all the people from there, all of us, we local people came from Dogono and then all this land was just covered by people. And then [they] broke up to the other place and one broke up to the other place and then [they] named the villages. That’s the end, where we are now (Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village September 1995).

By finding Dogono, then, the ancestors lost it for their descendants. By establishing places, people, animals and canoes in this new environment, they lost the capacity to reach Wabila and to keep the landscape ‘alive’. Many people in the Gogodala area are convinced that there will be a second chance for them, that Dogono will still yield some of its \textit{ugu} to those living there now. For people like Kamo, a lake of oil would be sufficient reason for the original journey of the ancestors and the protracted search for Dogono. In this way, ‘development’ would come to the area and people would finally be enriched as the story about Dogono suggests they should be. In the next section, I travel by motor canoe with Kamo and Charles, following Miwasa’s journey as he searched for Dalogo in the world of the dead, Yaebi Saba, and as he came closer to understanding the complex relationship between Gogodala and white people.

\section*{Death and the lost skin}

\textbf{Following Miwasa}

In April 1996, shortly before we left the area to return to Australia, Kamo took Charles and I on a trip in his large motor canoe to see the villages further along the Aramia River. Ostensibly our plan was to reach as far as Kenaewa village, the most easterly Gogodala village, and visit several other places on the way. What came to dominate the journey, however, was the proposition that we

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{52} Sanada Giliwa from Kimama village said that “the father had to recall them back, he didn’t want them to stay like that. So Dalogo died so that they could all go back” (March 1996).
\end{footnote}
were following the tracks of Miwasa. Having heard the story of Miwasa only the previous month through Kamo’s uncle Sanada, we had talked about the journey with Kamo and he had become adamant that we ‘see’ the places created by Miwasa in his adventures.

For the majority of local people, travelling along these waterways is commonplace. They constantly traverse ancestral tracks; places which still resonate with the actions of these temporally distant but spatially apparent beings. Large areas and sections of land, lagoon, river, and swamp were mapped and created by the movement and actions of the ancestors. Much of the information I received about a place concerned memories of these events which differentiated one place from the ground or water around it. Many of the places are still physically marked in one way or another, while others remain guarded by the ugu or monsters that were created and can still be invoked today. Indeed, while returning from our trip up the river, Kamo and Charles were startled by something in the water as we passed close by a small creek mouth. Kamo uneasily noted that the creek mouth was made by Sawiya when she turned her canoe around mid-stream and tried to return to Balimo. Instead, she had given birth to a monster, ugu, called Sanaka Sasaledae. This monster has been seen several times at that location.

Often the narratives I collected were punctuated with proclamations about the veracity of the stories, as the marks of these related events could still be seen. Sakuliyato, when translating a story one day, admitted that she had not really believed these stories when she was younger but had since seen the places and could verify that these things had happened as described. The efficacy of the stories are inscribed on the ground, water, and sky, available for acknowledgment by knowledgeable observers.

Morphy (1995:188) writes that for the Yolgnu, place is “forever mnemonic of the event”, the actions of the ancestors fixed not in time but in a particular space. Although for the Yolgnu, the ancestors ‘sat’ down and became the places - Gogodala ancestors created the significance of places through their movements and actions (see also Morphy 1993, Kuchler 1993).

Kahn (1990:52) similarly notes that the physicality of these named forms bears testament to the truth claims of these stories: “[p]ossessing knowledge of these physical forms becomes tantamount to possessing knowledge of the events those forms symbolize. These immortalised places become details of facts, the accuracy of which is necessary to give credence to events”.

Toren (1995) has noted recently that in Fiji, the salience of ancestral stories is found in the landmarks which embody the events of the narratives. She writes, “[t]he past referred to is distant and radically
Miwasa’s story relates the death of his wife, Dalogo, who was the first person to die. I was told the story of Dalogo and Miwasa by several people, including Sanada, my adopted grandfather Busali, and Sawiyato, Kamo’s mother. While the ancestors were staying at Botewa near Balimo, Dalogo would go fishing every day near Dogono at a place called Yagabo. Everyday, she would take her saeiya fishing net and travel by canoe to this place and catch fish for her family. One morning, a death-adder crawled into the balago, bark container, that she left near the fish trap and when Dalogo came to check the fish trap it emerged and bit her hand. Dalogo didn’t feel the bite of the snake and she paddled home to have breakfast. At home, her ‘eyes started going around’ and people asked her what was happening:

She got up again and told them, ‘I’m going to die - everybody is going to follow me’. It was the first lady who opened [the way] to die. From there she said: ‘When I die, go and put me on my Mum’s hand’. And then some people said ‘Who is her Mum?’ And some said ‘Ground is her Mum’. So they put her in the ground (Busali, Dogono village April 1995).

They buried her on her clan ground near Dogono, sitting her up in the grave and they put her digging stick at her back so that she could lean on it. This digging stick grew into a tree which can still be seen today. They also put her balago container and the earthworms she was collecting for bait near her feet. Dalogo’s spirit then went to Wabila.

Miwasa was told about his wife’s death as he was burning the grass with the other men, hunting wallabies. As he came towards Dogono, he sang a song about his wife and her untimely death. Obtaining a canoe from his brother-in-law, Miwasa followed the Aramia River in an easterly direction, attempting to find Wabila.

different from the present, but the story emphasizes material and manifest continuity between the present and that past” (Toren 1995:168).

56 Ross Weymouth (1960-70s) and Paul Wirz (1920) recorded similar versions of this story, in which the precious skin was lost and Dalogo died, marking the beginning of mortality for the Gogodala.

57 Dalogo was buried in the same fashion as later ‘big men’ and warriors of the Gogodala.

58 Miwasa’s song is used by paddlers in the huge Siboko clan racing canoes which are used to contest races on Independence Day, Balimo Show and Church, Trade store and school openings. The male paddlers sing this song before the race, while they are preparing for it.
We too left Balimo, moving through Kabili mouth which marks the end of the Balimo lagoon and turned east at the Aramia River junction. We travelled swiftly along the river, aided by Kamo’s fifteen horsepower motor attached to the back end of the canoe. Along the way, Kamo pointed out several places which marked sites on the trip of Miwasa indicating the map he had hastily drawn for us before starting. After about an hour down the river, Kamo brought the canoe into the bank at a small point of land which sported a small bush-camp house and a couple of old canoes. This was Pada where Miwasa had stopped to cut off the leg of Waya who was blocking the river. Miwasa had placed Waya’s leg in his canoe and continued on his journey.

Some distance further down the river, Miwasa stopped again and created two humans from the clay on the ground; Nali and Sidolo, and gave them life. Miwasa did not know the way to Wabila, however, so he asked some children at Bolame (near the village of Ugu at which we also stopped). These were the spirits, Dinipala, from placentas which are buried by mothers and their female kin after a baby is born. These spirit children told Miwasa that they knew the way to Wabila but he had to do something for them first. So Miwasa climbed up a coconut tree and tried to get coconuts for the child-spirits. However, the tree continued to grow as Miwasa climbed higher until it reached an old man sitting in the sky and the tree poked him in the bottom. The old man got angry and grabbed his fighting club, gabi lapila, and hit Miwasa on the head until he and the tree went back down again.

After the children gave Miwasa some directions he left again and, after travelling for a considerable time, came to the boundary of the living and the dead. Saida, a prominent male ancestor, was sitting there wearing an old man’s skin. Saida, after tricking Miwasa several times, finally allowed him to see Dalogo (see Appendix C). Miwasa arranged with Dalogo to leave for Dogono the following morning and during the night visited her. Unfortunately for Miwasa, Saida had already married Dalogo and would not allow Miwasa to engage in sexual relations with her. Increasingly frustrated, Miwasa went to

59 The burial of the placenta of new-born babies is still practiced today, despite the fact that most Gogodala women give birth in Balimo or Awaba Health Centres. Only women can touch the placenta and a woman’s female relatives bury the placenta near a tree on their ground.
hunt wallabies with his clanspeople at Wabila. While he was occupied, Saida destroyed Miwasa’s canoe and put the pieces in the sky. After Miwasa finished hunting he came looking for his canoe and, upon being unable to find it, engaged his friends’ help in obtaining another canoe.

The next morning, he put his belongings in the canoe and prepared to leave Wabila with Dalogo. As they left Dalogo, who was seated in the front of the canoe, was pulled from the canoe by Saida who had attached an umbilical cord to her; Dalogo fell into the water and went back to Wabila. Miwasa returned to the canoe place, picked up Dalogo again and tried to leave a second time. It happened again and again, until eventually Miwasa exclaimed;

‘Ah, I’ve had enough! She [Dalogo] no longer belongs to me, she’s Saida’s wife. Our future generations will come here, so this is the place for them, Wabila’. And he stood there and he told Dalogo, ‘I know there’s nothing I can do: you’ve set the way for everybody. Future generations will come here’. And he took off alone (Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village March 1996).

Before Miwasa left Wabila, however, Saida gave him a ‘ghost skin’ or gubali kaka to share with the other ancestors at Dogono. On the way back from Wabila, Miwasa stopped at Pada again and fought with Waya whose leg he had removed earlier. While Waya and Miwasa fought, the ghost skin was blown out of the canoe and eaten by snakes, birds, grasshoppers, small water insects, and butterflies: every animal or insect that is capable of shedding its skin and growing another one. “Saida told him to share this skin with everyone at Dogono, everyone would eat this skin and they would be able to eat this skin and change their skins when old, like a snake” (Sanada Giliwa, March 1996). Miwasa lost the skin and instead of the people being able to transform their skins and retain immortality, the small insects, snakes and animals who ate the skin gained that power. When Miwasa arrived at Dogono, he told the others:

‘He [Saida] gave a life but it fell out at Pada and we have only one way; we’ll follow Dalogo. I went to get Dalogo and life but I came back without [either]. All of us will follow the same way, [the]only way’. So Miwasa broke all those regulations. There is a shortcut to Yaebi Saba but we can’t get there yet. It’s the only way, we’ve all got

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*60 The colours in the clouds visible when the sun rises and sets are the pieces of Miwasa’s canoe reflecting the light.*
to go the other way, Dalogo's way. Die from here and go back [to] Yaebi Saba (Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village March 1996).

Before the death of Dalogo, the ancestors had been capable of shedding their skins and putting on new ones when these got old. In that way, the ancestors never died. There are several references in the narratives relating to the capacity of many of the ancestors to change their skins, transforming gendered bodies and names, and enabling movement between different spaces and contexts. The changing of a person’s skin was intimately connected to a change in name, names being embodied in the skin of the person. Skins then, were the ways in which many of the ancestors were able to traverse worlds, genders, and situations. It enabled them to go through various changes, renewing and re-embodying themselves at each transformation.

The story of Dalogo and Miwasa articulates the loss of immortality and the closing off of Wabila; but it also delineates a concern with the complex relationship between white people, the ancestors and locals. In the colonial period, gubali kaka or ‘ghost skin’ was the term used by Gogodala people to describe white people’s clothes and many older people still use that phrase. It was suggested on more than one occasion that this story is the reason that many local people believe Europeans are deceased Gogodala who have returned from Yaebi Saba to visit and help their relatives. In several versions of Miwasa’s story, there is a large pool of boiling water that stands before Wabila in which the dead have to bathe. In the process, their skin is stripped and they become white and only then can they enter Wabila/Yaebi Saba. White people, on the other hand, have access to Yaebi Saba at all times. The paradox

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61 Sawiya for example changed her skin several times, each time staying with a different husband; “while she was [at] Baidowa, that ancestor Bani and Saida both were racing each other, trying to marry Sawiya. Saida married her and both of them stayed for a while. And then she changed her skin [to] Mewalu Sagalu [woman’s name] and changed her name [to Mewalu Sagalu]. After staying some time with that name Mewalu Sagalu, then she changed her skin again and got a new name, Kigisa. After staying for some time with name of Kigisa she changed her skin to Silila. After staying some time as Silila she changed her skin and got a new name, Ekolowa. She was staying with these two ancestors [alternatively] Bani and Saida. After Ekolowa name, she left Baidowa” (Sanada Giliwa, March 1996).

62 Sawiya changed her skin and the skin’s name was different from the previous one. Another of the ancestors, Esanadae lived in “two worlds”; the “water world” and the earth. To enable him to move between these two “worlds” he had two different skins. He would wear one if he was entering the “water world”, his mewa kaka or ‘fish skin’, and the other when he lived on the ground.
of being emplaced in this environment, of being rendered human and settled, then, lies in this situation: Gogodala people are empowered by their relationship with the landscape in which they move and act, but the very act of being human and emplaced means that they are unable to reach Wabila or Dogono or transform their skins. White people, conversely, so often ‘out of place’ are able to traverse these spaces and bodies.63

**Fighting for the land**

The iniwa olagi articulate a contemporary concern of many local people; the reason for their current lifestyle and poverty of material objects, development, and money. At one point, Kamo expressed the feeling this way: “that’s why we have no hope now; because Dogono died”. There is some speculation that white people know more about this situation than they admit, that the first UFM missionaries were guided to the area by knowledge of the original ancestors from Israel. There is however the possibility of change, as Bolame, another small part of Wabila that also broke away at the same time as Dogono and came to the area, is said to be still alive and remains the hope of a ‘new heaven’ for many.

These stories express a substantial reordering of spatial and moral relationships with white people, particularly APCM missionaries, by drawing comparisons between Biblical and their own ancestral narratives and emphasising the commonalities between them. Wabila and Bolame, the original places of the ancestors, ugu, canoes, masks and the like, are similar to Heaven and New Zealand respectively and the places visited by the ancestors are said to be found in Israel and Australia. The stories of ancestral happenings have been validated by Biblical narratives as these stories have only served to emphasise the similarities between the origins of the Gogodala and that of white people. Incorporation of these ‘white’ spaces into local spatial

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63 White people as ‘out of place’ are talked about in corporeal terms - which I explore in Chapters 4 and 5 in more detail.
configurations has meant that local people can claim a close, spatially and morally, set of relations with Europeans.

Gogodala people have access to land, swamp and lagoons if they belong to or sit inside the original clan canoe which named, transformed, or created these places. Belonging, expressed through demonstrated genealogical links between ancestors and people, has become an increasingly contested issue in the context of logging, oil and other developmental interests in the area. Resolution of the disputes which arise in such situations is not always clearcut and a common perception of this was expressed by Sakuliyato as “Gogodala people are always fighting for the land”.

Narratives about the creation and constitution of the environment are passed down as personal as well as clan genealogies. The stories about the generations after the first ancestors belong to particular families and villages to which they pertain. One such story, the establishment of Aketa village on the Aramia River, was told to me by two elderly men, Kaemisi and Kimama, on one of our trips to that village; some time after the Aketa canoe race discussed in Chapter 1. The ‘Aketa story’, as Sakuliyato referred to it, continued the tale of Waliwali the ancestor who brought about the death of Dogono. Waliwali had a son, Simolobe, who in turn had a son named Gamaleya: this young man was told by another to come and look at a place on the Aramia River as ‘the place looks like you’. So he went and stayed there until he was joined by another man called Saweya, at which point they made a longhouse. As more people came from Dogono, they moved to another, larger piece of land and built a larger village.

From that point on, the narrative becomes a long list of the names of the founders of Aketa and their descendants (all male), including the connection to Kaemisi and Kimama. These are the sorts of details that are related in the meetings for land mediation, stories which demonstrate the

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64 Like the Tannese of south Vanuatu for whom Bonnemaison (1994:137) suggests that once they were given flesh and land, their appearances became fixed and “to be human was to be from somewhere, to have a name, and to belong to a ‘canoe’”.

65 Like the Kwara’ae of the Solomon Islands, Gogodala families articulate the ancestral stories as “the history of their own line of descent, which is also the history of their land” (Burt 1994:24).
ancestral basis of specific claims of ownership. Often, as in the case of the Aketa story, this kind of narrative and the people who know it become the subject of much debate when the land or water is targeted for developmental projects. For Aketa, logging has become an issue on land that, although not in the village, is close by and currently occupied by Bainapi people. The memories of past conflicts between the Kamula, Bainapi and Aketa people have come to the fore in the last couple of years as a result and this has led to some bitter recriminations on both sides. It was rumoured in 1995-6 that the ‘Kamula’ landowners (as Gogodala people tend to categorise Kamula, Bainapi and other non-Gogodala directly to the north) of this site were not allowing Gogodala people be employed by the logging company.

Other village stories, like Kawiyapo village on the Fly River for example, are based on conflict between members of a single longhouse causing those people to leave the village and move to other areas. Kawiyapo was founded by Misa, an ancestor who moved away from Dogono when it died and the ground became very quiet. He and others built a longhouse together until he had a dispute with some of the other ‘big men’ and left with his family. Hearing the water from the Fly, he was intrigued and established a village on the bank of the river, claiming the land and sago around the village as his own.

In the next chapter, I explore the implications of these ancestral movements across the environment and the ways in which villages and places form the basis of daily life for local communities. Places and spaces in the landscape are meaningful for many reasons and are replete with memories of people who have lived since the time of the ancestors. I look at the ways in which the lifestyle characteristic of local villages is based on certain images and experiences of spatial dimensions. The village or baiga is the main space in which people conceptualise and develop their relationships with particular places, although gardens, swamps and fishing areas are very significant. Places and spaces are enmeshed in perceptions of time and change and are linked to the imagining of development and indigenous notions about Jesus, Prince Charles and Sosola, whose agency opened the door for white people.
Chapter 3
Islands of time

Coming back to Dogono

Sosola used to send the letters to his people, these Lalamana people. He used to write letters [saying] ‘I’m okay, I’m staying here, I’m staying very well, doing this kind of work’. And then Sosola’s daughter, Queen Elizabeth, got married [and] they sent the word to [the] Lalamana people. So Queen Elizabeth got married and then [she] gave a birth to a boy. He’s now Prince Charles: that’s the second of [the] Queen, Prince Charles. So he’s the one. So I think he [Sanada] says that we are waiting for Jesus, and we are just praising God and then we are waiting for him. So his name is Prince Charles. So he’s the one we are waiting for - he might come back to Dogono.

Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village September 1995

The opening of the door, through the actions and movement of Sosola, allowed white people to enter: Sanada said: “you are still coming - you can come here, do whatever you like, go back, [and then] come back [again]”. As yet, local people are unable to travel to the places which Sosola and other white people inhabit, although some have spent time in countries like Australia, New Zealand, and England. To do so, however, these people become substantially displaced from those left behind: when Kennsy Kawaki, Sakuliyato’s niece, accompanied Paul and Karen Bickerton back to Australia in April 1995, many tears were shed at the airstrip and the farewell was protracted even though she was only leaving for three months. Shortly after, Sakuliyato received a letter from Kennsy expressing her extreme loneliness, isolation, and a description of how much she missed the food and the weather. Sakuliyato wrote back telling Kennsy not to worry as everyone knew where she was and she was not, therefore, lost - ‘you are not nowhere, you are somewhere’. Sakuliyato confided that Kennsy’s family at Aketa village was worried that she would be ‘changed’ in Australia and would not be allowed to return.
Countries like Australia and New Zealand have been incorporated into narratives, like the *iniwa olagi*, which outline connections between Sosola, Jesus and Prince Charles, and Wabila, Australia, Dogono, death and development. Yet they remain largely unknown and somewhat mysterious to most local people, the source of some concern. Sakuliyato recalled that when she had spent some time in northern Australia several years ago, visiting a missionary family for whom she used to work, she had been scared because she was worried that she might meet people she already knew - local people who had died and moved to Australia.

In this chapter, I explore some of the links between these different places, narratives, and experiences in light of the continuing interest of local people in their relationship with white people and places and how these are tied to images of death. Time, space, and place become entangled in the transformations of bodies and spaces through the experience of death, in which the deceased move to other places - Wabila/ Yaebi Saba/ Australia - are stripped of their skin and become white. The return of Jesus/ Prince Charles to Dogono could be the catalyst for the destruction of spatial and temporal boundaries between these places.

Firstly, however, I look at the village as the central space around which people organise their lives and actions. As Yi-Fu Tuan (1977:3) has suggested, “[s]pace and place are basic components of the lived world; we take them for granted. When we think about them, however, they may assume unexpected meanings and raise questions we had not thought to ask”. Space is socially constituted not simply ‘there’ or existing a priori to human interaction (Lefebvre 1991:26-7), and each society produces its own places and spaces: social space ‘incorporates’ social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who die, who suffer and who act. From the point of view of these subjects, the behaviour of their space is at once vital and mortal: within it they develop, give expression to themselves, and encounter prohibitions; then they perish, and that same space contains their graves (Lefebvre 1991:33-4).

For Gogodala people, sago swamps, villages, bushland and gardens are marked in meaningful ways: in speech - ‘we are coming from the sago place’
or ‘I am going to the garden place’ are the most common forms of greeting among village people. Through these acknowledgments, people locate their bodies in a particular place at a specific time. *Saba* is the word for ‘place’ or the ‘place of’ and it almost always used in conjunction with things like canoes, sleep, eating or sago to indicate the canoe place, sago place, sleeping place or eating place. A place is always a particular kind of place.

Places transform the bodies that move amongst them, manifest in the profusion of scars, scabs, and calluses evident on people’s legs, arms and faces. Bodies marked in this fashion display the responsibilities inherent in the status of adulthood. Places themselves are configured by trees, sticks, burnt areas, and hidden *ugu*: large stands of bamboo draw the eye to the spot where a particular monster was sighted while out fishing; a small island stands out from the floating grass as the place that someone’s father built his gardens or planted coconut trees.

**The village, the Church, and the longhouse**

**Dancing, singing and feasting**

The village, *baiga*, is central to the ways in which Gogodala people experience daily life. Houses and villages are both the product and the producer of these daily activities and experiences. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) has suggested that buildings or houses are a way in which space is organised and experienced; wider orderings of space can be extrapolated from the structuring of houses. He writes:

> [t]he house, an *opus operatum*, lends itself as such to a deciphering, but only to a deciphering which does not forget that the ‘book’ from which children learn their vision of the world is read with the body, in and through the movements and displacements which make the space within which they are enacted as much as they are made by it (Bourdieu 1977:90).
In the gendered, internal spaces of houses in particular, the generative schemes of the place are objectified, easily learnt and inculcated (Bourdieu 1977:89). Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones (1995:1), in About the House suggest that houses are the “places in which the to and fro of life unfolds ... houses have dynamic, processual characteristics encapsulated in the term ‘dwelling’”. Like Bourdieu, they emphasise that houses and bodies are intimately linked and that houses act as ‘mnemonics’ for people, who learn through the process of inhabiting (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995:2).

Christine Helliwell (1996:131) sets out to look at the longhouse as a “place to be lived and used” rather than as an “abstract structure to be mapped”. Physical gendered boundaries in longhouses, for instance, may not necessarily indicate the kinds of social boundaries which visual images may suggest. Sounds, smells, and light are other forms of sensual locational and perceptual experiences which inform daily activities (see Stoller 1989).

In the following section, some of the ways in which Gogodala domestic spaces are sensed, ordered, used, and transformed are discussed. Before the arrival of the UFM missionaries, villages were dominated by enormous longhouses, saida genama, in which the entire population of the village lived. Although it is difficult to speculate what type of experience living in such a building entailed, I want to start with an account of the Gi maiyata ceremonies and therefore how people used these living spaces in such a context.

The Gi maiyata were part of the initial celebrations related to the first stage of the initiation cycle and occurred on the night of the completion of the Wasikola maiyata (the first initiatory stage). Crawford writes of Bernard Lea’s...
experience of the last *Gi maiyata* held at Balimo village on the night of September 16 1937: 3

On the first evening I saw one of the first general ceremonies. What took place on this occasion was a rather sexy affair. Its significance, obviously, is tied in with the fact that the ceremonies are also fertility ceremonies. I went over to the longhouse in the evening and found dancing in progress but it was all on the centre floor of the longhouse - women, children and men all gathered in the centre. I moved up towards the middle of the longhouse because this seemed to be where the main activity was, and I found that on each side of the longhouse there were groups of girls lined up, and kneeling or squatting on their haunches in front of them, were the boys. I soon became aware of the fact that they were the pairs who had been selected to marry each other at a later stage in life (quoted in Crawford 1981:250).

The next day, Lea returned to the village and witnessed another set of dances in the longhouses:

In the evening I went in to the longhouse again and there was some singing going on. Now each clan group had gathered together - only the men and boys in this case (the women were probably sitting on that little balcony on their sides of the house and watching what was going on). One of the songs I took part in just for the fun of it, not realising probably that it had any special significance (Crawford 1981:250-1).

Longhouses measured up to 146 metres or 490 feet in length and could be 24-25 metres wide. The height of the house was usually about twelve metres and the houses were constructed 5 to 6 metres off the ground, considerably larger than those of neighbouring Kiwai and Fly River villages (Weymouth 1978:12). Lyons notes that the house itself was named according

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3 Bernard Lea (1940:5), one of the first expatriate missionaries to come to the area, wrote in 1940 that these enormous longhouses were the main attraction for outsiders. He wrote: “[t]he materials and mode of construction of the longhouse form an intriguing subject for whites who are accustomed to the resources of civilization. Scores of twelve-foot poles, a foot in diameter, are used for foundations. They are dropped into the earth six feet, the similar length above ground taking the horizontal beams on to which split palm is secured in place of flooring. The skeleton and framework rapidly ascends, varying sized trees and saplings from the nearby jungle being freely lashed into the superstructure with thousands of yards of pliable cane. The thatching is then neatly secured over this framework”.

4 “The butt end of a sago palm frond midrib was hollowed out - a piece like a little trough - with a hole through the middle of it, and then a bundle of twigs ... tied together in a little bundle with the string wound round them. When they gave the string a pull these little twigs would rattle round and make an awful (sic) clatter. This was done at a certain part of the song. Everybody in the group would lift this thing up in the air and pull the string” (Crawford 1981:250-1).

5 W. N. Beaver (1914:412) noted in 1914 that the ‘Dogona’ longhouse measured some 500 feet long, 117 feet wide and 70 feet high. A. C. Haddon (1916:335) quotes Lyons as suggesting that these
to the place on which it was built and that this constituted the name of the village (Lyons 1926:334).

Lyons (1926:334) wrote in some detail about the construction of one such longhouse:

[w]hen a site has been chosen, an area a little larger than that which the *genama* [house] is intended to cover is cleared of grass. Old men of all the clans then peg off the ground-plan on the cleared area. After this is done the young men, under the leadership of a few old men, proceed to cut and carry in suitable timber for the house. Meanwhile those men of each clan who are skilled at carving and designing prepare the centre row of stumps and the joists that will rest upon them. The *timi*, as the end stump is called, is either carved or painted to represent a man. This stump will support the joist under the *ganipara* (sic), or old men’s end of the *genama*.

longhouses measured anything from 60 to 100 feet in length and 50 to 60 feet in breadth. In 1960, Rachel Cleland (1996) and her husband, Sir Donald Cleland the Governor General of Papua, visited Balimo and wrote in a family letter that they had seen the ‘enormous longhouse’ between the mission and the station. She recalls being enthralled by the size and solid construction of the longhouse: “[i]t was an incredible two storied building at least a hundred yards long, erected on huge eight foot tree trunks, and most skilfully constructed” (Cleland 1996:240).
Once the timi or front house post was put into the ground and the joists placed on top of the cradle of the timi, the longhouse was named and the villagers celebrated with a feast. (See Figure 7) The construction of the saida genama itself generally took several months, depending on the number of men and women working on it and the distance of the poles and sago leaves from the site of the longhouse. At its completion, the village people would gather again and have a feast (Lyons 1926:334).^6^

Longhouses consisted of high, arched sago-thatch roofs which covered the structure of the house and reached to the ground on each side, and the interior was divided into certain areas. The central hall or komo, which stretched along the whole of the building, was primarily a male space which was further organised into distinct sections, marked by fireplaces, around which clusters of related men ate and slept. Platforms (gawaga) were built near the roof along the komo on which the men slept. There was a distinction drawn between the ‘tail’ of the house and the ‘head’: the initiated men slept in the latter and uninitiated boys in the former. Each of these areas had their own doorway. Women, who rarely entered the komo, were not allowed to do so through either of these doors. Married, and therefore initiated, men were the only group of people who had unrestricted access to all areas of the longhouse (Weymouth 1978:12).

Women lived with the children in compartments which stretched along the sides of the komo. (See Figure 8) There were two levels within these cubicles similar to the structure of the men’s hall; the lower level of the women’s fireplace and general living areas were called genagoba and the upper, sleeping levels were referred to as sikili (Crawford 1981:85). Both men and women slept some distance above the first floor in order to escape the incessant mosquitos, and men could reach their wives’ sleeping platforms by using narrow steps which led from the lower level of the komo to the sikili (Wirz 1934:143). Women entered their living areas through the floor and steps

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^6^ Lyons (1926:335) wrote that the longhouses were so well made that some had lasted longer than coconut trees planted at the same time. The life of a coconut tree is from sixty to eighty years.
or wokali which led into their lower living areas, this latter area (aeigutiti) being utilised primarily as storage space for fishing nets, bundles of sago and brooms (Crawford 1981:85).

Daphne Spain (1992:13) has suggested that ceremonial houses, like Gogodala longhouses which are often the arena of male ritual, construct “geographic distance between women and men”. Although such boundaries were visible in the longhouses, it is too simplistic to assume these gendered spaces allowed a dominant group to develop and sustain advantages over a less privileged group as Spain argues. The rigidity and permeability of boundaries between gendered spaces like the komo and the sikili was dependent on the situation. In times of war and attacks on the longhouse by other villages, for example, women and children moved into the komo. Similarly, in some ceremonial contexts like that of the Gi maiyata described above, married women joined the initiated men in the komo for sexual dances and celebrations. At other times, however, the komo was a strictly forbidden space to women, children and uninitiated boys.

In the Gi maiyata, described by Bernard Lea in 1937, both men and women participated in the festivities and dancing (except married couples

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7 Spain (1992:3) has suggested that there is a correlation between the gendering of spaces and resulting access of women to knowledge which is used by men to reproduce power and privilege.
without children). During this particular ritual sequence the young male initiates, who had been the focus of earlier dancing, sat on the gawaga and watched. Crawford (1981:248) writes:

[all of the ceremonial paraphernalia displayed for the morning ritual was carefully laid out in the komo, together with additional gi lopala [ritual objects] and effigies of ancestral figures, both male and female ... The komo itself was highly decorated with many posts supporting fringes of young frayed sago fronds hanging like transparent screens; large ancestral figures stood against the walls and a diverse display of gi gawa [ceremonial canoes] and gi lopala [other ceremonial objects] rested midway on the floor, the latter fully adorned with totem plants and most fitted with a salago lapila [canoe prow ornament].

Crawford notes that the ceremonies that took place were described by Lea as ‘immoral’ and by A. P. Lyons in 1926 as a ‘sexual orgy’. Lyons (1926:357) wrote that it began with each man carrying carved and painted canoes and paddles around the komo, each partnered by a woman holding his penis in her hand and making ‘libidinous remarks’ designed to excite him to have sex with her. The gi lopala (the carved canoes, paddles and other objects) were placed in certain spaces around the komo after which it became “a sexual orgy, interspersed with dancing, singing and feasting, which is kept up until daybreak”.

Shirley Horne, the wife of a UFM missionary who spent many years in the Gogodala area, produced a book (1962) based on interviews with a local woman, Pino, called Out of the Dark outlining her conversion to Christianity. In her descriptive account of Pino’s experiences as a child and then a woman in the longhouse at Akali village (near the Fly River), Horne depicts these gendered boundaries as visually and aurally permeable. Much of the sensory

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8 The book is written as an account of Pino’s life but told in the third person. Horne sets herself up as the dispassionate commentator who watches the child grow up and become a woman in a village during the early period of colonisation and missionisation. The text is replete with references to Christian images and metaphors of the ‘dark’ and hard life of early Gogodala women, as opposed to the ‘light’ into which they are drawn by the missionaries. Nevertheless it is a valuable resource as the comments she makes as Pino are consistent with accounts of pre-contact life and the coming of the missionaries, as well as contemporary idioms.

9 Like contemporary village houses, the walls were and continue to be made of either hardened sago frond or black palm and are generally easy to either see, hear or speak through. As I will elaborate later in this chapter, this is an important part of village sociality which renders people’s daily movements and actions visible and audible and, therefore, accountable.
experience of the inside spaces of the longhouses in early contact times was based on sound. During the *Aida* ceremonies, women and children were chased away from the village and could not return until the *Aida lopala* (objects) had been put away at sunset. In Horne’s account, Pino and the other women are warned to leave the longhouse by the sounds of the ‘du-du’ bird and an ‘inhuman’ whisper emanating from the *komo*. Horne (1962:16) writes: “[a]ll night they kept it up: the boom-boom of the drums, the stamp-stamp of the feet, the jangling of the Aida bells made from the hard shells of nuts”.

When Benjamin Butcher travelled through the area in the 1920s, he described visiting several Gogodala villages. At Baia village, he stopped and stayed overnight in the *komo* of the longhouse. He writes: “[n]o women were to be seen, but they could be heard as, hidden in their apartments, they were watching us through crevices in the walls, and there was audible evidence of much excitement” (Butcher 1963:72). Travelling the next day to Balimo longhouse, he spent another night in the men’s hall. At one stage the men in the *komo* started singing:

> [t]he deep, soft voices of the men blended together in the chant and other voices from unseen singers joined in, shriller and less pleasant, yet somehow harmonizing with the rest. The women and girls, hidden in their own apartments, were taking up the song, and the voices of all filled the building with strange music that went on and on through the night (Butcher 1963:75).

Crawford argues in *Sakema* (1975) that the central hall or *komo* of the longhouse was perceived to be a river, ‘the provider of life’. He writes:

> and in their own custom, before mission contact, they themselves created life by inviting their women into the *komo* or central hall for the *gi maiyata*. The walls separating the *komo* from the women’s area is looked upon as the river bank endeavouring to retain within its limits

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10 Shirley Horne describes the fear with which the women and children approached the longhouse at such times. “The blood was pounding in her ears, but she could not move. She wanted to get up and away from the house and the fearsome thing, hidden from her eyes with its mysterious being alive and real about her - but she couldn’t ... Pino got up quickly now. All about her was the feeling of stealthy, hurried movement. She rolled up her wallaby sleeping skin with quick, nervous motions. She was listening, waiting, dreading to hear and wishing that she had risen earlier. The ‘du’s were calling in unison now ‘du-du-du’. Her body stiffened and her skin tightened as she heard the harsh almost inhuman whisper coming from the *komo*. ‘Women, women, go down quickly, Aida is coming, go down quickly, go down quickly’” (Horne 1962:9-11).
the powers of creation, but like their river that breaks its banks, the giver of life is not limited to one boundary (Crawford 1975:1).

It is possible that the longhouse was thought to either have life through ugu or be otherwise animate although this is difficult to verify. Crawford (1981:177) noted that when a longhouse was built as a cultural centre in the 1970s, one of the opening ceremonies involved the parade of women dancing through the komo to dispel the ‘evil spirits’ from the new house.

Outside the saida genama, which physically dominated the village and ridges of land on which it was built, the utilisation and construction of space was also significant. Although both men and women lived in the longhouse, unlike many other areas in Papua New Guinea, there were also small houses which women used as shelters during menstruation and childbirth.11 These houses were called gwaei saba, or ‘hill place’, and were built by a woman’s husband for her use. Such houses were built on the ‘hill’ or ridges stretching down to the lagoons, near the toilets and far away from the saida genama. As men ‘hid’ their toilet activities from women and children, using the bush for such purposes, these areas along the sides of the land ridges were mainly used by women and children.

It is possible, though, that during the male maiyata cycle women spent their days, when not fishing, making sago or washing, in these small houses as they were not allowed near the saida genama until nightfall. During the first initiation sequence, the young boys were also secluded in small houses called wa genama at a distance from the longhouse (Crawford 1981:246). Only the initiated men stayed in the komo during this time making carvings, and chest, arm and leg bands. When the initiates were brought back from the wa genama (lit. ‘outside or surrounding house’), they were allowed to enter the komo for the first time but only through the ‘tail’ entrance (Crawford 1981:246).

Along the outside of the longhouse there were straight rows of salago, clan plants, which celebrated the clan membership of the villagers. These

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11 Beaver noted in 1914 that although the entire village population lived in the longhouse, small women’s houses were visible (Beaver 1914:412). Tai people remember that women had small houses in which they gave birth to children.
salago also demarcated the longhouse from the other parts in the village, such as the gardens, graves sites, and canoe places. Lyons writes that around the longhouse, an area the same size as the width of the saida genama was established and cleared as a dancing place (Lyons 1926:335). The gardens adorned the edges of this dancing space, perpendicular to the longhouse. The gardens, set out in long parallel mounds with ditches in between the garden beds, stretched down to the lagoon which inevitably surrounded the point of land on which the longhouse was built. (See Figure 9)

Figure 9. Gogodala longhouse; courtesy of The National Museum of Australia

The last saida genama, in Isago village on the Aramia River, was destroyed in 1979. Even in this longhouse, Crawford (1981:85) writes, different patterns of life had already developed and were incorporated into its design when it was built in 1957. Men and boys still slept in the komo but tended to sleep on the bottom level of the hall under mosquito nets, while women also made use of these nets to live in the lower levels of their compartments. The upper levels, previously used as sleeping areas,
increasingly became storage space; while the cooking and preparation of food took place under the house. Small doors had been built into the walls between the komo and the women’s compartments and the komo, although still used primarily by men, had also become the arena in which Church services and other meetings were held and to which women were invited (Crawford 1981:85).

The development of an indigenous Christianity based on the evangelical teachings of the UFM missionaries and early Gogodala Pastors has meant that villages are constructed now in significantly different ways from those constituted around the physically imposing longhouse. Jolly (1989:213) has noted that, as part of the conversion process in Melanesia, local converts to Christianity and missionaries deliberately sought to transgress boundaries and deconstruct certain sacred and gendered spaces (only to create new ones). Such a process often focused on the construction of a Church building in the village but also involved the rebuilding of houses in order to reshape domestic practices (Jolly 1989:213). Certain notions of gendered spaces and activities, deemed appropriate by expatriate missionaries, were encouraged (Jolly 1989:223). Cleanliness and village order were often targeted in this process.12 Domestic spaces were presumed to be associated with women and female missionaries often concentrated on promoting certain images of healthy bodies and clean places to local women (Jolly 1989:234). In particular, domestic and village spaces were emphasised; segregated sleeping arrangements were addressed and often transformed.

Weymouth (1978:59) argues that by the 1930s, house posts like the timi were being discarded in the process of building longhouses. He suggests that, as these posts were made of very hard wood and were therefore very heavy and difficult to carve, when young men were absent on plantations or other such labouring work these posts were dispensed with. The transformation of precontact spaces and practices of these villages had already

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12 Macintyre (1989:158-9) argues that early Polynesian missionaries to Tubetube in Papua New Guinea sought to transform local practices and spaces - they tried to introduce ‘better homes and gardens’. Large communal houses, built to display male power through lineage wealth, were destroyed in the process.
begun before the missionaries arrived in 1934 as a result of such labouring practices (Weymouth 1978:211).

By 1940, a group of local Christians sought to put a halt to dancing in the villages. Pasiya and other local converts argued that such activities initiated sexual relationships and most of the masks, headdresses and other ceremonial objects connected to such practices were disparaged - the carving of such objects was strongly discouraged (Weymouth 1978:176-7). In this type of debate village spaces, organised as they were around the longhouse and the dancing grounds, came into question. When a new longhouse was built for Kimama village in 1937 after the former house was destroyed by fire, the big man of the village, Pasiya, consecrated the new longhouse using a Christian ceremony, during which he led some women through the front section of the *komo*, an action previously punishable by death (Weymouth 1978:160).

**Conference and confessions**

The *saida genama* became the arena in which the missionaries and early Gogodala Christians sought to transform local beliefs and practices and was the site of village services, Bible studies and Christian conferences. UFM missionaries instigated a series of conferences in order to stimulate travel and communication between both neighbouring villages and those further afield. Prior relations between villages had generally consisted of those constituted by marriage ties and common land or water. These conferences, however, initiated more intimate and easy communication and travel between previously hostile villages - particularly providing a safe arena in which women could meet. For these conferences, people travelled from their own to the host village and stayed for several days, during which time Church services were held and praying, singing and feasting engaged in. Weymouth (1978:217) writes that at these conferences:

> matters relating to a Christian's demeanour were discussed: personal and village hygiene, setting a good example in careful workmanship of canoes, housebuilding and making good gardens to provide for family needs. Inevitably, these became the mark of a mature Christian.
The conferences were conducted in the komo, at which the expatriate missionary and Gogodala preacher stood at the centre of the hall with the men gathered at one end and the women at the other (Weymouth 1978:219). Men and women divide themselves in the same way in village churches today.

In March 1995, only two months after I arrived in the area, I went to the Women’s District ECP Conference held at Uladu village on the Aramia River. It was one of two major women’s conferences for the year, the other being the Regional Women’s Conference (held in Balimo later that year). There was between three hundred, and three hundred and fifty Gogodala women, as well as thirty Dibiaso and Kamula women from Bamustu village. Men were not allowed to remain in the village and they travelled to neighbouring places to stay with other family members. Each village group was allotted a house in which they could stay for the duration of the conference; in which they would cook, wash and sleep. The women brought their own sago, fish, coconut and bananas with them, carrying them in their canoes or on their backs. There was a large house set aside for the conference organisers and speakers, mostly deaconesses and women pastors.

I stayed in the small house assigned to Tai women, although it was initially assumed that I would spend the time with the other expatriate missionaries and conference organisers. On the night we arrived, there was a Church service at seven o’clock which lasted late into the night. The following three days consisted of two hour Church services, involving much singing by village groups, Bible readings, prayers and sermons. There were many children who had come with their mothers, although not many boys over the age of six or seven, and there were several substantial breaks throughout the day to ensure that the women has time to cook, wash and talk.

It was a relaxing time: many of the women in the Tai house walked around the house clad only in their bras and skirts, and the time before dinner

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13 The regional conference is much larger than the district event, as the region encompasses the entire Gogodala group while the district is only the eastern villages (the Balimo District). Gogodala women from Daru, Kiunga and Moresby travelled to Balimo to attend and there was close to 2000 women there. Other conferences held throughout the year included the men’s Regional and District, Youth District and Regional, Pastors and Deacon/nesses, Women’s and Men’s fellowship and several others. In 1995 there were eleven or twelve such ECPNG conferences.
was a one of joking and discussions about the sessions, speakers and relationships of other women. At intermissions, many went off to visit and eat with their relatives and close friends who they had not seen for some time. There was much emotion on the last day as the women packed up their bed mats, mosquito nets and sago bundles and paddled off in their narrow canoes.

The Church at Uladu was a long building that consisted of a black palm platform (si) that stretched the length of the Church, sheltered only by an arched roof of sago palm leaves (aso). It was set up in the new section of the village (which was in the process of moving to another point of land). As a result there were few coconut palms or seniwa trees to adorn the buildings or provide much shade. The houses were spread out on different points of land, several perched almost precariously on the side of the ridge. Most houses are now constructed so that family groups, usually based on a married couple and their children and grandchildren, can stay together in one building. Families tend to build several houses on the same point of land, so that siblings and their spouses are situated nearby.

A process that often takes several years as people let their old houses fall into ruin while they build their new ones in the selected section.
Villages are organised on ‘islands’, *osama*; ridges of land which appear to rise out of the swampy lagoons that surround them. In the past, longhouses were built along the central spine of the land. Other smaller areas of land are often utilised as garden areas and groves of coconut trees punctuate these islands. The *gudidibi* or points of land that constitute these ‘islands’ are high enough to ensure that the houses and gardens are not inundated during the wet season. People belonging to various clans and clan canoes live together in these villages, although houses are built on land that belongs to specific clans.¹⁵ As a result, villages are often characterised by concentrated groups of particular clans on specific points of land.¹⁶

As in many parts of Papua New Guinea, there is no place in the Gogodala environment which does not belong to a clan canoe or is not referred to in ancestral narratives. Each *gudibi* or point of land is named and owned. The ground on which the village is built, however, more generally belongs to one particular clan. The village is named according to the clan affiliation of the overall tract of land, although different claims to specific sections of land within this classification are upheld in the context of contestation. Dogono, for example, was named by Waliwali from Lalamana *udaga* but ‘under’ this Lalamana names lies the clan canoes which originally touched, made or simply claimed the distinct regions.

¹⁵ This was also the case when longhouses were the primary structure of the village. Paul Wirz in 1934 wrote that the Gogodala longhouse was unique in the region as both men and women lived together in the house, and the longhouse populations were made up of different clans (Wirz 1934:143).

¹⁶ This is the case particularly for the larger Gogodala villages. Adiba village is the largest Gogodala village with over one thousand people and is divided into five major components based on spatial and clan distinctions. These distinct parts within the village have their own name according to the primary clan designation of the point of land and are often referred to in English as villages within the larger village. Younger people, like Sakuliyato referred to these areas as ‘corners’ of another village; for example, Awaba had several ‘corners’ as it was very large - Aketa corner, Pisi corner and so on.
Tai village was named by an Asipali ancestor but the point of land on

Figure 11. Tai village 1995-6

which we lived in the later months, along with Sakuliyato and Kukuwa, Mala and Kukupiyato and their families, was called ‘Samaki point’ (from Wagumisi clan). The relationship between the more general name of the land and a deeper, more specific set of land ownership and clan membership criteria was explained in one instance to me through a metaphoric association with the human body. Like the human body, in which there is a surface or skin which covers layers of ribs, so too the land has a surface and a set of underlying ‘ribs’
which belong to different clan canoes. So that although Balimo, for this was the example we were discussing, is built on Asipali clan land and therefore carries an Asipali name, people from different clans live on their own points of land within the village and belong that land.

Villages came into being after the initial dispersal of the ancestors from Dogono after it died and the ground moved. The ancestors and their families moved south as far as the Fly River, to the Aramia in the north, Ali village in the west and Kenaewa village in the east. At various spots, they built longhouses, planted coconut palms, dug gardens and fished for food, claiming these places as they did so. Through the generations, these villages grew and some families fought and left, building their own houses away from the original village. Sakuliyato’s grandfather, Waidi, left Dogono longhouse because his sister was raped by the other Aida men after she inadvertently saw some Aida objects in the bush. Waidi was very upset and took his sister and family to Aketa village, which was in the process of being built by Gamaleya and Saweya (as described in Chapter 2). Other longhouses were split by conflict and whole sections of clan groups packed up their belongings and moved further afield. In this way, villages sprang from the first ones established by the ancestors.

This process continues to mediate village relationships today: when we arrived in Tai village in 1995, we soon realised that it was relatively small because half of the people had moved their houses over to an adjoining point of land and called themselves Oseke village ten years earlier. The dispute which had resulted in such a split began in the Church: the Pastor initiated a Christian ‘revival’ in which he promised that things would improve for Tai villagers. He suggested that ‘food would come by itself’, other material objects and money would become readily available and their lives would be appreciably transformed. Mala and several others, although originally involved, distanced themselves from the Pastor and explicitly rejected his propositions. Consequently, supporters of the Pastor moved with him over to another piece of ground called Oseke and began to build their houses and construct a new Church.
Even ten years later, in 1995, the split was bitter and at one point erupted into an intervillage fight in which most of the men and women of both villages became involved. The fight began over remarks about a piece of land currently being used to keep some village cows - there was some dispute about the way in which it was being used. The shouting and screaming was overwhelming and women ran back into houses to pick up axes, sticks and bush knives in case of necessity. The argument took place only several metres from our house at the entrance to Tai village, close to the communal water well. After a while the mamusi (TP) and deacons of both villages eventually sorted it out and within an hour or so, people began to move away without anyone being seriously hurt.

Village Churches are usually made from the same bush materials as village houses, though some places have managed to raise money to put iron roofs on their Churches.\(^\text{17}\) Another source of rivalry between Tai and Oseke was the new Church being built at Oseke. Some Tai villagers proposed that the two villages pool their resources and build a beautiful new Church between them but were hastily rebuffed.

The Church is the largest building and predominates as the main 'public' and social space of each village.\(^\text{18}\) At Tai village, the Church is built on the widest point of land (see Figure 11) and is approximately 80 feet (23.5 metres) in length, 39 feet wide (8.8 metres), and can easily accommodate two hundred people.\(^\text{19}\) In front of the Church, there is a field on which young men, and sometimes women, play weekly games of football and basketball. Most village Churches are surrounded by these playing fields, an empty space which

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\(^\text{17}\) This is a matter of some village rivalry. Some villages are a lot larger than Tai village and have managed to raise money to build an impressive Church. Kotale Church is one such example: it is made out of timber bought from the timber yard and the floors are floor boards rather than black palm. Tai villagers are trying to raise money to build a new Church building complete with an iron roof and at one stage the pastor approached us for ideas about getting money from overseas sources.

\(^\text{18}\) Churches are used for a variety of meetings, discussions and feasts. Generally women, men and children can gather without fear of offending another group and discuss village and intervillage matters, of which Church matters are fairly prominent.

\(^\text{19}\) Villages with greater populations have correspondingly larger Churches. Dogono village, for example, resembles a small longhouse in its size and has the capacity to hold several hundred people at any one time.
is seen as the property and responsibility of all villagers. The Church and its surrounding fields are used at any social gathering and constitute the arena in which village matters are ‘brought out to the people’ and dealt with.

The interior of the Church at Tai village, and the other Gogodala villages, is divided into areas in which men and women sit in distinct groups. Each of these spaces has its own entrance. In Tai Church, the women enter through one end of the building and sit in the corresponding section of the Church while men use the opposite entrance and stay in their half, facing the women. In between these two groups the altar, in the form of a table, stands at which the local Pastor and his or her Deacons conduct the services or meetings. (See Figure 12) In this central area, people mingle to participate in the singing which is often accompanied by swaying, clapping and dancing.

On either end of Tai village Church, there are two large fireplaces which are used in times of feasts. At Christmas in 1995, the Tai people gathered in the Church to celebrate with a meal of meat, rice, sago and tea. Charles and I sat in the middle with the women on our left and the men on the right. The food took up the centre: huge steel pots full of wallaby or beef cooked in coconut milk prepared by the men on fires built just outside of their section of the Church; plastic and metal tubs of steaming, cooked rice and layers of sago sticks wrapped in green banana leaves or bark. After the food was blessed by the Pastor, men began to move up and down the waiting women and children encouraging them to put out their plates, cups and bowls.

20 On the Friday of every fortnight, a day designated ‘Government day’ (in English - from the colonial period), all of the available village people get up early in the morning and cut the grass surrounding the Church and the playing fields.

21 Disputes, particularly those to do with land claims, which can not be resolved by the village community in the Church are taken to Balimo and dealt with in the local Council Chambers. Most village disputes and problems, however, are dealt with at the village level and ‘brought out to the people’ in the Church.

22 There are women Pastors but they don’t seem to have parishes on their own - rather they hold a village Church with their Pastor husband. I saw no instances of a female Pastor who not married to another, similarly ordained, person.

23 Other village Churches, such as that at Kotale village, are organised around these gendered spaces but in Kotale Church, women and men sit facing the front parallel to one another. They enter from the same entrance, at the back of the building, move down the middle of the rows and then sit facing the altar rather than each other.

24 Largely because we were being thanked for having provided the rice. At other times, we sat in the appropriate sections, Charles with the men and I with the women and children.
to be filled with the hot food. Boiling, sweet tea was poured into cups from large metal kettles and the sago bundles were collected by the women and distributed among the children and men. Small children ran across to their fathers, grandfathers and uncles to deposit these green parcels on plates before moving back to their own meals or racing outside to play with others.

When the food was finished and the children disappeared, laden with *bilums* (TP) full of dirty plates and cups, the men and women started discussing various village issues. After some moments, a woman stood up and accused her husband of having a sexual relationship with another married woman in the village. She entreated them to stop and asked the village people to back her on this matter. The other woman named in this discussion then stood up and apologised to the people gathered, saying that nothing was happening anymore, God had forgiven her and that she had nothing more to say. Then the errant husband also stood and expressed his anger at the people for even discussing the issue, as it was not their problem to deal with. There was much talk about this and the man left the Church soon after. Sakuliyato said that the first woman had decided to 'bring it out to the people' so that the others would have to acknowledge the relationship and try to bring it to a halt.

**Figure 12. Tai village Church spaces**

![Diagram of Tai village Church spaces]

- **Women's space**
- **Men's space**
- **Women's door**
- **Men's door**
- **Fireplace**
- **Singing and dancing area**
- **Altar**
There were a couple other issues brought 'out'; until, after some hours, finally all left the building and went back to their own houses.

Some village houses are very large, up to 40 feet (12 metres) in length and 30 to 50 feet wide, but most are somewhat smaller. Sakuliyato and Kukuwa built a large house into which his parents and younger brothers moved some time after it was finished. This was the house in which we originally stayed for three weeks when we first came to Tai. The house into which we moved was considerably smaller, laughingly referred to by some as a ‘firewood house’. Most are built some distance above the ground, up to 6 or 7 feet. Crawford (1981:85-6) writes that in the late 1970s in Isago village, the site of the last longhouse, several of the smaller houses, built after the longhouse was demolished, were constructed along the same lines as the longhouse: with a central hall for the men and side cubicles for the women and children.

Contemporary village houses usually have a central area with a fireplace and food preparation space; it is the primary place where people visit and sit to talk and eat. Men and women share this social space within the house, although often women are seated around the cooking area, preparing and cooking the food. (See Figure 13) When food is prepared and served, people are very careful not to step over food, or indeed any object on the floor as it is the space of eating, sleeping and talking. Stepping over cooked food is seen as particularly rude and in the case of women, dangerous for men and children.25 Around this are compartments for the various inhabitants to sleep in. Most couples sleep in the same room, although young, unmarried men often sleep together. Children usually sleep in the same mosquito nets as their parents or grandparents. Some houses are simply one big space around which people set up their mosquito nets and sleep at night.

25 I will elaborate on this issue in Chapter 5 in an exploration of the connection between spaces, gendered bodies and food.
Sensing local places

The village and adjoining gardens, sago swamps and areas of bush or grassland are places that local people perceptually engage. Steven Feld suggests that for the Kaluli of the Great Papuan Plateau, who dwell in a landscape dominated by rainforests, the sounds associated with the forest are central to Kaluli senses of place. Kaluli often hear what they cannot see and locational information derived from sound is greater than that derived from vision (Feld 1996:98). Similarly, Gell (1995:235) has noted that among the Umeda of the Sepik, who share the same sort of habitat as the Kaluli, the world is perceived predominantly through the auditory sense.

The Gogodala landscape, unlike the Umeda or Kaluli, is dominated by flat stretches of water, covered in lagoon grass, that are interspersed with

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26 Paul Stoller (1989:6-7) urges anthropologists to ‘tune’ their senses to local sensibilities - to reintegrate the tastes, smells and sounds of people’s worlds and experiences.

27 Gell (1995:232) suggests that this has very specific effects on the domain of ‘cognition’ - phonological iconicity in the Umeda language is accentuated. So, for example, the word for mountain in Umeda means ‘the sound that a mountain makes’ or the shape made by the mountain in ‘articulatory/acoustic space’.
islands upon which villages, gardens and coconut trees are highly visible. The primary source of information about a person’s location in this context derives from vision as people, canoes, trees and houses are clearly marked. Vision is a very important way in which Gogodala people talk about perceptions of themselves and others and through which they develop a sense of their places.²⁸

Sounds and smells become more significant when vision is impaired by a lack of light, in smoke-filled rooms, or in the dense vegetation of the swamps. In the sago swamps and travelling through the bush when hunting or searching for bush fruit, voices and listening are necessary for locating other people. In the sago swamps, when moving between sago trees, women constantly call to each other and their children to keep in touch. The smell of felled and rotting sago palms which permeates the swamps is also an intense sensual experience of the swamp. It is the initial impression of an outsider, and until I grew accustomed to it, was very unpleasant. The sharp aroma of smoke permeates every corner of village houses and clings to the hair, skin and clothing of their occupants.

Most village houses are rectangular in form and are constructed from sago-thatch roofs and sago-sheath walls or black palm walls, neither of which are intended to make walls visually or aurally impervious. Doors, once opened in the morning, remain so throughout the day and closing the door during this period is considered to be extremely rude. Even if people do not enter a neighbour’s house, the ‘openness’ of the house is declared by the open door. The walls and floors of these houses are highly permeable. Calling between these spaces is considered appropriate and women and men often converse between various houses and with those gathered outside and underneath the houses. It took me many months to realise that people were talking to me as I passed by their homes when walking through the village; I always assumed that they were speaking to people already inside the house. Eventually they began to stick their heads out the window or door so that I would acknowledge

²⁸ In later chapters, I will explore the notion that vision and the organ of vision, the eye, is integral to Gogodala notions of ‘tradition’ and carving. Gogodala talk about illnesses as looking at the sick person and ancestral stories are replete with references to eyes and ‘canoe eyes’ (gawa tao).
their greeting. People are located in the village through the loud calling of their name to which they respond in kind. Sound permeates the loose black palm or sago frond walls and floors of the houses, allowing ease of communication. In large houses, particularly at night when visibility is poor due to lack of light and the confusion of vision associated with the smoke from many fires, communication becomes very dependent on sound.

The notion of a discrete private space is not associated with village places. People constantly join in conversations about other’s actions and proffer comments on any issue, while in different houses or merely passing by on the way to the garden or lagoon. Instead people move outside the village to the gardens or sago swamps. For this reason, sexual activities usually take place in the gardens where people can reasonably expect to be alone.

In the days of the longhouses, gardens were built perpendicular to the central longhouse, stretching down to the surrounding lagoons. In contemporary villages, ‘garden places’ or egada saba are constructed close to the owner’s house, on the edges of land, as well as on surrounding islands. Garden places, depending on their location, can be either several hours’ walk or paddle distance or only a few minutes. Most village people, however, have several gardens located both at some distance from the village and several closer to home. For the gardens further away, many families build ‘bush-camp’ houses into which they move during the dry season. While at the bush camp, people fish and make sago, hunt and eat garden foods without having to travel too far as the camps are established in the bush or close to the river for precisely that purpose.

Sago swamps are also usually found at a considerable distance from the village. Sago palms grow in swampy areas which are havens for mosquitos, often in lowlying and inundated areas but that are not covered with water all year around like most of the surrounding lagoons. Swamps are surrounded by small growth forests or ‘bush’ which women have to negotiate in order to

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29 Helliwell (1996:138) argues that the Gerai longhouse constitutes a ‘community of voices’; that through the sounds of voices, people are connected although invisible to one another. In this way, listeners and speakers are “profoundly present in each others lives”. Helliwell (1996:138-9) notes that when she started living in the longhouse, she thought her hostess spent considerable amounts of time talking to herself about daily events but she was talking to other, unseen, people.
make sago. This bush is where men go hunting, mostly at night, and in which poles are cut for houses and firewood is found. Both women and men spend considerable amounts of time travelling in the bush, although it is only men who use the bush or grasslands at night to hunt for wallabies or wild pigs. The bush becomes flat stretches of grassland, *kunai* (TP) grass, which are often burnt by men hunting wallabies in large numbers.

**Moving through dangerous spaces**

Water is a significant space in the landscape and traversing bodies of water underlies experiences of daily travel. In precontact and early contact times, these watery depths could be dangerous and travelling between villages problematic, due to threats of sorcery and warfare, but also because they were populated by *ugu*. *Ugu* lived primarily in the water, lurking beneath the surface of the water and rising to catch out unknown or ignorant travellers. People who belonged to the clan and place of the *ugu*, and thereby known to it, were left unmolested. ‘New people’ or *tatata*, however, those who were unknown to the *ugu* in their immediate state of being, were at considerable risk. These people are still urged to stay away from lagoons and rivers, and are unable to travel during the term of their status as ‘new people’ for fear of the consequences.

The space of water is both one of mystery, as opaque surfaces behind which *ugu* hide, and an arena of daily movement. It is both familiar and unfamiliar. Contemporary concerns with travelling by water revolve around

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30 Nancy Munn (1996) has looked at a similar type of phenomenon in some Aboriginal communities in Australia. She relates the story of a group of researchers and some Aboriginal people from Belyuen and Darwin who were attacked by a manifestation of the Blanket Lizard, the ancient owner of the place. An old woman talked to the Lizard, however, and it subsided because it knew who she was and she in turn knew how to approach the Lizard (Munn 1996:458). Munn (1996:459) analyses these manifestations of ancient figures of the landscape as moving boundaries combined with the power of place. I would suggest that *ugu* perform a similar type of action for Gogodala villagers. *Ugu* only disturb those people who are unknown to them and who do not know how to approach them correctly. In the past, these barriers would have been more terrifying to those who travelled from far away and who did not know the *ugu* and its place. These powerful prescriptions on travel between villages have been considerably undermined by processes of pacification and missionisation.

31 The term ‘new person’ relates to many stages in life which all have to pass through in their lifetime. A ‘new person’ can be a newly pregnant woman and her husband, or a newly married couple; a girl making sago for the first time or having her first menses.
the continued presence of *ugu* at specific places, but also with several sightings of ‘submarines’. These submarines, which exhibit much the same sort of characteristics as *ugu*, lie submerged until people pass by and then rise out of the water to frighten those travelling past in canoes or pulling up fishing nets. The submarines are connected to the presence of white people and there are some stories told about village people disappearing as a direct result of these submarines.\(^{32}\)

Sakuliyato told me about a story at Aketa village, which her mother told her, that draws together several of these links: when Aketa villagers were living in their *saida genama* before white people had come, a young girl was out fishing with her mother and aunties and they saw something in the water. The women tried to catch it but it eluded them until the girl caught it in her net - when she lifted it out of the water, it died. The women took the object back to the longhouse where they gave it to the ‘big men’; these men thought to themselves ‘this is our lucky/special [thing]’ (*gabi lapila*) and made a container for it and put it away at the top of the *komo*.

All of a sudden, white people became interested in Aketa village and they came to Balimo and asked; “Where is Aketa?” Travelling in a ‘big ship’ they continued to other villages, asking “Aketa?” and then moving on until they reached Aketa. They came to the longhouse and began looking for something - the ‘big men’ wondered what they were looking for and showed them many things but they were not interested. Then the big men thought; ‘maybe they want to look at our lucky [thing]’ and they brought it down from the loft of the *komo*. The white people snatched the lucky thing, got back in their ship and sailed away, leaving the people at Aketa very upset and puzzled. Some years later, the girl was out fishing alone for prawns in a small swamp and she disappeared. Sakuliyato said that Aketa people are convinced that the white people came back in a submarine and took the girl away, probably overseas.\(^{33}\)

\(^{32}\) Mike Wood (pers.comm) has suggested that Kamula men talk about a direct correlation between *ugu* and these submarines. He said that the sightings of these submarines pervade both Kamula and Gogodala perceptions of the water around Balimo.

\(^{33}\) The *gabi lapila* that the girl found was a ‘white thing that looks like gold’, not large - the same size as a ‘medium tupperware’. Sakuliyato’s mother confirmed that white people had come but in the form of
Travelling away from the village can be a frightening experience for some people. Villages represent safety, a known and marked set of places. The islands on which the gardens are situated, the bush, swamps and fishing grounds are less secure, particularly in the past. Horne recounts an incident in which the rape of a woman in the sago swamp was the cause of a long running war between Akali and Dogono villages in the early 1900s. She writes,

Maname’s wife had been foolishly out making sago in the secluded swamps on her own. Absorbed with pounding the sago and squeezing the water through the bark bag with her feet, she did not hear Damua, from Dogona(sic), come stealthily through the swamp. As he came out of the sago palms into the clearing near the water where she was working, she looked up startled and bewildered, ready for flight ... Later her husband received a small bundle from Damua. On opening it he found that it was his wife’s grass skirt. Damua had deliberately added insult to injury, in adopting this way to tell Maname about the incident (Horne 1962:17-8).

Women often will not go to the sago swamp alone, preferring to go in small groups of other women or accompanied by their husbands. Gardens also can be a place in which men or women are vulnerable. One of the first stories that was told to me involved the recent death of a man close to my adopted family who had been killed while in his garden. No one could agree as to how he was killed and by whom. Being alone in his garden, however, had rendered him vulnerable to this type of attack.

Travelling through the bush when hunting or going to bush camp also puts people in dangerous situations. The majority of deaths among village people occur because they are bitten by snakes while out hunting or travelling to swamps and gardens. Villages areas, especially around and underneath houses, are kept free from grass so that snakes can be seen and destroyed. A man from Aketa village was bitten by a snake while travelling between the village and his bush camp. When his sons found his body, they retaliated by spearing another man with whom their father had been having a dispute for some time. Travelling through these spaces, then, renders people vulnerable to

government administrators who built two houses at Aketa canoe place. The big men gave them the gabi lapila and they went away again but left some rice and tinned fish in the small houses. The people at Aketa, however, did not know ‘how’ to eat these foods at that time.
human and non-human agents who may mean them harm. Several Tai women had been propositioned and harassed by men while alone in their gardens or fishing in a remote place.

These areas outside the village such as the bush, sago swamp and lagoons, however, are also spaces along which people travel and with which they interact on a daily basis without harm. The village is not always a place of security. In early contact days, Gogodala villages were often at war with one another and the village was the arena in which surprise attacks were carried out. Aketa villagers still talk about the burning of their longhouse by Kamula raiders in the 1930s. In the Church at Kotale, there hangs an image of an early longhouse set on fire during another such conflict. The village, in the form of longhouse, could also become dangerous in the context of illness: the flu epidemic of the 1920s spread through the lower Fly River villages and wiped out large numbers of people.34

### Source of life

Christine Hugh-Jones (1979) talks about longhouses, bodies, rivers and universes as examples of what she terms ‘space-time systems’. These systems, she argues, have three spatial dimensions; a vertical dimension, a horizontal dimension and a synthesis of these two. She argues that movement within these space-time systems is constitutive of them (Hugh-Jones 1979:237). Although I don’t wish to construct such concrete and bounded systems out of the temporal and spatial components of the Gogodala universe, I want to emphasise her analysis of movement within and between these realms as constitutive. For the Gogodala, experiences of spatiotemporal processes and systems are bound up with bodies and canoes. Canoes are the primary

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34 Home (1962:58) talks about this epidemic and its effects on Akali villagers through Pino’s eyes (1962:62). She writes: “[t]he great long-house at Akale was a sickening sight and other long-houses were the same. The people, their bodies emaciated, lay weak and ill on their mats. Too helpless to assist each other they lay in human filth. Flies came in hordes spreading the disease. The dead lay with the living. The living died and lay with the dead. Those who had escaped the sickness, realizing that it was spreading from one to another, fled the long-house and going out into the bush they existed as best they could”.

mediating space which renders movement between these areas possible (and relatively easy) and bodies are the basis of movement.

The most general term for the earth or world is *aeibaiga*, a concept that derives from the first place, Wabila. The islands of Wabila, Dogono and Bolame are connected to everyday spaces and temporal rhythms of contemporary villagers through the original ancestral journey to Dogono. *Aeibaiga* covers all water and land, and in recent years has expanded to include other areas of the world. *Aeibaiga* derives from two words which underlie local understandings of the complex relationship between people and their landscape: *aei* means leg, ground or earth (and to draw water out from the ground), and *baiga* is the word for village. The term *aeibaiga*, then, brings together the idea of ground and village to encompass the world and express the central place of human beings within it. Inherent in *aeibaiga* is the metaphoric association with images of the body, as the word *baiga* or village also refers to the back of the human body. Ridges of land parallel the contours of a human back.

*Aeibaiga* is the primary link between Wabila, the first place, and the contemporary landscape. Wabila is represented by the embodied form of Obaya Limo Iwalela, the original or first person and continuing ‘source of life’. The power and capacities of Wabila and the original ancestors derive from this being. There are several meanings which are inherent in the elaborate name of this person: *obaya* translates as ‘alone’, *limo* as ‘spirit’, and *iwalela* as ‘the power of thought’. Sanada suggested that Wabila looks like, and is, this first person, Obaya Limo Iwalela. His drawing of Obaya Limo Iwalela

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35 *Baiga* is also used for the word ‘country’ in the contemporary sense.

36 Feld (1996) notes that the Kaluli words for land and water formations *fele* and *dom* are related to the word for ‘thigh’ and ‘sides’ respectively. He suggests that the image of the body as ‘hills’ and ‘sides’ connected by ‘thighs’ is an enduring one for the Kaluli (Feld 1996:103).

37 These were the words which Kamo used to translate the concept of Obaya Limo Iwalela from Gogodala to English. From this, Sanada said that this person was the ‘source of life’ and that this was the complete meaning of his name.
emphasised the head and chest of this male figure and he pointed out that this was where and what Wabila was.38

The other two places associated with Wabila - Dogono and Bolame - are characterised by their ability to move around and act on their own volition as I noted in the previous chapter. In the ancestral stories, these islands are referred to through idioms of organic creativity and action, although more recently mechanistic metaphors have been used. In one of the stories, Dogono is associated with a pig called Gibita who made a terrible noise with his tusks and who was finally quietened down by the song of Waliwali:

Waliwali heard those frogs singing or making noises and some other insects. While he heard these things making noise he started singing songs. Those songs were Aida songs. While he start[ed] singing songs to Dogono these insects stopped singing or making noise; birds too they were singing [and] stopped (Kaemisi and Kimama from Aketa village, December 1995).39

Dogono was also thought to be a 'twelve-story building', not unlike the Biblical Tower of Babel. The only island said to be still alive and which can be found, at certain times and by particular people, between Ugu and Kenaewa villages on the Aramia River, is Bolame.

We have got two places, Dogono and Bolame, but they didn’t kill Bolame. In the beginning they [the ancestors] came to Dogono and killed Dogono, stayed there. So that’s the name Bolame, people think it [is] New Zealand. That’s Gogodala people’s opinion. But the real thing is that from Wabila, the master sent these two places, Dogono and Bolame. It’s already back to life [but] you can’t see it (Sanada Giliwa, September 1995).

Bolame is still embedded in the local landscape.40 It is described as being like an ugu monster, arising from the surrounding bush to startle unwary travellers and then sinking back into invisibility. Sanada also said that the motion of

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38 In Chapters 4 and 5, I look into the notion of limo in more detail and how it relates to issues of personhood. Limo more generally indicates the power to act that is inherent in every living thing, including humans.

39 Sawiyato described the song of Waliwali as being more like a whistle, with which he quietened the pig that was Dogono.

40 There is some dispute about the comparison between Bolame and New Zealand although many people talked about this connection. Because Bolame can be located in the Gogodala area, on the Aramia River, some people are unsure about it being equated with New Zealand.
Bolame, as an alive place, was similar to that of a turning ‘propeller’. In Miwasa’s story, Bolame is the home of the ‘spirit children’, the placenta of babies born to Gogodala women.

Wabila, on the other hand, is not accessible through traversing the local landscape but instead represents the space-time of the dead, the ancestors, and, more recently, the places of white people and things. Increasingly Wabila is spoken about in terms of being in the sky, much like the Christian notion of Heaven.\textsuperscript{41}

If there is an imagined vertical space-time system among the Gogodala, then it would seem that water is seen as the lower part of the earth, land is the centre on which people live, and sky is the realm of the Christian Heaven and Wabila or Yaebi Saba; the ‘richest place’. Water is connected to the underground in several of the ancestor stories; it represents unimaginable depths covered by an opaque and muddy surface out of which anomalies can, and do, emerge. In one of the ancestor stories, Ame Sibala, a monster created from a dog, snatched his prey - one of the ancestors - and dragged him down to the bottom of the Fly River. Then Ame Sibala went underground to the Aramia River and established himself at one of the creek mouths. Water is also the arena of other ugu or monsters and, recently, submarines like that described above. The land is the ground on which the villages are built and food is collected, hunted or made. It is the time and space of everyday life. The sky has increasingly become the space-time of Wabila, Heaven and Yaebi Saba, the place/s of the dead.

\textsuperscript{41} Weiner (1991:3-4) argues that for the Foi, ghosts are said to inhabit a world that parodies that world of lived experience. This place, Haisureri, is found downstream to the southeast where all the water flows into a spot and stops. These ghosts, then, exist outside of the spatial and temporal process of life. Hugh-Jones (1979:108) also talks about the Pira’-parana’ belief that the underworld is an inversion of the everyday life of the people.
In horizontal terms, the Gogodala landscape is distinguished by two parallel rivers which bound the Gogodala villages along and between their banks; the Fly and Aramia Rivers. In the time of the ancestors Dogono, the original ancestral village, was bordered only by these rivers and covered the whole area. Now, Dogono is one of several villages situated in this area. (See Figure 14)

**Figure 14. Gogodala 'landscape'**

The notion of *aeibaiga* acknowledges the influence of metaphorical and everyday canoes. It is often used interchangeably with Kanaba, the primary clan canoe out of which all of the other canoes came, as well as Wabila - the first place. If Wabila is embodied in the person of Obaya Limo Iwalela and represents the source of all life, then this first person's canoe, Kanaba, is the canoe from which all others came.\(^2\) When used in the context of Kanaba, then, *Aeibaiga* means the 'original or first place or village'. Kanaba is the primary Gogodala connection with the earth, as it represents the place

\(^2\) Obaya Limo Iwalela's more commonly used name was Ibali, although the conflation of these two ancestral figures is not necessarily complete or definitive. Both Ibali and Obaya Limo Iwalela have been likened to the Christian figure of God who is represented in Biblical narratives as the source of all life.
from which the earth and its life derived and is intimately connected to Ibali and Wabila. “All Paiya and Segela came up through this one - the source of life. All people came through here”.

Facing the past

The landscape resonates with the power and capacities of the original ancestors. When this area was alive, before the death of Dogono and Dalogo, trees and bushes moved of their own volition and canoes embodied the ugu of the ancestral power which created them. The sun was a skin which Daligi wore and the evening star was his sister-wife Genasi.

Then these things died as now all people die - in which death is movement, a journey from the local area to Wabila. The act of dying creates the possibility of travel from one space-time to another, from that populated by Gogodala people to that of their ancestral antecedents and white people. The passing of time is experienced through places - certain spaces are associated with specific temporal realms. Particular spaces in the landscape, like Wabila and Dogono, embody ancestral agency and temporality. Others are associated with the everyday experiences of contemporary village people and those who have travelled between these places in recent memory. Weiner (1991:4) argues that “[t]ime and space acquire their significance for the Foi, as they do for the rest of us, as a result of human action in the world”. Time and space are ‘talked together’ and built into the very structures and places around which people organise their lives. Weiner (1991:8) writes, “time, when considered

43 Kanaba gawa tao (canoe design) articulates the fundamental link between all clans, people and the place in which they live, as everything originally ‘came out of’ Kanaba.

44 In 1995, Awaba High School on the Aramia River produced some T-shirts depicting the Kanaba gawa tao with the words ‘Aeiibaiga’ above it.

45 This “‘talking together’ of time and place” is noted by Jolly (n.d:1) in a recent paper. She suggests that the condensation of the spatial and temporal seems to be a common factor in many languages. Nancy Munn (1996:465) argues that paradigms which articulate a separation between time and space ignore the “centering subject”, the actor who is always spatially and temporally situated and through whose experience, time and space emerge.
as the life span of people, is a record of their movement through space”.46 The word in Gogodala for time, *tepa*, is also used to talk about places or location; *tepa* can indicate either at the time of something or the middle of something or place. It can mean the middle of the table or lagoon, or be used to suggest that time is ‘eating time’ (*baya nana tepa*).

As Feld argues for the Kaluli and Weiner for the Foi, land for the Gogodala is seen in terms of the water which surrounds it.47 The notion of island, *osama*, informs Gogodala notions and experiences of land. Houses are built along a ridge of land so that they run parallel to the lagoons which surround most villages, their doors facing in towards the Church, the playing fields and the other houses. A central track, or a series of tracks, wind themselves along the central spaces in-between the rectangular houses.

It is also through water, the level of water in the lagoons or rivers in this case, that village people become aware of the passing of time. There are four different ‘seasons’ or times in a given year, during which time the environment is transformed by the movement of water in one form or another. These seasons are also characterised by two types of winds, *gogo* and *ibowa*, which blow from opposite directions. In the time of *gogope samoso*, which literally means ‘Gogo’s month’ (sometime between January and April); the winds come from the northwest and this time is associated with the severe *gogo* storms which have the capacity to destroy houses and trees. Between May and June, both *ibowa* and *gogo* winds blow while from July until the end of the year *ibowa*, or southwest winds, predominate.

The level of water in the lagoons, and consequently the amount of fish accessible, is the primary way in which people know that the wet and dry seasons are coming. Weiner (1991:8) writes, “[s]seasonal variation is but the

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46 Hugh-Jones (1979:235) has suggested that in the context of the north west Amazon, Pira’-parana’ people connect to the alternate time and spaces of their ancestors through transposing this system onto the ‘concrete system’ which they can control or change through practical action. She argues that Pira’-parana’ explore these interconnections between everyday and ancestral time-spaces through the ways in which they build their houses, through corporeal images, through representations of their sexual reproductive cycles and through their environment (Hugh-Jones 1979:235). Hugh-Jones points out that temporal processes are associated with different spaces.

47 For the Foi and the Kaluli, however, water is usually flowing water, not still like the lagoons of the Gogodala. For the Gogodala, moving water is associated with seasons and the passing of time.
expression of a translated landscape, a topographical image in its temporal
dimension”. When the waters are rise, heralding the arrival of the Wet, fish and
other aquatic animals are not plentiful as they tend to feed in deeper waters.
When the waters in the lagoons and rivers drop, however, the fish come to the
surface of the water to feed and are easily caught. At these times, fish, prawns
and eels are plentiful. Recently, however, people have noticed that the seasons
are changing, and that rains come and then stop at unpredictable times. Several
people suggested that in the last five years, women can no longer predict when
the fish would be plentiful in the lagoons and when the rains will come. People
discuss the ways in which the place has changed over the course of their
lifetime: the grass has grown over the lagoons, and the seasons have changed
so that they can never tell if the water is going to ‘come up’ or ‘go down’.

Articulations about the impact of these changes, embodied in
environmental and corporeal realms of experience, must be contextualised
within certain ideas about the past, the future and the present. Gogodala people
tend to see themselves as ‘facing’ their past, a past inscribed within their
bodies as well as onto the water and land around them. This past intrinsically
informs the actions of contemporary village communities. The future, on the
other hand, is perceived as ‘coming from behind’; as something that cannot be
seen but which realises connections between the past and the present. Like the
neighbouring Bainapi, Dibiaso and Kamula villages (Wood n.d:22), this notion
of the closing of the cycle between the past and the future has become a
common image in the discussions about the impending end of the millennium.
It also has implications for local images and perceptions of development,
money, Europeans and the significance of the original ancestors to which
everything else relates. Sanada said:

the end part is coming right to the beginning. All these village people
have got these type[s] of skills and they’re talking and then while they
are in Church, Sunday service, after that they are talking - because
things are changing and our olden type is changing into [a] new type.
So we are waiting for Jesus, we are waiting for [the] Princess’ son,
that’s Charles. Because our person, Sosola, went from here in the
beginning. So we ought [to] be waiting for Charles because Jesus,
Prince Charles, is coming back to see Dogono (Sanada Giliwa, September 1995).

When Gogodala people die, they follow the path used by the original ancestors to reach Wabila /Yaebi Saba. Their bodies are buried on an east-west axis so their faces can meet the sun when Jesus returns to the earth, and they can be awakened. Dead people exist in the same space and time of the ancestral beings as well as Europeans, defying the temporality of their living descendants.

Wabila, Dogono and Bolame are places in the local landscape, while simultaneously distinct from it. They are present in some times and contexts and absent and unavailable in others. As Sanada suggests, there has been much discussion about the agency of Sosola in opening the door so that white people can come to the Gogodala area, and speculation about his role (through his grandchild, Prince Charles/ Jesus) in returning to complete the circle. Prince Charles, as Sosola’s descendent, has been conflated with the figure of Jesus Christ whose position as the saviour of humankind is well documented in Gogodala Bibles. The second coming of Jesus has been a central theme of the teachings of the UFM and APCM and hymns sang in Church, prayers and readings continue to revolve around this image. Sosola’s action in the early colonial period was a necessary part of the establishment of relations between white people and local communities: it laid the foundation for future, more equitable, links between them. By facing the past, in this case Sosola and early administrators, local people are contemplating a better future with the possibility of development and an easier lifestyle. As Sanada said, the end is meeting the beginning and the shape of the future lies in the past.

Prince Charles: there’s two names Prince Charles and the Gwaligwali Dumaya [Gogodala name for Prince Charles] and then Jesus. His name [Prince Charles] is hidden and the name Jesus is in front. So people are looking out at Jesus but this Gwaligwali Dumaya, Prince Charles, is coming behind. So we are looking at Jesus, [but] coming at the back of us, behind us, is Prince Charles, underneath our leg[s]. We are looking at Jesus, we are pointing to Jesus but instead you look back you see somebody coming at the back of us. The words came in our head began its already now changing into a new generation (Sanada Giliwa, September 1995).
The return of Sosola, through Prince Charles, heralds the transformation of the Gogodala into a ‘new generation’, a ‘new time’. Wilde (1997:12), in his thesis *Waiting for Jesus*, argues that Sosola is central to local perceptions about the future and that when Jesus returns, differences between white people and locals will be ‘effaced’. “Sosola, for the Gogodala, links the ancestral past with the advent of Europeans and subsequently the future return of Jesus” (Wilde 1997:12). The ‘new generation’ is tied up with the idea of the original kinship of Gogodala and Europeans and the perception of a ‘mixed race’ future, issues which I explore in the next two chapters.

**Footprints in other places**

Notions of earth, space, time, land and water encapsulate the different sensual experiences of the Gogodala landscape encountered through everyday movement. Weiner (1991:183) argues that “what we do when we build is what we do when we create the tracks and paths of our cognized landscape”. He suggests that for the Foi, and I would argue the Gogodala, movement creates space; but it also transforms spaces into named places and bodies. Bodies are constituted within this type of movement and effort, as they are through the consumption of sago, fish and garden foods. Canoes are a primary way of experiencing movement: these metaphorical and everyday vehicles mediate between different realms of experience and different space-time dimensions of the landscape. Miwasa could travel between Dogono to the sky-realm of Wabila in his canoe, as people can traverse the local lagoons and waterways on their way to garden places, sago places and villages.
The time of the ancestors was one of creation, when places and spaces were moulded into certain forms and resonated to the sounds and smells of their actions, misdemeanours and *ugu*. Places like Wabila and Dogono, alive places which could move and act on their own volition, existed before the ancestors came and Wabila and Bolame still live somewhere else. So did many of the places - Sogowa and Ibali came first and 'saw' them and went back to initiate the migration from Wabila to Dogono. Places became focussed around specific canoes, ancestors and other creatures who left their marks on the ground, trees and water, layers of memories adhering to such spaces through the passing of time and motion of human and ancestral bodies.

In the past, the notion of *aeibaiga*, earth or ground, was related to the space-time of local village experiences and dimensions. In the colonial context, and with the development of an encompassing sense of evangelical Christianity, spatiotemporal dimensions have been transformed. Other places in Papua New Guinea, like Port Moresby, Daru and Kerema for instance, have been incorporated into local experiences. Kerema, in Gulf Province, is being put forward as the other place to which the Gogodala ancestors travelled after they reached Dogono. Upon reaching Kerema, these ancestors stayed there and established villages; kinship is claimed with this particular place and people. When asked whether Kerema people knew of this connection, I was assured that they had been already told.
Likewise, Moresby is the place where Bani travelled first, leaving one of his massive footprints there and then moving to Balimo town where he stepped again and left his huge footmark, or *Aeiwa Saba*, ‘footmark place’, near Buila Community School and the Mission Station. He stayed at Balimo for a while, then left in a westward direction and there is some suggestion that he still lives in Irian Jaya at the site of his third footprint. Daru and Kiwai Island were places at which the ancestors stopped to fish, change canoes or hunt, thereby incorporating them into the local process of constituting their landscape. Many Gogodala people also have experiences of these places, especially Daru and Moresby, through relatives working there or through time spent in jail.49

In the next chapter, I explore the implications of spatial relationships in the constitution of village life and look at the ways in which people experience the relationships posited in the ancestral and the colonial past through adoption and naming. I focus on the centrality of places for the ways in which people constitute their bodies, practices, and experiences. Blood, skin and names are

49 A surprisingly large number of Gogodala men have been incarcerated in both Daru and Moresby, mainly for minor crimes like fighting, or break and enter.
central ways in which people employ and engage with their environment. The names of the ancestors, which sit inside the clan canoes and are handed down as personal and family genealogies, are a central idiom around which people mobilise. Belonging to canoes through having and using a name, engaged through blood and skin, is a primary experience of local people and constructs a particular type of personhood.
Chapter 4
Adopting Samaki

Naming bodies
People construct and maintain relationships with their landscape, other people and their bodies, through the process of owning a personal name. Having a name is central to perceptions of, and links with, the ancestral past and their places and spaces, and to a gendered, embodied experience. The ways in which names are given to people articulate and substantiate relationships that sustain and constitute a Gogodala person: ties to ancestors, clan canoes and therefore land, and relations between women and men.¹

Possessing a personal name is also a way in which people conceptualise knowledge. The utterance of a name establishes an immediate understanding about a person’s claim to clan and clan canoe membership and their position in the hierarchy of family names. In contemporary Papua New Guinea, to have a Gogodala name is to express a certain type of claim to the past, community and importantly, place. For people, who in the past had little contact with people other than those living within their own and neighbouring villages, identification and communication with Gogodala from more distant villages is rendered possible. For urban Gogodala people, especially those who live in Port Moresby, having a Gogodala name is vital to the retention of relationships with the village, people and land.

The main context in which people are named is the giving of names to newborn children or adopted clanspeople. The elder men of these families and clan canoes control familial and clan access to these names but older women and young parents also have a significant input into their allocation. Unlike the Eastern Iatmul (Silverman 1996) and the Manambu of East Sepik (Harrison

¹ Eric Silverman (1996:36) argues for the Eastern Iatmul of East Sepik; “since existence and totemism are coterminous, the absence of a totemic name implies nonexistence”. Similarly for Gogodala, names are the way in which people negotiate the various relationships and practices of their lives.
1990), however, there is no ritualised context in which this process is politically debated and contested. The bestowal of names among the Gogodala is not a political contest over the ownership of mystical powers associated with these names, played out in male ritual as described by Harrison and Silverman. Naming disputes take place in the context of the village, involving both women and men, and they are usually ‘taken out to the people’ in the village Church. Parents debate the various claims over the use of the name under dispute and older, more experienced members of the village community reach a decision about the appropriate naming practice.

In 1926, A. P. Lyons (1926:345) wrote concerning naming practices among Gogodala people:

[children are given at least two names, which are selected, not by the parents, but by the male grandparents, or failing them, by the uncles of the parents. Names of ancestors are given to children. A child is usually addressed by the name given to it by the paternal grandfather. By the members of its mother’s clan, however, it is addressed by the name conferred by the maternal grandfather.

The processes through which contemporary people are named seem similar to the ones noted by Lyons in 1926. Children are often given more than one name, usually given by the paternal grandparents, and these names are the primary ones by which the child is called. Many children are also given names from their mother’s brothers or parents, although this happens less frequently as names are a precious resource and must be appropriately utilised. However, these processes of naming people are fluid and ambiguous, and in each different naming instance, people make use of different strategies and arguments to validate their choices.

Instead of constructing a specific and bounded set of ‘rules’ in which a Gogodala system of moiety, clan and clan canoe are formulated and bonded onto the people who live within it, I want to explore the ambiguities of naming practices. I suggest that by doing so, the ways in which people engage with their various relationships of ‘red and white people’ - how they sit in their clan canoes will become more clear. As Pierre Bourdieu (1977:36) has suggested in
the context of the Kabylia of Algeria, “[t]he competition and conflicts provoked by the transmission of first names provide an opportunity to observe the practical and political functions of these genealogical markers”. Such an approach allows emphasis to be placed on the various practices of kinship relations rather than privileging genealogies and what Bourdieu (1977:34) terms “official kinship”. This was also the way in which many of the specific details about clan canoes were explained to me and became part of my own experience.

**Samaki’s story**

Let me begin with issues that arose out of the adoption and naming of a small boy in Tai village in 1995, as the experiences of this child and his family were extremely instructive for my own engagement with the complexity of naming practices. This baby’s name was also substantially linked to my own Gogodala name; later in the chapter I will draw on this connection to illustrate some of the issues which arise out of the naming of white people, the gendering of these names, and the embodied experiences of having and using a Gogodala name.

Sakuliyato and her husband Kukuwa decided to adopt a baby from Kukuwa’s cousin who was pregnant with a child that she did not want to keep. Kukuwa’s parents approved of the adoption of this child as the baby possessed the same ‘blood’ as Kukuwa and he was the eldest son. As Kukuwa and Sakuliyato seemed unable to have any children, adopting this baby was seen as an appropriate solution to an increasingly desperate situation in which the first-born son had no children of his own despite being married for some time. When the child was born at Balimo Hospital, Sakuliyato and her husband walked in to the hospital to stay with the baby and his mother; unfortunately, however, the aunt of the baby adopted the child before they reached Balimo. Sakuliyato had, for some weeks, been taking hormone pills supplied by the hospital in order to stimulate her breast milk so that she could suckle the baby. Bitterly disappointed, the couple returned back to the village with empty hands.
A young unmarried woman who had recently returned to Tai village from Daru to have a baby then consulted Sakuliyato and Kukuwa and agreed to give them her young baby boy. She was also Kukuwa’s cousin and the father of the baby was a Gogodala man living in Daru who was distantly related to Sakuliyato. This meant that the child sat in the same clan canoes as Sakuliyato and her husband, easing the adoption of the child into his new family. Soon after, Kebaliyato, the mother of the newborn infant, moved into the house of Kukuwa and Sakuliyato with the child so that they could look after her as she nursed him.

The baby was given four names by his paternal grandfather, Mala, from the clan canoe of his adoptive father Kukuwa: Bedimi, Samaki, Mainawa and Badi. Bedimi and Samaki were his ‘big’ names, the important names given to him as the first-born son. The child was called Bedimi by his paternal grandparents and father’s brothers and their wives, although some of his younger ‘aunties’ referred to the baby as ‘Bedix’ utilising a playful non-traditional diminutive of the Bedimi name. His adoptive mother called the boy by his second name, Samaki, as she had connections to this name through her mother’s clan canoe. The Samaki name was already being used by a young boy of about eight, however, and the mother of this child approached Sakuliyato, suggesting that, as this name was already being used, the new baby could not be given it. In the dispute that ensued, it was established by the majority of the knowledgeable village people that the newly named baby was the correct recipient of the Samaki name, as the older child’s father did not actually ‘sit’ in the canoe from which the name derived. Subsequently, this older child’s mother told Sakuliyato that they would still call the boy Samaki, but only when others in the village could not hear the name being used; at other times he would be referred to as Gologo. Sakuliyato agreed that this was a good arrangement as long as her child could use the name ‘in front’ of the village people.

In the following discussion, I will focus on the experiences of Samaki and his family as his story encapsulates many of the types of ambiguities which surround issues of adoption and naming. But firstly I want to look at the ways in
which names sit in canoes and how the genesis of these canoes, in the time of
the ancestors, effects the ways in which names are used today. Then, by looking
at the ways in which the name Samaki derives from a certain place and ancestor,
the meanings of names and their connections to the landscape are elaborated.

**Samaki sits in Aegae - names that sit in canoes**

In the time of the ancestors, some canoes were brought, others were created and
still others ‘came by themselves’ to the area. Knowing the genesis of these
different canoes - the ways in which each canoe was constituted and out of what
or whom they were created - is important for trying to reach some understanding
about the nature of clan canoes and their continuing significance for
contemporary relations. The ways in which these names signify certain gendered
relationships and status are an arena in which younger people engage with and
experience stories about the ancestors.

The original canoes were given to the first ancestors by Ibali, one canoe
for each of the eight clans or *udaga*: these eight canoes became the *kabigina
gawa* or ‘big canoes’ for each of these clans (see Figure 16). The big clan
canoes have the greatest number of people and names sitting in them, names
which locate people within ancestral, and contemporary social and political
relationships. People who sit in these clan canoes trace their genealogies directly
from the first ancestral owner of the canoe, collapsing the generations between
this originary ancestor and the person’s great grandfather. Personal genealogies
of this nature are utilised in the allocation of names, allowing the person access
to available clan names.

Kamo Bagali had his clan names written down in an old diary. As the
male head of his family, this list of names constitutes names available to him for
his children and grandchildren and had been passed on to him from his father
before his death a couple of years ago. The names were set out under the
heading: ‘*Naepe aenaemi aenaemi sokate*’ under which was written, ‘My family

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2 Ibali gave his canoes to his sons, the male ancestors who represented the eight clans, but there is some
dispute as to whether Ibali gave the Aegae canoe to Sawiya, a female ancestor.
line from the beginning’. On another page there was a list of male names deriving from the first male ancestor of the Wagumisi clan, showing direct lineage from Sogowa (originary ancestor) to Kamo’s male antecedents. Increasingly, as even most of the older people, especially men, are literate in Gogodala if not English, these lists of names are written down and handed down through families.  

Children are named from their own clan, their father’s clan. Samaki was given four names, two of which were the most important male names for his adoptive family as he was the first son of the eldest man of that family. Sometimes, however, children can be given names from their mother’s clan canoe, although this does not usually include ‘big names’ as these are used for those born or adopted into that clan. If such a name is given, often the mother and her kin will use this name when talking to or about the person. As I suggested above, Sakuliyato called her son Samaki rather than Bedimi because it reminded her of her mother’s clan canoe. 

Other canoes were created from the bodies of human beings, animals or in the course of some ancestral event: these canoes may or may not have people or names belonging to them. Each of the eight clans has a number of clan canoes from which people derive their names and in which they sit as well as several with few or no names and people belonging to them.

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3 Kamo was given a list of thirteen male names and sixteen names for girls from his parents. Mala Sogowa from Tai village gave his sons their children’s names which he had written down in Gogodala in an exercise book. Mala also wrote two names, one male and one female, for me when I left so that I could call my children Wagumisi clan names. He sent a subsequent letter changing these two names as the one of the names he had given to me was now being used by one of my ‘brothers’. 
To try and compartmentalise Gogodala gawa or clan canoes into subclans, then, becomes a problematic venture. Only a few of the clan canoes in the eight clans can be used as designators of names or clan membership. These other clan canoes become significant in contexts where the power implicit in their ancestral genesis can be utilised. The details of these are inscribed in the ‘canoe designs’ or gawa tao and expressed in the ancestor stories. People can claim common kinship with these canoes, although they were not born ‘into’ them and cannot obtain names from them, because particular ancestors (from whom they are descended) created or named them. Some of these canoes were created from human bodies or parts of bodies, such as legs, intestines, and heads. These are ewano gawa, canoes made from the bodies of humans, which usually have very few names or people belonging to them. This transformation of bodies into canoes is implicit in the gawa tao and I explore the implications of these embodied connections in Chapter 7. Their importance lies in the roles that they played in the ancestral creation and naming of spaces and places and, thereby, the constitution of certain relationships.

Personal names are the subject of much discussion and dispute. As for the Manambu of east Sepik (Harrison 1990:52; 1985), names which belong to the clan canoes are very important for the members of the clan canoe and are ‘jealously guarded’. In practical terms, the process of naming is a family affair within the context of a particular village, as in the case of the naming of Samaki, and names have to be chosen accordingly. Naming one child with a name that
has already been given to another person of the same generation in the village is considered to be not only inappropriate but highly inflammatory, and it usually indicates that there is some dispute over the ownership of a particular name. In this context, ancestor stories are used as the primary verification of the validity of opposing claims, and the genesis of the clan canoes as well as the genealogical link between the families and the ancestors are debated and contested.

As Samaki’s story above illustrates, the processes of naming children can be complex and the implications of choosing certain names can be far reaching. Names are given from the clan canoe of the father, but these names also have to ‘come from somewhere’; that is, they must have been used in the naming practices of the family in the not too distant past lest other people ask, “where did they get that name from?” Once a name is given to someone, that person assumes ‘rights’ over it so that they can give it to succeeding generations. Giving a name to someone of a different clan canoe can be an extremely significant gift which marks a close relationship between people not necessarily related through clan ties. Samaki’s names were given to him from his paternal grandfather from the list of male and female names in his small exercise book. Names for children are chosen from the names of the grandparents’ generation, rather than the parents.

The most common disputes about naming occur when a family challenges the right of another to use a particular name for their child, as for Samaki and his adoptive parents. In that case, it was decided that, as the original Samaki had been named from a clan canoe that was not even his, Kukuwa and Sakuliyato’s adopted baby could use the name instead. Disputes about names are complicated because the detail of the ancestral stories is enormous. For example, Sogowa, the first male ancestor for the Wagumisi udaga had thorns all over his body and he had no children as a result. His brother Bogela from Awala udaga which is also from the white moiety gave one of his sons, who had been born with a yellow skin (Awala is white and Wagumisi is yellow), to Sogowa. The descendants of Wagumisi, then, originally came from Awala and the close connection

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4 Similarly among the Avatip, Harrison (1990:61) notes that “every person must be completely individuated by his or her names and no coevals may be namesakes”.

5 The name Samaki was given to this small child, however, despite the fact that it is also one of Kukuwa’s names. I will explore the reasons for this later in the chapter.

6 Disputes about names are complicated because the detail of the ancestral stories is enormous. For example, Sogowa, the first male ancestor for the Wagumisi udaga had thorns all over his body and he had no children as a result. His brother Bogela from Awala udaga which is also from the white moiety gave one of his sons, who had been born with a yellow skin (Awala is white and Wagumisi is yellow), to Sogowa. The descendants of Wagumisi, then, originally came from Awala and the close connection
demonstrated a genealogical link with the Aegae clan canoe and the family could show that they had recently used that name (it was one of Kukuwa’s names).

Naming disputes such as this one in Tai village are ‘taken out to the people’, usually in the Church like other local issues and concerns. The ‘big people’ of the village, the men and women who know the ancestor stories and the clan canoes, decide in which canoe the name belongs and therefore who can use it. Once the decision has been made, the name can be taken away from the child - although often these disputes do not make it to this stage of arbitration. In another example in Tai village, a baby boy was given a name from his father’s clan canoe which had already been used for another child in neighbouring Oseke village. The people in Oseke however did not take this dispute ‘out to the people’ and several Tai villagers speculated that this was because the name they had used was not in their own clan canoe.

**Samaki is a place**

Names derive from the birds, animals, places and other objects which make up the local landscape. In the time of the ancestors, things were named according to the colours of the landscape: yellow objects were placed in the Wagumisi and Lalamana clans; red objects were claimed by the red clans; and white things were put in the white clans. One species of the crocodile belongs to the Wagumisi clan, for example, because it has yellow skin. The colour of the landscape, then, is part of the relationship between people, their environment and their clans.7

Animals, birds, fish, places, water, food, colours and designs are all personal names and each belongs to specific clan canoes. There is no category of things, such as grasses or trees for example, which belong only to one clan, or

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7 This is an issue which I will explore further in Chapter 7 concerning the canoe designs and their relation to place. I suggest that colour is an integral part of the Gogodala experience and conceptualisations about the environment.
more particularly to a clan canoe. That is, there is no 'domain' in the landscape which belongs exclusively to one clan, although several grasses belong to the Wagumisi clan, and the sun and evening star belong to Siboko. There are many types of trees which belong to the Asipali clan, while most of the other species belong to the Gasinapa and Wabadala clans.

Names are not equal inside these clan canoes, however, and important names are accorded the status of being inside the 'front of the canoe', with the 'others following at the back'. These *kabigina gagi*, which literally means 'big names' (also referred to as *moto lapila*: 'inside part' or 'inside names'), sit at the front of the clan canoe. First-born children, male and female, are accorded these big names which indicates that they have a greater potential to own particular tracts of land, swamp and lagoon. Sakuliyato and Kukuwa's adopted son received four names, two of which were big names for the Aegae clan canoe. These big names are those things, colours, or places which are considered significant for the clans involved; Mala, the name of Kukuwa's father, is a big name for the Wagumisi clan as *mala* means 'yellow' a colour that is central to this clan.\(^8\) Samaki was a place named by Sawiya, the first female ancestor for the Wagumisi clan. As such, it also constitutes a significant name for Aegae clan canoe as it was Sawiya's own personal canoe with which she travelled around the local waterways.

Names for people include place names (such as Samaki), names of fish, animals, snakes, frogs, mosquitos, most plants and trees, the sky, sun, moon and stars, water, grass and houses. Ancestor names are also personal names, usually counted as big names and given to the eldest of the family, like that of names of canoes, clans and *gawa tao*. The names of some villages are suitable for personal names (see Figure 17 and Appendix D).\(^9\) Parts of the human body, like the words for the tongue, head or blood are used as personal names while other sections of the body are not. Similarly, there are a number of animals, birds or trees, canoes or other objects which cannot 'be called to a person'. It is not the

\(^8\) All of the colours, black, red, white and yellow are names for specific clan canoes.

\(^9\) Certain significant places like Wabila are also personal names, although Wabila can only be used as a woman's name.
objects themselves or the way that they look or taste which make these things inappropriate to use as personal names. Rather, it seems that there is a general pool of names which it would be, as it was expressed, ‘funny to call to a person’.

Figure 17. Some examples of personal names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Name</th>
<th>Meaning of Name</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sibala</td>
<td>crocodile</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malebe</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>Asipali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batata</td>
<td>frog</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daligi</td>
<td>the sun</td>
<td>Siboko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genasi</td>
<td>the evening star</td>
<td>Siboko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buliya</td>
<td>tree</td>
<td>Awala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoso</td>
<td>the moon</td>
<td>Tabama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iga</td>
<td>dirty or cloudy water</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabudu</td>
<td>breadfruit</td>
<td>Wabadala and Gasinapa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the Foi of the Papuan Plateau, Weiner (1991:2) argues that the person and the object or place from which the name derived are seen as having a special affinity with one another, and are considered to be capable of affecting one another. Hence a Foi person can be linked with past events already associated with a place after which they were named. Similarly, for the Eastern Iatmul and Manambu of the Sepik, people who share the same name also share the same soul. Silverman (1996:38) writes “[t]he human body becomes the corporeal vehicle for the totem. Indeed, persons often act in ways that are deemed characteristic of their names and namesakes”.

Gogodala names, although they derive from certain parts of the landscape, are important within the context of the clan canoe rather than creating a close connection between the meaning of the name and the person named. The logic for these naming practices is found in the detailed descriptions
of the words and actions of the ancestors. Sanada and Kamo explained that the names of things, and therefore people, were given to the ancestors from the beginning; from the ‘first person’ and the ‘first place’ - who told them “this is how you should name things, men, [and] women”. The “idea of doing things was coming from this man, this Ibali. So all these things were given by the ancestors. That’s how they were divided” (March 1996). It is not the nature of the animal, tree or body part, then, that makes it unacceptable for a personal name. People are not named after objects or animals which bear the same name: rather, people are ‘called’ the names themselves, names which derive their importance from the links to the past and the significance and experience of the various elements of the landscape.

For the majority of people who do not have access to this detailed knowledge, however, the names which they know and use are the ones which are most readily recalled. The practice of naming, using names handed down from the ancestors and experienced in the local environment, remains a primary one. Sakuliyato once admitted that she remembered the clan membership of animals, birds, and other elements in the landscape through the relationships she had with others and their names. That is, she knew their clan names and could then remember which clan the fish or tree of the same name belonged to.

Knowledge about personal names, through this kind of embodied experience of them and relationships with other people is the main way in which contemporary people, especially younger men and women, retain or express links with the ancestral past.

Kamo once commented: “you’ve [Gogodala people] got to know it - names - where you are getting it from [which clan and canoe]. Names are very important”. He suggested that although people would die and recede from

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10 The answer to my oft repeated question about the basis of such naming practices was invariably “it’s from the ancestors”.

11 In this case, Ibali and Kanaba were seen as the same person. In local terminology, people would say that Ibali was wearing the skin of Kanaba, his canoe design.

12 Some names even sit in two different canoes, straddling clans. Again the logic for such names lies in the ancestral period. For example, the name Dibili is in both the Wagumisi and Lalamana clans because Sawiya from the Wagumisi clan travelled down the Dibili river and Waliwali from Lalamana followed behind.
immediate memory, their families still retained control over the names, and this particular way of living would continue. Simon Harrison (1990:58) has noted a similar concept among the Avatip in which the names of a ‘subclan’ are seen as representing “the idea of all its past, present and future members”. People belonging to the clan canoe change with the generations but the names remain to be used by succeeding generations. Memories of the past inhere in the names although, once given to another, the name becomes theirs for the duration of their lifetime. To lose names from circulation and use within the clan canoe is to lose the past and memories of those have gone before.

**Samaki and Samakiyato - naming women, naming men**

Gogodala personal names are divided into male and female names. The example with which I initiated this discussion about naming practices involved the giving of several male names, of which Samaki was a primary one. Women’s names derive from the same things as men’s names but have an ending which distinguishes them from the names given to men. 13 This ending, -ato, also has the effect of making a pair of names from one set of meanings, one for men and one for women. The female name linked to Samaki is Samakiyato.

There are many examples of this type of naming: indeed, the majority of women’s names have this ending although there are several that do not. The Gogodala word *ato* is the general term for ‘women’ although the link between these two uses of *ato* is underplayed by local people and the association is deemed coincidental rather than meaningful. Sakuliyato, during the many conversations we had about names, consistently refused to acknowledge that they were even connected; instead, she pointed out that these male and female names were given by Ibali to the ancestors before they left Wabila and that what made a name female was the fact that the previous bearer of it was a woman.

13 Weiner (1991:43) writes that among the Foi, there are common endings for men and women’s names: a woman’s names could be Isaka -ka being the ending. For men, -mena, derived from the word *amena* meaning ‘man’, is a common ending for male names. The Kamula to the north of the Gogodala do not have the same endings on women’s names although some Kamula women are given Gogodala women’s names when they marry into or become close to a Gogodala family (Wood pers.comm.).
Kamo suggested that the ancestors had named men after the male component of an object or animal while naming women after the female complement. Many of the female and male ancestors were named in this distinctive fashion, in some cases siblings linked by such names subsequently married each other. It was also argued that as local people continue to have many children, names are becoming a scarce resource. In the thirty-five households in Tai village, of which about thirty families had children, about half of the children were named in this fashion.

Names that are linked in this way are sought after by parents for their children. Several women agreed that most appreciated this method of naming and that an -ato name is 'a good type of name' to have as a woman. Sakuliyato noting that it was eminently practical as 'you can call it [the name] to a boy and then that same name to a girl ending with -yato'. Using these gendered names means that the clan names can be used within the same family twice. Not all linked names can be used by the same clan, however, and there are several examples where the male name can be given to a man of a particular clan but the female name cannot be used by women of that clan. Instead, the female name can be used by another clan. These are often the cases around which ambiguities and conflict arise.

Although I was told that men and women linked by these naming practices do not have any special relationship and they are not expected to marry in an exchange situation, many of those who share names are often closer in age than to other siblings and tend to get married around the same time. If an older sister marries a man from the opposite moiety, then his sister or cousin is

14 He suggested that, for example, Sibala, a male name which means crocodile has a female equivalent, Sibalato which is a female name. The Gogodala word for crocodile is sibala, whether the crocodile is male or female so I was somewhat unsure why he suggested this as the reason for -ato names.

15 Some families in Tai had up to twelve children, although the average was between five and seven. In the past, only the Kanaba 'war leaders' were encouraged to have many children and other people were punished when they had too many children. The population was kept fairly stable. Since the 1960s, with the presence of the Balimo Health Centre and the cessation of these village prescriptions, the Gogodala population has more than tripled, and most parents have a minimum of four or five children. Family Planning Clinics are trying to reach local people through the Health Centre, distributing free contraceptives to encourage longer breaks between children, but most Gogodala women do not use them.
expected to make a marriage back into the first family. In marriage, women and men usually marry within their own village or to someone in a neighbouring village. The practice of moiety exogamy, red people marrying white people, still generally predominates despite fears to the contrary - several people made the point of saying that the missionaries had tried to make “red marry red and Paiya marry Paiya”. In the past, if people wanted to marry someone who could not exchange someone else to balance the relationship, sago swamps and land could be used instead. Now, I was told, there are too many people and not enough land so that money can be used to ‘balance’ the relationship.

In 1995 and 1996, however, most Gogodala people still contracted marriages based on a notion of ‘balancing’ brothers and sisters between families, clans and villages. In this practice of sister exchange, when a person marries out of their moiety and clan then another person has to be sent back the other way to ‘balance’ the families and villages. When Kukuwa approached Sakuliyato and asked her to marry him, it was considered a good match as Kukuwa’s older cousin-sisters had married Sakuliyato’s twin brothers some years before. As Kukuwa’s cousin-sisters had no immediate brothers, the families had been waiting for the maturity of Kukuwa and his two brothers to complete the relations between them. Sakuliyato lived in Aketa, as did Kukuwa’s sisters who had married there (before moving to Moresby), and she was in the opposite moiety to Kukuwa. Shortly after Sakuliyato came to Tai, Kukuwa’s younger brother, Giliwa, also married from the same clan and moiety as Sakuliyato although his wife already lived at Tai village. This marriage was also approved of as both of Giliwa’s and Kukuwa’s new wives were from the ‘same family’, however distantly related. Thus the original departure of the two cousin-sisters from the Tai family (and white moiety) was balanced by the arrival of the two new wives from Aketa/Tai (red people).

16 Ross Weymouth (1978) suggested that missionaries were often more interested in promoting marriages between indigenous Christians rather than specifically challenging the basis of Gogodala marriage practices. The result was much the same, however, and he writes that marriages contracted in the 1960s and 1970s were often based on brideprice rather than sister exchange. During the period of my fieldwork, however, by far the majority of marriages conformed to the notions of exchange rather than brideprice or bridewealth.

17 Both patrilateral and matrilateral cousins are referred to as ‘cousin-sister’ or ‘cousin-brother’ in English but simply as ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ in Gogodala. In terms of marriage exchanges, cousin-sisters and cousin-brothers are as significant as sisters and brothers and, as extended families are usually large, it ensures a number of ‘balanced’ marriages. Balanced marriages are the ideal, paralleling the notion of the significance of balance or reciprocity in other relationships between people.
Although marriages between those in different moieties is encouraged, young people are discouraged from marrying into the same clan from which their mother came, and joking statements like 'you don’t love your mother’s clan’ are applied to people who have married into it. Sakuliyato married into the Wagumisi clan, which was the clan into which her mother was born but she had been adopted into Lalamana immediately after birth and remained in this latter clan until married. This, Sakuliyato assured me, meant that she could marry Kukuwa without fear of being seen to disrespect her mother. Instead of solidifying relations with a person’s mother’s clan, marrying into this clan is seen as destroying much of the efficacy of the relationship. I was told that people who married into their mother’s clan were considered to be ‘floating grass’. One of the ways in which people show pride in their mother’s clan is by calling themselves a special name. When a person marries into their mother’s clan, they cannot call themselves this name anymore. People then say ‘get yourself another name, you are just floating grass’. In this case, floating grass is being used for those who have contravened appropriate behaviour by undermining an essential respect for their mother’s clan. In doing so, these people have given up the right to use their mother’s clan names in any context.

Once married, there are a number of awila gagi, or in-law names, that are given to the spouses of a particular family. Calling the name of a person related through marriage is considered to be sign of disrespect to that person, and the offended person can demand reparation in the form of a small feast or, in retaliation, speak the name of the other person. People are not allowed to

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17 Sakuliyato’s mother, Sibalato, was born into Wagumisi before the arrival of the missionaries. Her mother did not want another girl and left her at the gwaei saba (small house for giving birth described in the previous chapter) before returning to village and proclaiming that there was a child in the small house if anyone wanted it. A woman from another village and clan went and claimed the child. After she was married, her adoptive brothers argued with her and told her to get out of the Lalamana clan and she returned to Wagumisi.

18 They use the main clan animal of their mother’s clan, such as the Papuan Black snake, the wallaby, the eagle or crocodile, as an emblem of strength and unity. People who use their mother’s clan name are called ‘small snake’ or ‘small wallaby’, malebe kowabi, gauba kowabi and so on. Many sports teams in the villages as well as Moresby use these names. If a person marries their mother’s clan, then they cannot call themselves malebe kowabi ‘small snake’ anymore.

19 When Kamo was talking about this one day, he lent across to Nakeyo and told him that he was ‘floating grass’ because his wife, Bibiyato, sat in the same clan as their mother. Nakeyo sheepishly admitted it.
speak the names of their in-laws, especially those siblings who are older than their spouse, and parents and grandparents and vice versa. It seems that between genders, people have to maintain the most distance and ‘respect’. Sakuliyato cannot speak the name of her husband’s elder brothers, or ‘cousin-brothers’, and likewise they cannot call her name. Similarly, Kukuwa cannot use her older sister’s name, yet he could call her younger and older brothers gasi ‘brother-in-law’, followed by their personal names. Sakuliyato refers to his sisters, both older and younger, as mipi ‘sister-in-law’ combined with their name. Those people who marry into a family are automatically considered to be brothers and sisters as they are from the same moiety: Sakuliyato and Giliwa’s wife, Kabiliyato, called each other naya or ‘elder sister’ and wapeta, ‘younger sister.

Often in-marrying women will find that clanswomen have already married into the family, providing an important set of familiar women and relationships in the new village or house.\(^{20}\)

As for personal names, there is a hierarchy of affinal names, and people who marry the first-born children, like Sakuliyato, receive ‘big’ in-law names. These in-law names, however, belong to the family’s clan and can not be used or given to another person by the spouse. In-law names cannot be used for any other purpose than denoting the relationship created by marriage. If a person’s spouse dies and they remarry, then the affinal name is taken back by the family and can be used again. These names do not ‘sit inside’ clan canoes as personal names do; instead, they belong more generally to clans. That is, there are certain names which can be used as in-law names for each clan and anyone in any of the clan canoes in that clan can access those names. As there is only a limited number of these names, there are often several people using the same in-law names.

\(^{20}\) In-law names are derived from different sources than personal names: they often come from words for different points of land, parts of buildings, heads of animals, and certain types of fish. Sibala Ganabi is an in-law name which means ‘crocodile head’, Mala Wi means ‘yellow water’ and Bisuli Genama derives from a particular type of tree and the house which is made from it. Female in-law names are not derived from the same male names, although a lot of these names also end with -ato. Owameyato means ‘greasy fish’, but only the female name is classified as an in-law name. The male name, Owame, is a personal name for the Wagumisi clan.
name in a village - Sakuliyato had several peers in Tai who had the same affinal
name as her.\(^{21}\)

**Embodying names**

There has been much written on the idea of the person or ‘experiencing self’ in Melanesia since the 1980s (see for example Poole 1982, 1984; M. Strathern 1988; Battaglia 1990; Linnekin and Poyer 1990 eds.; Morton & Macintyre 1995 eds.), emphasising social actors’ models of themselves (Moore 1988:38).\(^{22}\) Nancy Lutkehaus (1995:14) notes that one of the major themes to emerge from this material is the significance of substances to the constitution of persons, in particular semen, blood, breast milk, bones and food. Although I am not attempting to encompass the myriad ways in which being a Gogodala person is lived and learnt, nevertheless I wish to emphasise the idea that only through sitting in canoes can people do or be anything. Through an exploration of the processes of naming people and the embodying of names I want to elucidate one part of sitting in clan canoes. Throughout the thesis, the ways in which these aspects of a person are conceptualised and experienced through substances like blood and skin, names, canoes and *gawa tao*, food, development and ‘culture’ will be elaborated.

\(^{21}\) There used to be a number of bereavement names which were used in Sakuliyato’s grandparents’ generation. These bereavement names were given to people who had experienced the death of a close relative, often a child or spouse. Sabatela was an example of one of these types of names, meaning ‘the floor was empty - no one was playing’ and this name was given to Sakuliyato’s father by his parents when his first daughter died. There is very little information about this type of naming and most people have not heard about it. It is not used today. It seems to resemble something like the ‘death names’ noted by Brosius (1995:119) for the Penan of Central Borneo which were titles given to people on the death of a close relative.

\(^{22}\) M. Strathern (1981:168-9) noted that Melanesian ‘persons’ were not the same as the Western idea of the individual. She argued that Hagen (Highlands of Papua New Guinea) notions of personhood did not correlate to the distinction made in Western discourse between society and individual. Macintyre (1995), Jolly (1992b), Keesing (1992a), and Biersack (1991) have critiqued Strathern’s position on the basis of her ahistorical construction of Western versus Melanesian notion of sociality, personhood and agency in *Gender of the Gift* (1988). Similarly, Battaglia (1990:188)) has suggested that the self in Melanesia is defined and experienced “through an array of significant relationships with others past and present, living and dead”. Macintyre (1995:29) argues that the analyses of personhood of Battaglia and Strathern depend on a distinction between Melanesian and Western sociality, a dichotomy that “brings with it the complications of essentialism and Occidentalism” and suggests that “[i]t is as if the intrusion of Europeans into Melanesia, and the changes they wrought, can only be considered as epiphenomenal”.
Gogodala people hold certain ideas about themselves and their capacities through perceptions and knowledge of their bodies. The term for body, obe, encompasses various aspects of a person’s life and experience: dede (blood), gosa (bones), kaka (skin), li (brain) and limo (spirit). The li, translated into English as ‘brain’, is situated in the head (ganabi) and linked to the limo, the ‘spirit’ or ‘source of life’ of all living creatures (and a couple of different types of trees that are said to have limo inside their trunks). Neither the li or limo are distinct from the rest of the body, although the limo can leave the body during sleep and it is dangerous to abruptly shake a sleeping person lest they make awaken without having time for their limo to return. This is also the part of the body that leaves once the person has died and been buried, and returns to Wabila. Local people act according to their understanding of their own actions in the world, and Sakuliyato would often use the phrase li bini (lit. ‘brain finished’) when joking with us about the stupidity of someone’s action or comment. When talking about Obaya Limo Iwalela, the original being and the source of all life, Sanada emphasised the head and shoulders of his diagram to demonstrate the ‘spirit’ or limo part of his being. The word iwalela means ‘to think’ or ‘thought’, obaya refers to being by itself or acting alone, and limo is the spirit, indicating that this being, alone, was the beginning of all life and thought which are intimately connected.

Obaya Limo Iwalela was the only creature that could produce itself; others come into being through the efforts of others: in the mingling of blood and semen at conception; through birth into a clan canoe and the gift of a name; and through nurturance and care. When human bodies die, their memory becomes a part of the name that they used throughout their life. Although names sit inside clan canoes and therefore belong to the clans, they represent the history of those previous generations. Once a person has been named a connection is immediately established although, rather than being the result of a shared soul, such a link is based on the use of the name. Kamo once said that

23 The term limo is also used to encompass the concept of the ‘Holy Spirit’.
although people died, their relatives still had the names which could be passed on to the next generation to continue the process.

In contemporary contexts, skin (*kaka*) and blood (*dede*) have become common idioms through which the relationship between people and places is discussed and around which it has been contested. Names and bodies are substantially connected - Nakeyo once mentioned that he ‘would feel ashamed’ if he called the name of his father-in-law, even after his death, because he would then have ‘broken a rule’. Speaking his name is analogous to touching his father-in-law’s body, a similarly shameful act.

The small boy whom Kukuwa and Sakuliyato adopted was given several names: however the name around which most of the controversy was generated, Samaki, was used deliberately despite the fact that it contravened certain prescriptions naming children after their parents. Kukuwa had already been given the Samaki name as one of his own when he was a child. Sakuliyato argued, however, that Kukuwa and his parents had chosen to give the child that particular name so that other people in the village could not use it. She suggested that she, and they, “didn’t want people to pick [the names] up off his [Kukuwa] body”. In the following sections, I will look at some of the ways in which such idioms of linked bodies and names, through skin and blood, express vital relationships between people and land.

**Naming the skin**

The significance of the skin in the mediation of human relationships is well documented for many Papua New Guinea societies. Knauf (1989:252) has argued that throughout Melanesia, highly costumed, painted and greased bodies are held to be sensual, beautiful and full of vitality. Michael O’Hanlon (1989:16-7) has similarly noted that in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, personal adornment and display are significant means of demonstrating group membership as well as delineating crucial moral relationships. He argues that

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24 Silverman (1996:43) notes for the Iatmul, personal names are like a mask, as they cover the human body with “totemic identity”.

Waghi adornments and displays communicate not simply messages of health and well-being, but also the state of certain moral relationships upon which the possibility of such displays is hinged (O’Hanlon 1989:17). Marilyn Strathern (1979:250) has argued that the skin is the “point of contact between the person and the world”. She suggests that Hagen dancers say that they feel ‘sorry’ for their skins and consequently they cover them when dancing. Strathern notes that in other places in Melanesia, skin indicates more than just the surface of the body and often encompasses the flesh as well. People often talk about the decorations making the skin look good and “fat” (Strathern 1979:249).

The skin is a significant site of relationships with the landscape, other people and non-human agents. For the Gogodala, the name of the skin mediates the relationship between people and their places through clan canoes. The word for skin, kaka, is used for humans, animals, coconuts and the surface of the water (as well as also meaning an elder brother). A healthy person is called kaka wibeganapa (literally skin with plenty of water) and a healthy skin is referred to as kaka wi bapi or skin that is wet.25 Kaka sits on the surface of something or somebody; whether it be the hard shell of a coconut or the soft skin of a human baby. Skin encompasses the flesh beneath it as it is said to be ‘full of water’ when greasy or shiny. Old or sick people, on the other hand, have loose or dry skin.

In Chapter 2, I discussed briefly the association between skins and names in the ancestor stories. The first ancestors born to Ibali and Gaguli, the first brother and sister, were named and given clans according to the colour of their skins; white, yellow or red. One of the characteristics of Gogodala ancestors was the their capacity to shed their skins ‘like a snake’. In this way, the ancestors could change their skins when they got old and be renewed.26 This enabled them to assume different names, clans, and even genders, depending upon which skins they changed into and for what reason. This state of affairs

25 I will look at the types of bodies as well as skin that are considered to be ‘healthy’ in Chapter 5.
26 Gell (1975:320-1) notes that there are many instances of these types of stories about the changeability of skins throughout PNG.
was transformed by the death of Dalogo and the loss of the 'ghost skin', by Miwasa, her husband.

The ancestor stories detail many examples of this type of relationship between skin and names. Before the original ancestors came to the area, Ibalı wore the skin of Kanaba, his clan canoe, and chased Sogowa who was wearing the skin of Otokoko, his own gawa tao. Another ancestor wore the skin of a kabiya, a scrub wallaby, so that he could hide his own identity.²⁷

Sawiya, an important female ancestor for the Wagumisi clan, changed her skin to enable her to marry different men at different times. Sawiya came from Wabila by herself and travelled a different way from the rest of the ancestors. On the way to the Aramia River Sawiya stopped at several places: Torres Strait; Kiwai Island and then she came to the north bank of the Fly River. Near Pedaeya Creek, the creek used by the ancestors to travel to Balimo from the Fly River, Sawiya settled down for some time. Two male ancestors, Saida and Bani, followed Sawiya to this place.

While she was [at] Baidowa, that ancestor Bani and Saida both were racing each other, trying to marry Sawiya. Saida married her and both of them stayed for a while. And then she changed her skin, Mewalu Sagalu [women’s names] and changed her name [to Mewalu Sagalu]. After staying some time with that name Mewalu Sagalu, then she changed her skin again and got a new name Kigisa. After staying for some time with name of Kigisa she changed her skin to Silila. After staying some time as Silila she changed her skin and got a new name, Ekolowa. She was staying with these two ancestors, [alternatively] Bani and Saida. After [using the] Ekolowa name, she left Baidowa (Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village March 1996).

After being married alternately to both Saida and Bani, using different skins and therefore different names, Sawiya left Baidowa and went towards the Aramia River.

Esanadae, a male ancestor from the Gasinapa clan, is said to have two skins; one of which was a normal skin like the other ancestors and the other was a mewa kaka or 'fish skin'. Esanadae was the name of the normal skin which he

²⁷ A kabiya although termed ‘wild pussy’ by most Gogodala is what we would call a small marsupial or scrub wallaby.
wore when he lived on the land, and Bagubagu was the name he was called when he wore the fish skin. Having these two skins enabled Esanadae to move between the water and the land, living in both domains. Mala Sogowa explained that: “When he wanted to come up, he would use the Esanadae name and come up to this world. If he wants to come up to this world he has to put this ‘fish skin’ called Bagubagu away and then put his Esanadae skin [on] for the earth” (October 1995).

The changing of skins, and therefore names, was intimately connected to gendered bodies. In one of the stories, a woman named Silila became worried about her children who had gone away with the men to hunt for wallabies. It was late and they had not returned. So Silila got changed and came. And she got this man called Titalela Dalamakeya and took his armband and nose stick [which was] called Dumutu. She came to Ketapatele island, she had a bath and changed her skin. She wore a man’s decorative dress. She was changed into a man. She killed her sister Miyala Kekepa whose body became a canoe, _ewano gawa_ a human canoe. Then she washed, got changed into a man, chewed betelnut and she came (Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village March 1996).

Later, she left and went back to Wabila in her canoe. Silila became a man by donning the appropriate armbands and nose stick that constituted a ‘man’s decorative dress’ and then chewed betel nut, itself a male practice. Doing these things was an integral part of her transformation into a man, as was the change of her female name into that of a male name.

Before the arrival of the missionaries in the 1930s, local people took great care in painting bodies for ceremonies, dancing and canoe races. When A. P. Lyons (1926:339) travelled to the area in 1916, he took note of the ways in which they decorated their skins. Lyons wrote that a man who had killed another in a headhunting raid was entitled to wear a feather ornament on his chest and paint his body black and his face red. Crawford (1981:247) has also written about the colours, red, white, black and yellow, which the dancers and participants in the _Aida_ ceremonies used to wear on their skins. The colours and designs painted onto bodies were complemented by the masks and dancing
plaques which boldly displayed the canoe design of the dancer.\textsuperscript{28} When Aida came travelling around the villages from east to west, following the path of the original Aida, he would arrive wearing a certain set of colours on his skin, particularly elaborate on his face.\textsuperscript{29} The rest of Aida’s body was covered with \textit{lopala} (layers of grass skirts, paint and feathers) so that he could not be recognised.\textsuperscript{30} When he arrived in the village the older men would realise, from the specific colour surrounding his eyes, \textit{tao}, which clan would prepare for the feasts associated with the ceremonies.

M. Strathern (1979:254) has suggested that the inner self is displayed upon the surface of the body, on the skin, through decoration with objects from the outside world. She argues that this ‘self’ conveys efficacy, a capacity for action and achievement.\textsuperscript{31} Through these decorations, the person both establishes and redefines relations between themselves and others, between humans and non-human aspects of the landscape.

For the Gogodala, skins display names and the efficacy of the name and the clan canoe in which it sits can be demonstrated. When Ibali wore the skin of Kanaba and Sogowa wore the skin of his canoe Otokoko, the decorations were transformed and incorporated into the corporeal experiences of these ancestors. Similarly, the names of the canoe designs which men wore on their bodies and on their masks, became their own for that period of time.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[\textsuperscript{28}] Only men painted canoe designs on their bodies and wore the dancing masks and plaques which bore the \textit{gawa tao}. Women, however painted their bodies with red, yellow and white paint and wore heron feathers, chestbands and grass skirts.
\item[\textsuperscript{29}] Although, the \textit{Aida maiyata} was the final part of the four stages of the initiation cycle, it did not always follow from the other three: the \textit{Wasikola maiyata}, the \textit{Gi maiyata} (as described in the previous chapter), the \textit{Gawa maiyata} (of which canoe races are the only remaining activity); because of the east-west cycle, Aida often did not arrive for several years after the completion of the \textit{Gawa maiyata}.
\item[\textsuperscript{30}] As Strathern has noted, however, the act of concealment is related to the bringing of things outside. So that in ceremonies in Hagen, what is normally hidden is brought out - in dancing the self is brought outside. Distance is the mechanism of revelation. “The inner self is visible only to extent that it makes invisible the outer body” (1979:249).
\item[\textsuperscript{31}] I want to explore the notion of making vital relationships, which are normally hidden, explicit in the context of dance and performance in Chapters 7 and 8. I suggest that in the racing canoes, the dances performed for the Balimo Show and other venues, men and women display their capacities to act on their skins and bodies through painted and decorated bodies and artefacts.
\end{footnotes}
The painting and scarring of bodies and skins has certainly lost much of its significance since the arrival of the missionaries and the development of an indigenous Church. Before the coming of the missionaries, women and girls were scarred in a distinctive fashion (called *kaka poledae*) across the chest, breasts and upper arms. (See Figure 18) Although there is little literature or oral accounts of such practices it seems that girls were cut early in their lives by

Figure 18. Two Gogodala women at Madiri plantation; courtesy of The National Museum of Australia
older women. Girls spent their first menarche in the *gwaei saba* (small houses on the edge of the lagoon). When they emerged from their period of seclusion, they were adorned with paint around the eyes and along their bodies. Both men and women also wore woven grass or sticks (*dumutu*) through their noses.

People today wear western clothing, women in long, flowing skirts and loose shirts or *meri* blouses (TP), shorts or trousers for men. Early in colonial contact, the missionaries encouraged local villagers to wear European clothes and there are numerous examples in the early mission and administrative descriptions of the Gogodala in which the nakedness and ugliness of the women particularly was stressed. Women today dress in clothes which cover most parts of their bodies, particularly their legs and thighs. It is considered particularly inappropriate for a pregnant woman to wear a tight shirt in which her pregnancy is visible to all. The Gogodala word for European clothes was, and for older people still is, *gubali kaka* or 'ghost skin' like the skin given to Miwasa at Wabila although most younger people call them *kakana lopala* or 'skin things'.

Michael O’Hanlon (1989) has noted that among the Waghi, everyday dress is primarily western as it is among the Gogodala and most areas of Papua New Guinea. He writes that Andrew Strathern, in a personal communication, suggested to him that Hagen women tend to wear brighter clothes than their male counterparts which resonates nicely with the brighter face paint worn by women on ceremonial occasions. O’Hanlon (1989:87) makes a similar

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32 Crawford (1981:257) writes that both Wirz and Bernard Lea witnessed a female ‘initiation’ held in 1937 at the same time as the Balimo *Gi maiyata* or canoe race (part of the male initiation cycles) in which two girls were initiated soon after their first period. The first stage revolved around seclusion in a small house not far from the longhouse and the implementation of strict food taboos. Crawford writes: “Much sago was made by the mother and wrapped in sago leaf bundles, which at the end of the seclusion were piled high near the *genama*. The girls were then decorated with new long-tasselled chestbands, frontlet and a wide belt. This was followed by a short and simple song ceremony by other women in the house, just before they emerged. They then performed another simple dance around the *genama* accompanied by their fathers beating the drums, circling the longhouse three times, after which they set out on a final stage. On this occasion, each time they reached one of the women’s entrances, an old woman lay prostrate on the ground and the girls, on reaching her, gently touched her simultaneously with their toes. The old woman then rose, and collected a bundle of sago from the pile. Thus ended the ceremony”.

33 Richard Eves (1996) has recently suggested that Victorian ideas and practices were deployed by colonial evangelism in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific, in which a particular form of body was deemed a sign of complete conversion. He writes: “[a]s well as being clothed, clean, neat and orderly, this body incorporated appropriate habits, comportments and gestures indicative of a disciplined Christian, whose interior morality was consistent with his or her outer body” (Eves 1996:85-6).
comparison for the Wahgi, suggesting that the men and women wear clothes that are a similar hue and brightness which parallels the wearing of face paint during ceremonies and dances.

Gogodala woman tend to wear clothes whose colours are muted in comparison to the men, particularly young men who often paint *gawa tao* on their jeans and shorts or shirts. Women, even young ones, never wear these clan designs on their clothes, bags or bilums. Girls, when they reach the age of two or three, are encouraged to wear underpants and skirts while boys of a similar age are allowed to run around naked. Even as young as three or four, girls must wear skirts which reach past their knees, and shorts are very seldom worn unless they closely resemble a skirt. Whereas many men, whether sixteen or forty, often walk around without shirts, displaying their upper bodies. Only when we were at either a women’s conference or in the sago swamp with other women, did women remove their tops in view of others. Once dressed up for feasts or Church, however, men and women wear clothes that are similar in hue and brightness.

**Blood in names**
The relationship between blood and names is as significant as that between skin and names, and is often expressed and discussed in the context of contemporary naming processes and disputes. Having Gogodala blood is to have a name and an intimate experience of local places, people and food. Blood is integral to the process of conception, with the parent’s blood mixing in the woman’s body to produce the baby. Semen, *etawa*, is also necessary for the early development of the foetus in the womb. Conception is not a particular moment in time but rather is a process by which the father contributes semen to the child through regular sexual intercourse. Whose blood or semen was most influential in the process was difficult to ascertain: Sakuliyato would become embarrassed whenever the conversation was raised and tried to assure me that village people really did not know how babies were made. She suggested that women’s blood was more important than men’s in the making of children, but that men argued women
could only have babies after sex with them. She also said that until she had had tried to have a baby with Kukuwa, she had not known what made them.

Sakuliyato and Kukuwa had been trying unsuccessfully to have a child for some years, although Sakuliyato already had three children as a result of previous relationships. Finally, they decided to go to the Balimo Health Centre where, friends had told them, many people with problems had gone and subsequently become pregnant. The staff at the Health Centre took samples from Kukuwa and Sakuliyato and examined both of them. Returning some time later, Kukuwa was informed that he had a low sperm count. Sakuliyato and Kukuwa walked back to the village that afternoon where Sakuliyato promptly told everyone that it was not her problem, but Kukuwa’s, that prevented them from having children. Kukuwa’s mother was very upset and exclaimed: ‘My son, why are you doing this?’ Sakuliyato later told me that the doctor at the Health Centre had explained that babies were conceived through semen from the man and an egg from inside the woman’s body. 34 Previously, she had not known even how long the baby was inside the mother’s stomach before it was born and had only worked this out after the birth of her first child.

People who have ‘strong blood’ have children whose parentage shows on their faces. It was emphasised that even when a woman didn’t know (or wouldn’t tell for some reason) who the father of her child was, the child would invariably look like or act like that person as they grew up and hence the family would know. That Kukuwa couldn’t have children reflected the weakness of his, and his family’s, blood.

Kamo stressed the point that men’s blood was the primary factor in the growth of a foetus as it is the father’s blood that the child carries once it is born and grows into an adult. He argued that the mother’s blood and body allowed for the growth and nurturance of the growing foetus. Semen and male blood

34 Many women in the area have been influenced by the clinics held by the Family Planning Clinic which sometimes is held at Balimo Health Centre (as well as Awaba) and several of the women I knew were taking contraception supplied by the Centre. Others, like Sakuliyato, had gone to see the nurse about having babies, starting breastmilk for similar concerns. Sakuliyato said that in the old days, women gave birth in the gwaei saba and the woman would be attended by two or three ‘big mother women’ who knew about the process. Now all women give birth in at the Health Centre.
formed the child which, he said, women acknowledged when they were angry and yelled at their husbands: ‘get your kids away - your blood!’ Blood is a central facet of a person’s membership of their clan canoe. Kamo said that “blood talks about the gawa [clan canoes] and gawa tao [canoe designs]”. He suggested that people speak about having ‘Wagumisi blood’ for example, or ‘Asipali blood’ and that having this Wagumisi or Asipali blood is tantamount to possessing a Wagumisi or Asipali name. Having parents who belong to clan canoes, then, is the primary form of acquiring a Gogodala name and thereby demonstrating Gogodala blood. Kamo suggested that as the male parent usually dictates the child’s clan canoe membership, the father of the child must have Gogodala blood otherwise the child is not considered a Gogodala person. This is usually spoken about in terms of not having access to land, sago swamps or coconut trees of their own because as Kamo suggested “that blood has land, sago swamp, gawa tao [canoe designs], everything”.

Ambiguities which arise to challenge such categorical statements of belonging have developed in the colonial and contemporary context, with close relationships between local people and other Papua New Guineans, expatriate missionaries and administrators. Thirty-five Those people with two Gogodala parents are referred to in English as ‘full bloods’ or ‘pure bloods’ while those who have only one Gogodala parent, usually the mother, are called ‘mixed race’ or ‘mixed blood’. There is no term in Gogodala which encapsulates the notion of ‘mixed blood’, and Waiko, a young man from Tai village, suggested that this term had only come into usage fairly recently. Kamo noted that modern medicine had only served to show that local ideas about the importance of blood in determining corporeal and clan identity was justified.

Roy Biyama, a local businessman, has a mother from Balimo village and an Australian father. His light skin and white name are seen as indicative of the significant differences between Roy and other Gogodala people in his age.

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35 This is not to suggest that ambiguities were absent from early naming practices; when Kamula or other neighbouring people were killed in raids, sometimes children were adopted by the raiders and given names. This is an issue today; Nakeyo once made a comment about a particular family who derived from one of these adopted Kamula, pointing out that their claim to a particular claim of land couldn’t be substantiated as a result.
group. As his father was not Gogodala, Roy is 'mixed race'. He has Gogodala names which he was given by his mother's parents but most people call him by his white name. Another couple had four children, all of whom were considered to be 'mixed blood' as the woman was Gogodala but her husband was from Goroka, Eastern Highlands. Each of these children was given a Gogodala name from their mother's brothers and while they lived in the village they were called by these names.

The adoption of children, such as in the case of Samaki, is a common occurrence in most Gogodala villages and is often a context in which a person's claims to certain types of blood are debated and redefined. Adoption creates a situation in which people who are born into one clan canoe are adopted into another. Sakuliyato explained that people adopted babies who were born outside of marriage because these children were the 'same blood' as the adopting parents. She said that unless people of the same blood looked after the child, he or she would not have any names and access to land or sago. It was suggested also that adopted people often 'return to the blood' when they get older and there is a constant dialogue about the primary relationships which locate adopted people within the family and clan.

In Samaki's case, Kukuwa's parents were happy to endorse the adoption of the child because he carried the blood of both adoptive parents. This, it was reasoned, would make the later return of the child to 'the blood' extremely difficult as the clan canoe into which he had been adopted was his birth mother's canoe. Samaki's chances of being given land and a name by his birth mother's brothers or parents were minimal. Being adopted into his mother's clan canoe then was appropriate as, if his claim to certain tracts of land, sago or lagoons were questioned later in life due to his adoption, being born into the blood of the same clan canoe would substantially strengthen his position.

The significance of blood in the establishment and reiteration of relations between people incorporates the possibilities which having certain blood entails. Possessing 'Asipali blood', for example, can mean that the person has access to particular names, to a piece of land or a stretch of lagoon.
Ambiguities arise in situations when people attempt to use aspects of their blood which are considered to be inappropriate or unsubstantiated. A young man from Tai village, Waiko, who had been adopted from Oseke village suggested that because he had been treated well in his adopted family, he would not return to his Wabadala blood. His adopted father had given him big names from his adopted clan and plenty of land. The possibility remains, however, that Waiko’s children will ‘return to the blood’ as the children of adopted people often do.

Blood and names are potential resources in the political definition and constitution of relationships between people and their places. Relations based on blood and names are inherently gendered as mother’s blood, although extremely important, is less able to be used and in this sense, less valued. The blood of the father, through which names are given and claims to land, sago and fishing areas are realised, is primary. This is not to suggest that there not many instances in which mother’s blood and clan canoe can be invoked and links to certain tracts of land, swamp or lagoon substantiated. Personal genealogies, like that of Kamo’s, which detail the male names from the time of the first male ancestor of the clan canoe create the potential for these blood relations to be invoked and substantiated. These genealogies are increasingly validated in the mediation of competing claims over access to and ownership of the environment.

**The return of Samakiyato**

The connection between skin and names, and more generally between bodies and names, continues to be significant in the context of relationships between Europeans and Gogodala people. I would like now to turn to Samakiyato, myself, in order to explore some of these entanglements. When I came to live in Tai village in February 1995, I was adopted by Mala and Kukupiyato as Kukuwa’s sister and was given the name Samakiyato, the female version of one of his names (Samaki). Some time later I discovered that this name, Samakiyato, had been previously given to the eldest daughter of Mala and Kukupiyato, who had died when she was only six years old. Several people in the neighbouring
village, Oseke, became convinced that my husband and I were Gogodala people who had returned to visit our families. It was difficult for our families to talk about these issues with us, however, as both local pastors and missionaries preach very strongly against such constructions of white people.

The ambiguities which arise from the different relationships between local people and outsiders are brought together in the difficult process of naming ‘mixed blood’ children. As I noted earlier, the story of Miwasa and Dalogo is seen to provide some explanation as to why many local people consider Europeans to be, or be similar to, recently deceased family members returning from Yaebi Saba. Miwasa’s journey to Wabila in pursuit of his wife, Dalogo, constitutes the last time that a person travelled to Wabila and back again while still alive. (See Appendix C) When Gogodala people die, their limo or ‘spirit’ leaves the body once it has been buried and follows the same path of Dalogo to Wabila/ Yaebi Saba. Before the limo or ‘spirit’ reaches Wabila, however, it must enter a pool of boiling water. Through this process, the limo peels away its skin and becomes white.

Many speculate that Wabila or Yaebi Saba could be Australia, and that eventually, all Gogodala people become white-skinned. Wood (1995) has noted similar comments among Kamula people to the immediate north of the Gogodala. There is a “widely held” belief that Kamula spirits go to Australia, where they live and become ‘white skins’. He writes: “[s]ome Kamula have been able to come back to live in Kamula country in their European form even though they will themselves be unaware of their prior status as Kamula” (Wood 1995:33). Some local people expressed the opinion that several missionaries and other white skins in the past had reminded them of particular deceased relatives. Ross Weymouth noted in 1978 that:

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36 This debate played into several factors in the relationship between Tai and Oseke villages. The family into which I was adopted in Tai village constituted one of the families to reject the ‘revival’ message of the Pastor and many people in Oseke felt that maybe I had ‘returned’ to the wrong village, forming a relationship with people who had not believed in the Pastor’s message about returning ancestors and the cessation of hard work.

37 Kamo pointed out that it was extremely important that bodies were buried, otherwise their limo would leave the body and float around causing trouble. Once buried, however, the limo leaves the body and begins the journey to Wabila/ Yaebi Saba.
Quite a number continue with beliefs which surround the legendary death of Miwasi’s (sic) wife and his visit to the abode of the spirits in an attempt to bring her back. While Miwasi was at the abode of the spirits, he saw the spirit’s ghost skin (gubali kaka). This, the people now say, was like the European clothing. Miwasi therefore told the people that when the Europeans arrive, they should be friendly with them as they came from the place where the spirits dwelt and would give them clothing. Subsequently, individual Europeans have been identified with ancestors, especially dead relatives (Weymouth 1978:342).

Similarities between recently deceased relatives and white people continue to be discussed in some detail. Dawn Macgyver, wife of one of the missionaries at Kawito in the 1980s, was seen as Sakuliyato’s older sister after she employed her as a ‘housegirl’. Other people suggested that the way in which one particular missionary walked, for example, was definitive of some sort of relationship between him and a deceased relative.

If the story of Miwasa and Dalogo explicates the complex and enduring relationship between white people and Gogodala, then the narrative detailing the original moment of difference between these two groups of people looks at its genesis. This story suggests that white people and local groups came from the same place and family as brothers with the same colour skin (although there is some dispute whether they were black or white). Sanada told me:

At the beginning when the father came and he gave them [the two brothers] the choice [between bows and arrows and guns]. And the bigger one [brother], us, got the bows and arrows, but you peoples, you got the gun, the small brother. So the [big] brother missed the chance and gave the chance to small boy, small brother. So that’s the beginning; how [and] why you became white people and why we became the black people. So this is a hard time for us (September 1995).

This moment was likened to the Biblical story of the rivalry between Jacob and Esau for the birthright from their father. Nakeyo said that Jacob the

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38 Wood (1995:31) also talks about the original ‘brother’ relationship between white and black for the Kamula.

39 Weymouth (1978) quotes an Aketa village informant who told him the basis of the relationship between white people and Gogodala, particularly in relation to white peoples’ material possessions and technological knowledge: “Ibali gave them (his children) hard things to do and follow to see if they would obey him, but they only did the easy things. The only ones who did obey him was the original ancestor of the European race, who built houses out of brick instead of bamboo as the other sons did” (Weymouth 1978:332).
younger brother ‘stole’ the older brother’s birthright, so that Jacob, *wabeya* or ‘small brother’, got the ‘white sheepskin’ while Esau, *kaka* or ‘older brother’, only received the ‘black sheepskin’. Sanada suggested that in the Gogodala story, the brothers were originally white-skinned, the eldest becoming black-skinned when he chose the bow and arrows. He also said that Ibali and Gaguli and the original ancestors had white skins, but after they ‘made trouble’, and engaged in sexual relationships with one another on the way to Dogono, their bodies changed and they became black-skinned. This was not corroborated by others, most of whom did not suggest (or were not sure) that the ancestors came from Wabila wearing white skins. Indeed Mala suggested that even the ‘white’ skins of several of the first ancestors which allowed for their clan affiliation at birth, was more like a ‘light-skinned’ Gogodala than the colour of my skin.

Much interest has also focused on the issue of naming and the fairly recent practice of naming local children after expatriates, especially missionaries and teachers. Wood (1995) notes that for the Kamula, identification with Europeans often takes the form of namesake relationships. He writes, “Kamula have named their children after myself, Tony (Crawford), Jenni (Crawford), the SIL linguist Isaka (Rotume) and the missionaries Lola and Mark (Nyburg)” (Wood 1995:33). For the Kamula, the namesake relationship implies similarities between the named and the giver of the name. In this way, Wood (1995:33) suggests, Kamula people incorporate European names and persons into their domains, while also “copying” Europeans into Kamula bodies.

Many Gogodala people have ‘white names’ which they received from white friends or employers or their parents were given to use for their children. Nakeyo’s wife Bibiyato has a white name, Elizabeth, which her parents were given to use for their daughter from a expatriate friend. Each of the children of Bibiyato and Nakeyo has a white name; one from a local missionary, one from a family in Moresby and a couple of names which Nakeyo selected from the *Post Courier* newspaper. Kamo and Genasi similarly have given their children white
names, derived from white friends in Moresby. Most of those who do have white names also have their more significant Gogodala names which are the basis of their claims to clan canoe membership.

For those live in Balimo town or the other urban areas of Papua New Guinea, white names are more likely to be used on an everyday basis and children who are born in places like Port Moresby may be given their white name before they receive their Gogodala name (as the name has to be sent to Moresby from the village). When returning to the Gogodala area, however, these people are always called by their Gogodala names as these link them to other people and places in the village context, and confirm already established relationships. The majority of village people do not have, or use, white names as most have had little direct contact with expatriates in Balimo or other urban centres. Some notable exceptions include the children of unmarried local women, children who are not claimed by a Gogodala father and are consequently called in Gogodala English ‘fatherless kids’.

For the Eastern Iatmul and Manambu of East Sepik, the sharing of names through a namesake relationship means that people are very close or similar to one another, having a common soul. Silverman (1996) argues that people can be affected by a mysterious illness because their grandparent namesake contravened a rule or practice. He suggests that because this person and the grandparent share the same name “they are identified as the same person” (Silverman 1996:35). For the Gogodala, however, people who share the same name through a namesake relationship are not considered to be similar to

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40 Kamo and Genasi introduced themselves to my Charles and I as Stanley and Gloria, which they felt were more appropriate in that context. Once we became close friends however, and stayed at their house many times, it was considered more appropriate to call them by their Gogodala names and vice versa.

41 Only people like Roy Biyama, mentioned earlier, and Johnson Pasiya, son of one of the first converts Pasiya, are generally called by their European names. The special relationship which his family shares with the missionaries and Church hierarchy, however, underlies much of this usage of Johnson’s white name - even then, he was always referred to as ‘Johnson Pasiya’ (his name and his father’s name).

42 Like Roy Biyama: when Sakuliyato had her three children, the babies were named by the nurses in Port Moresby General Hospital and Balimo Health Centre. They were given white names (Mathew, Voilet and Tracy) and used these until her brothers gave the children some Gogodala names from their clan canoe. When Sakuliyato married Kukuwu, the youngest child was adopted by her husband and was given names by Mala and Kukupiyato. The ambiguities which arise from the growing number of children with what in the local Gogodala-English terminology is called ‘mixed blood’ are often played out in the context of contemporary naming practices.
one another or to share a soul although there is a substantial link between them; young people are not encouraged to give their names to younger relatives as this bestows on someone else something vital to their own well being.

In a context in which children’s names are given from the father’s clan, a namesake or *gogoya* relationship allows women particularly to utilise their own personal names and establish relationships with their brother’s children, or other people from different clans. A *gogoya* or *gogoweya* relationship is one in which a person, often an older women, gives her name to a female child. The parents and child then call this older woman *gogoya* or *gogoweya*. Rather than being based simply for familial relations, this namesake relationship is considered to be an affectionate one, based on mutual interests and respect. Sakuliyato explained that “she [the older woman] gave you a name. It’s a very big thing, it’s not a small thing”. The child and her parents are expected to repay their *gogoya/gogoweya* with small gifts of food, or help getting firewood and sometimes small amounts of money. Igato (Tracy), Sakuliyato’s daughter, gave her first bag of sago to her *gogoweya*. Kamo said that when his daughters’ *gogoya* came to their house, he and his wife would always make sure that she was comfortable.

A similar type of namesake relationship constituted between men and boys is called *gasi*, which is the same term for brother-in-law. Although the *gasi* relationship has parallels with the *gogoweya/gogoya* connection, Kamo suggested that “a woman cannot get a name from male and give it to someone”; women can only give their own names to others. Men, particularly those acknowledged heads of the family like Kamo, often have access to larger pools.

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43 I was given two names for this type of relationship: *gogoweya* a term which people from Tai, Dogono, Aketa and neighbouring villages use, and *gogoya* from the people of Balimo, Kini, Kimama and Waligi villages.

44 However, Kamo suggested that when he was choosing names for his children, particularly his daughters, he used the names of his aunts. He would then inform that aunt that he wanted to use the name and from then on this aunt would become *gogoya* to his children.

45 Young girls at the age of six, seven or older will often make their first bag of sago which is considered a significant event by the women of their household. Who the child gives her first bag of sago to traces some significant relations in her life.
of family names with which they can allocate names to other family members and others.\textsuperscript{46}

The basis of \textit{gogoya} and \textit{gasi} relationships is often found in the close relations established in previous generations. Kamo’s youngest daughter’s name, Bisuliyato, and the relationship with her \textit{gogoya} originated in Kamo’s parents’ generation. Kamo’s parents gave one of his cousins the Bisuliyato name although she was from another clan. They told her at the time; “You are Kamo’s sister”. The relationship between Kamo’s parents and this cousin then became very close and Kamo says that they shared extra food and she would often stay with them. He said “they [could] treat her like a real child because they gave her a name”. When Kamo wanted to use this name for his daughter, this woman gave the name to her and became her \textit{gogoya}.

Wood argues that, for the Kamula, white people like missionaries, anthropologists and business people are incorporated into local bodies and places through the practice of creating namesake relationships. The ideal culmination of this process is a “new category of person”, the “white skinned Kamula” (Wood 1995:34). Gogodala people are also interested in discussing the types of bodies and names which will be the result of the continuing relationships between white people and Gogodala\textsuperscript{47}. Some speculate that, sometime in the future when white and Gogodala people live together, all of their children will have ‘light skin’ similar to that of ‘mixed blood’ children. While they remain black-skinned, however, emplaced in their village environment, Gogodala names remain the most significant form of naming.

\textsuperscript{46} Kamo’s son was named by Muti, Kamo’s cousin. This does not constitute a \textit{gasi} relationship however as Muti and Kamo are considered to be too closely related and this type of relationship is more closely aligned with the family allocation of names between different members.

\textsuperscript{47} It was suggested to me that the missionaries severely disrupted the ‘rules’ of the old people when they arrived in the area and since then there have been many ‘fatherless kids’, a category for which there is no Gogodala word. People are very aware that the missionaries have wrought considerable transformations in the ways people relate to one another in sexual and marriage matters.
Taking back Samaki

The process of giving names, whether in a gogoya/ gogoweya relationship or through the allocation of family names to newly-born children, is an extremely important one and one in which most people, throughout the course of their life, participate and experience. They are the primary way in which stories about the ancestors and the creation and mapping of the local environment are known and utilised by younger men and women. Through names, people experience and establish certain relationships, continue others, and explore the gendered landscapes of which they are a part. Names and substances such as blood and skin are central idioms which are deployed in constituting and contesting these relationships. Blood, skin and names are also significant ways in which contemporary Gogodala people talk about their connections to other people, whether expatriates, other Papua New Guineans or ‘mixed blood’ Gogodala.

Silverman (1996) has argued for the Eastern Iatmul that totemic names possess the capacities to transform ‘totemic categories’ so that debates about such names can transform and realign these categories. On the other hand, Harrison (1990) has noted for the Manambu of Avatip, such disputes over the allocation and distribution of names are only constitutive of human action and do not affect the a priori, and therefore ahistorical, nature of Avatip ‘totemic categories’. For the Gogodala, the classification of their landscape and the incorporation of human and non-human elements within it into the clan canoes of the red and white people is, like the Avatip, the basis of all human action. The categories are perceived as fluid and processual, however, rather than fixed as they are concerned with places and their transformations. Disputes about ancestral actions and movements, spatially expressed and remembered, reflect and transform many of the boundaries and classifications of names, places, people and things. Discussions about naming practices are often based on dilemmas raised in the context of those who are caught on the fringes of these definitive categories of clan canoes and their corporeal requisites.

Samaki’s story is salutary in this regard: after only three months in which time the child was named and entered into certain types of relationships,
Samaki was taken back by his birth mother who claimed that she now wanted to keep him. Kukuwa and Sakuliyato, the adoptive parents, were counselled against trying to get the boy back as it was argued that it would only cause more shame and pain to the family. The names which had been bestowed upon the baby were immediately withdrawn from his body as were all of the relationships associated with these names. His adoptive parents and grandparents would not physically or verbally acknowledge either the child or his mother and any reference to the boy emphasised his shameful lack of a name. As the birth mother lived in the neighbouring house, the situation was very awkward and for many months both Kukuwa and Sakuliyato refused to walk on the path leading past their neighbour’s house, despite the fact that this led directly to their own house. Adoption is recognised as a generally ambiguous relationship which, more than any other, must be constantly monitored and reassessed as it challenges many of the normative relations established through the giving of names and the allocation of clan canoe membership. Even those children who remain with their adoptive families are unstable members of the family as they retain the possibility of returning to their own blood.

In the next chapter I elucidate how, through the production and ingestion of food, villagers speak about the intimacy between their places and their bodies. Central to an experience of the local environment is the overwhelming significance of food production and consumption, particularly that of sago. The link between sago, people and landscape constitutes a singularly significant context in which the agility, strength and fitness of Gogodala bodies are seen as the result of the ‘hard life’ which they lead. Ambiguity surrounds the issue of development and the ways in which this transforms these local bodies and places, and what it results in. There is some local concern and debate about the positive and negative aspects of ‘living on sago’ versus those who, like white people, ‘live on money’
Chapter 5

Sago is our life

Floating grass

To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in.
E. Casey 1996 p.18

The experience and understanding of local places derives from the ‘implacable reliance’ (Jolly 1991:47) on food produced in the area. For the Gogodala, the body inherently informs lived experience and is reflected in the use of corporeal images to articulate connectedness to places.¹ Through idioms of body shapes and sizes, characterised as representative of particular places, village people construct certain ways of knowing about others. Kahn (1986) has argued that for the Wamira of Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea, food constitutes an important way through which people construct and learn about who they are and thereby their relationships with others. She suggests that food is a medium through which Wamira people think and communicate (Kahn 1986:xviii). For Gogodala communities, food, and especially sago, forms the basis of many relations with others. Knowing about sago and its corporeal effects is integral to the process of learning about the environment.

In this chapter I explore the ways in which Gogodala villagers speak about this relationship between bodies and places: expressed primarily through the embodied experience of village life and practices; and through the consumption of sago. Anne Becker (1994:102) has argued in a recent paper that aesthetics and moral values associated with specific body shapes and sizes are

¹ Richard Eves (n.d:1) has suggested that the Lelet people of New Ireland utilise corporeal tropes as an integral part of the process by which they constitute lived places and develop ‘attachment to their place’. They “construct a cosmology of space and place around the contrasting images of bodily comportment” primarily that of an immobile or mobile body (Eves n.d:1).
related to perceptions of personhood and embodied experience. In Fiji, she suggests, bodies that are well formed and filled-out are admired because it indicates both the capacity to work and the care already embodied in it (Becker 1994:103).

Gogodala village life, which is talked about as *oko kalakalabega* or ‘hard work’, creates specific types of bodies. Eating sago and other foods mainly grown or collected from around the village, substantiates this relationship through imbuing village people with strength and the capacity to ‘grow’. The ability to continue this difficult way of life is highly valued and strong, fit bodies are equated with responsible adults. The moral values which underlie such corporeal images of strength and ability are gendered. People are branded weak or lazy if their bodies are incapable of meeting the demanding requirements of village activities.

I noted in Chapter 4 that Strathern (1979) and others have argued that, in many areas of Papua New Guinea, the inner self is rendered legible on the skin or surface of the body in the context of rituals and ceremonies. The inner capacities and worth of people are exhibited in visible ways in everyday activities as well. I suggest that, for people like the Gogodala, imagining bodies in a particular way is an integral part of conceptions about moral, social and efficacious capacities. It is what people can do that realises crucial moral relationships. Having muscular and well-developed arms, then, enables people to demonstrate their worth through strenuous daily activities; whether it is pounding the sago pith in the swamp or hunting eels at night in a canoe. The long and narrow hips and legs of both women and men indicate many hours spent walking between Balimo and the village, carrying injured children to the Health Centre, or paddling narrow canoes to the garden or sago place.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that people who marry into their mother’s clan are labelled ‘floating grass’. Increasingly, non-village people are

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2 She notes that Fijians are not interested in obtaining a particular shape as an individual goal (as in American society where it is connected to the individuated self) but rather that their interest in bodies relates to the “social positioning of the person - how he has been nurtured or neglected in his social milieu” (Becker 1994:103-4). Attention to body shape, then, is an idiom of care and nurturance, and reflects not only personal capacities but delineates links to social networks (Becker 1994:104).
also subject to these sorts of categorisations as they live apart from the land and people from which these categories gain legitimacy. There is a considerable population of Gogodala speakers who live Port Moresby and are employed as teachers, pastors, shop assistants, nurses and doctors. Relatives often live for long periods of time with these family members - Sakuliyato stayed in Moresby with one of her twin brothers, a teacher, for many months. Others, like Kamo, who spent many years in the Papua New Guinea Defense Forces, live in Moresby, Lae, Madang and other places. There is a small graveyard set aside in Balimo for Gogodala soldiers who have died in combat (mainly during the Bougainville conflict). So far there are only three men buried there but they were all returned to the area and buried with great ceremony.5

Most of the Gogodala who live in Moresby stay in the suburb of Gerehu. There is a section of Daru, the Provincial centre, which is also almost exclusively populated by Gogodala people; particularly those working as teachers, nurses and doctors. Other local people live in the ‘urban’ sections of Balimo, Awaba, Wasuwa and Kawito: they teach at local community schools, Awaba High School, in the Health Centres, in trade-stores or are involved in the Bible college at Mapodo. Although they live near the villages, they tend to buy food, whether sago or rice. Not subject to the experiential dimensions of village life, these urban dwellers are posited as weak and soft, ‘unfit’ for their environment and substantially displaced from their past, clan canoes and practices. Although such categorisations seem to be absolute, local people are very aware of the ambiguities associated with them. Later in the chapter, I juxtapose expressions about these (and other) urban people with some instances in which such categorisations are both created and challenged.

5 While we were staying at Balimo in May 1995, one of these bodies was brought back: there was hundreds of people gathered near the Council Chambers waiting for the body and its escort of local Defense Force members. After some hours, the coffin was marched the length of Balimo town, carried on the shoulders of several men and soldiers, before being buried in the plot set aside for it.
A hard life

‘We Gogodala have a hard life’ is a statement often used by village people. It acknowledges the continual need to produce, gather and prepare food. It also indicates that local people often compare their own type of lifestyle to that of certain images they have of other peoples’ lifestyles. This image of village life underlies distinctions made between their landscape, bodies and practices and urban or white peoples’ environment, work and bodies. Local bodies are posited as strong and hard, the embodiment of the intimate connection between the people, their food and land. White people, and urban others, are, in comparison, characterised as soft, weak and unwieldy.

Merleau-Ponty (1969:51) has argued that the human body is the field of ‘perception and action’ and the world is the “totality of perceptible things”. In this formulation, the world is only thought about because people in their corporeal reality have experienced it first (Merleau-Ponty 1969:52). The lived body is the irreducible basis of the village experience and practical, embodied knowledge, rather than discursive knowledge, underlies many aspects of daily life. Gogodala bodily images are very significant for the articulation of value as speaking about bodies, theirs and others, posits everyday links with the landscape that shapes them. As we are not isolated subjects but interactive bodies, we often turn our somatic attention, the process by which we attend to and objectify our own and others’ bodies and surroundings, to other bodies.

Gogodala people talk about the difficulties associated with living in their landscape as definitive in making and growing bodies. Michael Smith (1994:5-6) also talks about the ways in which the Kairiru people of East Sepik Province discuss their type of lifestyle. These village people describe themselves as living in hard times. Smith quotes one man as saying; “The village is full of illness and death, the people are nothing but skin and bones, the village grounds are covered with faeces! Everything is falling apart” (1994:4-5). Kragur villagers are also very aware of the material riches of white people in relation to themselves, as well as the relative material wealth and ease of lifestyle of urban Papua New Guineans (see also Smith 1990).

Michael Jackson (1983:337) writes that embodied experience is the basis of what people think and say as bodily practices “mediate a personal realisation of social values, an immediate grasp of general precepts as sensible truth”.

By focusing on these ways through which we attend to and with our bodies, we can find out about the world and the people with whom we interact (Csordas 1993:138).

Astuti (1995:470) has noted for the Vezo of Madagascar, when they say where it is that they live, “they provide more than a description of the environment in which they live; they also outline a theory of how
(1994:199) has suggested that 'work' is a broad concept for many Melanesian societies. Work or *oko* for the Gogodala is what village people invariably label their purposeful activities and movements. Travelling between the garden or sago swamp and the village is *oko*, as is caring for children or collecting fish from the nets. *Oko kalakalabega* or 'hard work' covers the more strenuous activities of sago-making, building houses or making gardens. Women and men agree that both sexes work very hard. A couple of women in Tai village proposed that although building houses was 'heavy work' it was not necessarily hard work and certainly no more arduous than making sago. They suggested that although women and men did different types of work, both types of work were difficult.

Sago swamps are not always readily accessible and travelling between the swamp and the village can take considerable time either in a canoe or by foot. Women are responsible for the production and preparation of sago, from the finding and cutting down of the palm, to the cooking and preparation of the sago flour for eating. Although yams, taro, bananas and coconuts are also cultivated, the overwhelming reliance on the production and consumption of sago remains the most significant practice of village life. Sakuliyato once explained that “sago is important because its our life, because we live on sago”. She suggested that this underlies the significance of women’s work as most village families do not have access to a regular supply of money, and cannot buy the rice, tinned fish and flour available in the local trade stores. Sakuliyato said: “money didn’t come from our old people but sago came from our old people [ancestors]. It’s God’s plan [that] we are living on sago; some people are living on money; [and] some people [are] living on garden things”.

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*they came to be what they are, since what they do - and therefore 'are' - is determined by where they live*.

8 Sago (*Metroxylon sagu*) provides the majority of dietary energy for the Gogodala. Dwyer and Minnegal (1994:81) note that Dornstreich has suggested that sago promotes ‘mobile subsistence pursuits’ as it offers immediate returns for effort expended. Other writers, however, have argued that because of high returns on investment and the potential for long term storage of sago flour, sago-based economies like the Gogodala may ‘intensify and become sedentary’.

9 Kahn (1986) has argued that the Wamira people conceptualise their own identity through this intimate relation to taro expressed in similar ways to the Gogodala. She was told “We are taro people, but where you come from, people are money people” (Kahn 1986:154). Similarly, Dan Jorgenson (n.d:8) has noted
Two types of sago are planted: *ola baya* which is the type planted in the swamps and is the preferred sago palm; and *digidigi baya* which can be planted closer to the village near water wells, lagoons and gardens. Sago palms, and the land on which they grow, belong generally to the men who sit in the relevant clan canoes but trees are often planted by parents for both girls and boys. As a sago palm takes between fifteen and twenty-five years to mature, some forethought is required and careful parents make sure that children are well supplied with palms when they grow up.

Women, once married, usually make sago in their husband’s area, although my adopted mother and her sisters were in an unusual situation. Their father had been a *mamusi* (TP) for the early administration and had been given the lands around Tai as payment - as he had no sons, three of his five daughters and their husbands stayed in Tai village. They use the land and the surrounding sago swamps, all of which belong to them, but most of the Tai women also make sago in these swamps because the sisters decided there was enough to share with others (and did not want them to lodge other land claims).  

Garden foods are important for supplementing the sago diet and providing a different set of foods and tastes. Most of the garden foods are seasonal, although coconuts (*bau*), bananas (*dubali*), *solosolo* (a green leafy vegetable similar to spinach), and sweet potato (*kaima*) are available at most times of the year. Yams (*waisa*) and taro (*kokae*) are eaten in the later months of the year, usually from August until November. Some pineapples and watermelons are also grown as is sugarcane (*ai*).  

There is also a particular type that the Telefolmin argue that there is an everyday link between taro and people, and that they identify themselves explicitly as ‘taro people’. They also draw comparisons between themselves as taro gardeners and other neighbouring groups who grow and eat mainly sweet potato suggesting that “a diet of sweet potato is the price such people pay for their laziness or improvidence as gardeners” (Jorgenson n.d:9).

10 The husbands and sons of these sisters are not, obviously, in the clan canoe that claims these lands. But because the women have proved generous with the land, others in the village have not tended to dispute their claim of ownership. My mother’s husband, Mala, moved over to Tai when he married Kukupiyato leaving his own considerable lands at both Kotale and Dogono villages. He still has first claim on those lands but in a couple of generations time, that claim will have less veracity as others are currently working and caring for the land.

11 There is no indigenous term for pineapple or watermelon as both are recently introduced.
of tree which produces soft green leaves, *seniwa*, which are picked while very young and eaten with sago, fish and coconut cream.

Men are seen as the primary gardeners although women often have their own gardens with which they can help supplement the main diet of sago. Nowadays, there are no restrictions upon the gender of the planter or harvester of the garden produce, and both women and men go the gardens at various times.\(^{12}\) Previously, men were primarily responsible for the planting and harvesting of yams particularly; Nakeyo Kakana once suggested that yams and sago represent the two most important Gogodala foods ‘from the beginning to now’.\(^{13}\) Even now there are particular ways in which people are required to harvest yams, ranging from abstaining from sexual relations the night before planting yams to the particular method by which the yams are dug up.\(^{14}\) Yams are planted in the central mound of the gardens, interspersed with banana trees, although Nakeyo suggested that yams grew better when planted on their own. As yams are acknowledged to have spirits, he said, thorny plants like pineapples have the capacity to scare them away.\(^{15}\)

Gogodala still practice the mound and ditch agricultural system which characterised gardening on the south coast of Papua for many years.\(^{16}\) Frank Hurley, an Australian photographer and adventurer who travelled up the Aramia

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\(^{12}\) Although women who are menstruating or pregnant for the first time, that is they are ‘new people’, they are at a stage in their lives where they pose considerable danger to the fertility of the garden vegetables.

\(^{13}\) It seems that yams formerly had more ceremonial significance than they do in the contemporary context. This was especially the case for the secret knowledge which *Aida* men had about the healing possibilities of yam medicine, *gagaga*. This yam medicine was the means by which *Aida* men could return life into the recently dead. I discuss the story of the first Aida later in this chapter and elucidate the role of yams in *Aida* ceremonies.

\(^{14}\) Nakeyo said that having sex before planting yams ensured that the yams would not ‘bear fruit’ or grow properly. Also he said that when the yams were ready, there would be thorns all over them making them impossible to harvest.

\(^{15}\) It seems fair to suggest that the significance of yams as a ceremonial and ritual food has been largely undermined with the breakdown of the cycles of male initiations and *Aida* ceremonies of earlier days. As I will elaborate on later in the chapter, yams were part of secret male initiatory practices in which they were a special type of ‘medicine’. No other plants, including sago, are said to contain spirits like yams. Jorgenson (n.d:8-9) has a similar belief among the Telefolmin in which taro is said to have spirits that, like the yams for the Gogodala, unless they are treated well and harvested properly, abandon people to hunger.

\(^{16}\) Swaddling (1983:27) notes that, unlike other groups in the south coast, Gogodala still use these gardening methods. She also points out that, although they rely on sago as the primary crop, a lot of time is expended on gardening (using techniques like some Highland groups).
River between December 1922 and January 1923, described a Gogodala longhouse and the surrounding gardens:

[on] going ashore at the village new scenes of wonderment were to unfold. The village which comprised a single large communal house, was built on the crest of one of the rises. It was enriched by a well laid out and kept garden, and by grass free paths. The gardens which encircled it gave it an air of great homeliness. Taro grew alongside crotons, Dracaenias Colei and potatoes. Arranged along the centre of the beds were uprights over which yams trailed, giving a very charming effect to the gay colored ornamental shrubs (Hurley in Specht and Fields 1984:124).

A. P. Lyons (1926:335), Resident Magistrate of the Western Division, described these gardens in some detail in 1926:

[at] right angles to the sides of the quadrangle [around the longhouse] and the approaches, long rectangular beds (e-i) are made by loosening the topsoil and heaping it up into mounds. Topsoil from the intervening spaces between the beds is added. The best are usually from 10ft. to 12ft. wide.

Lyons (1926:336) noted that in these big gardens men planted two types of yam, taro, bananas, sugar cane, coconuts and betelnut. Separate tobacco gardens were cultivated which, like betelnut, are not generally planted anymore.\(^\text{17}\) Sika or kava was also grown and used in the area before the missionaries came. In those days, the Gogodala gardeners used a combination of ashes, chewed betelnut, lime and pig dung, as well as human faeces, to fertilise these gardens (Lyons 1926:336). Today, gardens are built close to new toilets or on the sites of old ones as well as on the site of old houses.

\(^\text{17}\) Some young men grow small amounts of tobacco and betelnut and some of the elderly men who never gave up smoking tobacco do also. Young men usually smoke mutrus (TP) tobacco which can be purchased from local trade stores for 20 or 30 toea per cigarette. Spear Gold tobacco packets are also available and are usually rolled in newspaper or leaves.
Fishing and hunting provide valuable and tasty supplements to sago and garden foods. Fishing is done primarily by the women and they spend some time each day, particularly early in the morning or late in the afternoon, setting and checking their nets, hooks or traps in the lagoons or rivers. There are several methods which women use, depending on their intention and the level of the water in the lagoons or river. *Saeiya*, a large fishing net made from cane, is used for blocking creek mouths and catching large numbers of fish and can often be as tall as a person. Other smaller types of nets are used to scoop small fish (*pilipili*) out of the water when they are in season in the lagoons. Metal hooks or *tudi* are used for much of the fishing and are purchased from Balimo or Moresby. Long commercial nets are also purchased at Balimo and are considered very valuable items, as they allow women to catch plenty of large fish from the river rather than the lagoon.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{18}\) *Tiya* is the general Gogodala word for these types of fishing nets. They used to be made of *seniwa tao*, the bark of the *seniwa* tree and cane but are now usually bought from the tradestore at Balimo made from vinyl thread.

\(^{19}\) These nets are stretched across the river and catch the barramundi and catfish which frequent the river at certain times of the year. Poison called *jaeiti* made from the roots of a particular plant is still used to catch large numbers of fish for a feast or Church gathering. Men and women participate in such an event. Women also make bamboo traps called *kabo*, and turn sago sheaths upside down to catch the mud fish which hide...
Fish form the basis of the protein eaten by most Gogodala as women generally catch several small fish each day. These fish are usually divided between large families; and when the water is high in the lagoons and rivers, fish are harder to catch. Men hunt *suliki* or freshwater eels and prawns (*sasagawa*) at night, using multi-pronged spears called *menekata* to catch them. Men also hunt wallabies (*gauba*), wild pigs (*wai*) and other small marsupials such as flying foxes and *kabiya*, or scrub wallaby, usually hunting at night. When hunting wallabies, however, they often gather as a group during the day and burn the surrounding grasslands in order to flush out the animals. Fish and game are more accessible in some villages than others. In Tai and surrounding villages, the numbers of wallabies and wild pigs being caught by village hunters have declined considerably since the availability of guns and bullets. On the other hand, villages like Kotale along the Aramia River often have large numbers of wallabies in the surrounding grasslands. Likewise, villages situated along the Aramia River also have access to more fish throughout the year than their counterparts in villages based around lagoons.

In Tai, Oseke and Dogono, however, there are several cows which roam the lands adjacent to the Aramia River and which came to these villages about twenty years ago during a cattle project which was initiated at Balimo Vocational Centre and purchased by the women in exchange for sago bundles. The herds have grown considerably since then and at Tai village alone the number of cows was estimated to be close to two hundred. Cows are killed for village feasts, such as at Christmas, or bought by people from surrounding villages. 20 Cows are also killed and cut up, each piece of meat being sold individually at the markets in Balimo. Eating beef in Tai village is now more common than consuming wallaby or wild pig. Despite this, meat is not eaten frequently and fish remains the primary protein supplement of most village people.

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20 Whole cows are bought by people putting on feasts of their own, to celebrate marriages or commemorate someone's death.
Women are responsible for the making and preparing of sago for their families (which often incorporates parents and parents-in-law). Men are the primary house-builders, gardeners and hunters and they often care for the children when their wives are away in the swamps making sago. When the sago or fish is collected and prepared, there is also firewood to fetch and cut and clothes to be cleaned. Both men and women often complain about the harshness and effort involved in their type of lifestyle, in contradistinction to mine specifically and white people more generally.

Sawiya-women and Saida-men

Saida and Sawiya

In the time of the ancestors, not only were places, humans and other beings created and named, gendered practices were explored. Many of the activities associated with the production and consumption of food were established. The ancestors, through these practices and experiences, created and explored certain notions of ‘maleness’ and ‘femaleness’ and established activities which became associated with women and men. Sawiya, a female ancestor, and Saida, a male ancestor, emerge as particularly important for the constitution of gender-differentiated activities. Sakuliyatato explained that Sawiya “did everything for women and Saida did everything for men”. As a result “men are called Saida men and ladies are called Sawiya women - [because] those first people called us those names”.

Sago was brought by the ancestors: sago seeds were planted along both sides of the Aramia River by Waliwali, from the Lalamana clan, after being carried originally by Kelaki (Wabadala clan).\textsuperscript{21} As Waliwali journeyed up the Aramia River in his canoe, he threw the seeds onto both sides of the river. These seeds were distributed unevenly: one side of the river receiving plenty of ‘good sago’ and the other side receiving few seeds. This distribution of sago seeds

\textsuperscript{21} As a result, sago sits in both Lalamana and Wabadala clans.
reflects the relative abundance of sago on the north side of the Aramia and the paucity of ‘good’ sago palms on the south side.\textsuperscript{22}

If a male ancestor was the first to plant the sago, Sawiya, a woman, was the first to cut down the sago and pound and wash the pith; laying the foundations for the practices of future generations of Gogodala women.\textsuperscript{23} At a particular place on the Aramia River, Sawiya chopped down a sago palm and processed the sago using her feet to wash the sago pith.\textsuperscript{24} The crossbars with which she washed the sago pith are still visible.

Sawiya: you know she just saw the sago standing up but Waliwali just plant them or something like that. And then Sawiya just cut down the sago down, [and] start[ed] making sago. She was the first woman. Not a man. Man is just planting, woman is doing (Sakuliyato Kawaki, Tai village December 1995).

Sawiya’s role in processing the first sago palm, as well as several other characteristically ‘female’ activities, is talked about as the primary reason for the gendered division of labour in local villages.\textsuperscript{25} Sawiya is a central figure in the ancestor stories and she is often exemplified as representative of ideal womanhood by both women and men. In these stories, Sawiya sets out the template of Gogodala women’s lives: she is the first woman to make sago, she goes fishing using the methods and equipment still used by many contemporary women, and she prepares food for her brothers - displaying the capacity to nourish and provide for her family.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Bani also came spreading sago seeds throughout the area in his travels.
\item \textsuperscript{23} van Baal (1966:278-80) notes that among the Marind-Anim, there was a female ancestor called Harau who was the first woman to make sago. She made sago, showing the other women how to do it - who, until that time, had not known how to make it.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Kitakitaiyabagosa, on the western side of the Aramia River near Ali village, is the place where Sawiya cut down and harvested the palm and the sago fronds that she used to wash the sago pith are still there. Sawiya used her feet to squeeze the pith which is a method of washing sago that is unique to this area of Papua New Guinea. The Boazi of Lake Murray, the Suki to the south west, the Keraki of Morehead River and the Kamula to the north use this method of processing sago, as do the Kairi of the Kikori River in the Gulf Province (Swadling 1983:36).
\item \textsuperscript{25} Also visible are the fishtraps that she used. Nakeyo Kakana explained to me that; “[t]he things that she has done in the olden days they turned into stone, big stones, big rocks. When this water comes down, high tide comes down, when you see the big fishtrap, that’s the place where she used to catch fish with the fishtraps”.
\item \textsuperscript{26} In one of the stories, Sawiya is portrayed as a generous sister who lends one of her dogs to her brother so that he can punish his parents for their miserly ways. The parents are suitably punished for hiding their
\end{itemize}
Christianity and gendered expectations of missionaries have served to consolidate the values of these activities. Although women's activities and responsibilities have been transformed by their colonial and postcolonial experiences, explicit expressions of links with female ancestors like Sawiya constitute an enduring connection to the past. In sermons at women's ECPNG conferences at both Uladu and Balimo, images emphasised the virtues of hardworking women. Kamo explained it this way: "that [is why] these [Gogodala] women copy all these things from her, because she did them". Noting that, in other Provinces, men fish as well as hunt and women look after the gardens, Kamo emphasised that for the Gogodala "it is different because Sawiya did it". Kamo made this kind of comment to distinguish Gogodala communities from others in Papua New Guinea. This is not, however, the usual context in which such an identification with Sawiya is expressed: village women referred to Sawiya as their 'big mum', the woman who had initiated the kind of activities that form the basis of their lives and rendered them significant in the ancestral narratives.

Saida, Sawiya's afore-mentioned male counterpart, is not as clearly the embodiment of masculinity or the progenitor of contemporary male activities. Saida was the son of Kelaki, Wabadala's first male ancestor. After having a sexual relationship with his own mother, for which he was killed by his father

biggest fish from their son, and consuming these fish when alone. Sawiya, on the other hand, displays her generosity by preparing the largest fish for her brother to eat. In another story, she prepares food for Waliwali while he teaches young men associated with Aida. When Sawiya left Waliwali and started travelling along the Aramia River: "she put this mewa baya [fish wrapped in sago], a big bundle of food, she put it on the end of the house and she told Waliwali she was going to Widama. She did her job as a woman, cooked the food for her brother" (Sanada Giliwa, March 1996). In another version, she prepares kane baya, a definitive feast food made of sago grubs wrapped in sago and smothered in coconut cream. Both mewa baya and kane baya are seen as 'good' food that helps people to grow and keeps them strong.

27 Macintyre (1989:164) notes that although the people of Tubetube were originally traders, during the colonial period they became more focussed on gardening.

28 Shirley Home (1962:15) in her fictitious account of precontact Gogodala village life writes: "[y]oung girls, with a future of freedom that was to surpass all other wonders and changes that they were to see, came slowly back to the longhouse and the ways of living that they hated, but from which they could not free themselves. They were held by it - it had to go on. Only ONE could change it. His power to break these chains had been for twenty centuries and no one had told them". Pino, the Gogodala woman from whose life Home constructs her account, becomes a Christian and begins to practice her daily activities free from the 'shackles' of her past beliefs. This is a common theme in the contemporary sermons delivered by female missionaries at women's ECP conferences. These daily practices have changed little since the time of Pino and her peers.
Kelaki, his limo or spirit went to Wabila, the place of the dead. At Wabila, Saida married Dalogo (Miwasa’s wife) and the first Gogodala woman to die. Saida was an Aida dala (Aida man), a notion less relevant for contemporary notions and experiences of masculinity.

The original Aida was a man from the Wagumisi clan called Bebema who followed a kabiya, a scrub wallaby, to Bolame near Ugu village. The wallaby was a man called Uwa or Giwaleya from the Wabadala clan who wore the skin of the kabiya to hide his identity from Lekeleke, Bebema’s wife. While Lekeleke was making sago alone in the swamp one day, Uwa crept up on her and raped her. Lekeleke told her husband about this and he came with her the next day prepared to kill the kabiya. When Uwa came close to Lekeleke, Bebema shot him with a spear and the kabiya ran away. Bebema followed and came to a longhouse that he had never seen before. The wallaby/ man had disappeared. Instead, an old man told him to go inside the house.

Then Uwa [the old man] asked him “Are you a man or a little boy?” And then Bebema said “No, I’m a man”. From there he told him: “Go on to the other side of the door”. From there, this Bebema went into the house. And this Uwa changed into a very big man and he was going into the door and he was really tight to go into the door, because he was a very big man. And [he] told Bebema [to] get up and then Uwa, he was called (what they call these big men) Aida, he was a real Aida man (Busali, Dogono village April 1995).

Then Uwa taught Bebema how to chew ema or betelnut and gave him Aida lopala or ‘Aida things’ in a container with a Kanaba design on it. Eventually Uwa taught Bebema the most important secret of the Aida men; how to use the yam medicine to bring people back to life. Bebema then went back to his village and taught the other men how to become Aida men. Bebema died after being bitten on the bottom by a snake which was set there by a disgruntled villager.

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29 Before the ancestors reached the Gogodala area, they killed Saida and left his body floating in the water. His two sisters, Genama and Baiyada rescued him and brought him back to life. After he ate their pig, however, the sisters threw Saida out of their house and he joined his father’s canoe. Here he had a sexual relationship with his mother, Oleke, Kelaki’s wife.

30 In Chapter 2, I outlined the story of Miwasa and Dalogo and the experiences of Miwasa when he travelled to Wabila to try and find his wife. See also Appendix C for a more detailed account.
The initiated men who found his body took all of the Aida things and went around the other village teaching men about the Aida lopala. (See Appendix E)

Saida was also a giant who made the floors of the longhouse bend as he stepped on them like Uwa in the story above. Saida was reputed to have a long penis which eventually scared his wife away. And he was a man who knew how to drink kava, chew betelnut, sexually initiate other men and who had knowledge about the bringing the dead back to life. As the male ancestor who ‘did everything for men’ like Sawiya did for women, however, Saida is being undermined by contemporary experiences of masculinity which have little to do with the Aida ‘big men’ of the past. The last male initiation rituals were performed in the 1930s, before the memories of living narrators and elders. The enormous influence of the APCM missionaries on ritual life and practices, which were primarily the expertise of men, and self-conscious determinations of an indigenous Christianity have meant that today’s ‘big men’ are more likely to be deacons in the local Church or Land Mediation Officers like Mala Sogowa.

In previous chapters, I looked at the extent to which mission preoccupation with the longhouses as the site of male activities, in combination with increased contact with the Australian administration based at Daru, had already resulted in the breakdown of many village and ceremonial practices. Young men in particular were targeted by recruiters in the pearling industry and plantations (Weymouth 1978:57-60). Much of the early carving and painting of canoe designs was connected to men’s participation in male initiation ceremonies and many of the daily experiences of men at this time revolved

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31 When Miwasa first reached Wabila in search of his wife Dalogo, he found Saida sitting at the boundary of the living and the dead wearing the skin of an old man. Miwasa did not recognise him and went into the house where the other men were sitting. Saida then sent his wallaby skin mat with a Kanaba canoe design on it in to Miwasa. Miwasa was too scared to sit on the mat, however because it moved by itself and was ‘alive’. Then Saida sent in betelnut and lime in to the house for Miwasa to chew. Again Miwasa was scared because these things were alive. Then Saida sent his penis “big penis underneath the floor, it came through the wallaby skin and into Miwasa’s bottom” (Sanada Giliwa, March 1996).

32 Both Macintyre (1989) and Brison (1995) note that men, in particular, and their practices were construed by missionaries as more threatening than women’s activities. In Tubetube, male leaders were “rendered impotent” while women retained control as managers of food production and consumption (Macintyre 1989:167-8). For the eastern Kwanga of East Sepik Province, certain conceptions of male strength and leadership were undermined (Brison 1995:157).

33 The hats (diba) which were put on boy’s heads when initiated were worn less and less by young men, and male initiations and canoe races were held less frequently. (Weymouth 1978:59-60).
around their ritual lives, the carving of ceremonial and everyday objects, and the chewing of betelnut or drinking of *sika* (kava). Men no longer use Saida as an example of what Gogodala men do and therefore are and, like the women, are entreated in Church and men’s conferences to strive to be good and hardworking gardeners, hunters and Christians. Nevertheless, the idea of Sawiya and Saida as the ancestors who initiated certain gendered practices remains.

**Engendering people**

Bodily images and idioms often produce and delineate distinct sets of relationships between groups of people, and between people and places. This type of imagining is integral to people’s perceptions of themselves, their histories, experiences and their places - through their bodies which are constructed from the ingestion, collection and production of food, the bearing and caring of children, the creation of gardens or the hunting of wallabies.

Jolly (1991:48) has suggested that for people of south Vanuatu, “[t]he human body, the products locally produced by human effort, and the land itself are conceived as intrinsically and substantially connected”. Gogodala people also articulate an embodied link between places and foods produced on them. The connection posited between their difficult lifestyle and their bodies is usually expressed in two ways: through the experience of places in the course of daily activities, and through the overwhelming importance of the consumption of sago. The difficulties associated with everyday life and movement produces a

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34 Indeed, Saida has more recently been likened to Jesus as a man who could perform ‘miracles’.

35 Using Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the intimate connection between the existential environment and the human body, the latter having a unique sensitivity to the former, and the essential ‘openness’ of the human body, Carol Bigwood asserts that the body is not closed, fixed or essentialised. This body, she writes, is not static but rather constantly being transformed through its interactions with the environment, other bodies, actions and so on (Bigwood 1991:62). Bigwood is contributing to a long running discussion in feminist literature as to the nature and location of the gendered body: many feminists have argued that to speak of a feminine body as a constant throughout history is problematic - there is no fixed, experiential basis on which this continuity of this body can be built (see Jacobus, Fox Keller & Shuttleworth 1990; Bordo 1990; Martin 1990; Kirby 1991).

36 She writes that strong foods produce strong and capable bodies, but the strength of the food derives from its ‘rootedness’ - from being grown on the place. Local food grown on local places mediate between people and their land (Jolly 1991:48).
specific type of body, one deemed ‘fit’ for the environment; hard, strong and muscular. Sago is also integral to this process, providing energy and strength to weary bodies.

Gogodala bodies are the corporeal expressions of the intimate connection between people, places and sago. ‘It is hard for us’ is a common expression and mostly used when village people are talking about their everyday activities. This association between the type of place and ‘way of doing’ (Astuti 1995:471) is an enduring one. Sakuliyato told me that “village people, you don’t see them growing fat because they are working hard” and their ‘blood’ is moving around.37

The first day that Charles and I arrived in Tai village to stay with Sakuliyato, she and Kukuwa took us straight to the garden place on an island some minutes away. To get there, we had to cross a muddy and soggy area of the lagoon at the back of their house which was usually covered by water during the wet season. When we arrived, we picked some watermelon and a couple of other foods and walked back to the village. Upon sitting down at the house, cross-legged on the black palm floor, it was discovered that my legs had been scratched by the long grass on the sides of the rough path we had just traversed. There was much discussion about this, most of which was beyond our understanding at that stage, but the general feeling was that we were going to have a difficult time in the village if we couldn’t even go to the garden without being injured.

37 Smith (1994:211) has noted that Kragur people talked about the heaviness of their bodies when they were forced into inactivity. He writes “[m]any say that it makes them physically tired and their blood sluggish or congested (in pidgin, blut lfas)”.
When, the next day, I was taken to make sago for the first time, the women chose a spot relatively close to the village so that the day would not be too arduous for us. It was hot and muggy and just getting to the sago palm was enough to make us sweat and pant. The tree, baya i, had already been cut down,

Figure 20. The palm has been felled; Sakuliyato and Agi begin peeling off the bark

and a section of the bark neatly peeled off with an axe.\textsuperscript{38} When we arrived, Sakuliyato and my adopted mother, Kukupiyato, tried to set up an area in the muddy, inundated lagoon grass on which I could sit and watch the sago being made. Kabiliyato, Giliwa’s young wife, and Sakuliyato began pounding the pith of the sago palm with their sago mallets (sau).\textsuperscript{39} As the day grew steadily hotter, Igato and Webowato, their children, stripped off and played with the water well which was to become the place where the sago pith would be washed. Their squeals intermingled with the grunting of the two women as they hit the pith

\textsuperscript{38} Once the mature palm is selected, easily identified by the unusual bare branches which protrude above the leaves at the top of the tree like a person’s ‘hands’ above their head, it is chopped down and falls neatly into the cradle of sago palm leaves already laid out to cushion the fall. Taking the skin or bark off in neat sections, each woman selects her own part and strips the heavy bark from the starchy pith underneath.

\textsuperscript{39} These sago mallets are made from bamboo in the form of a triangle held together with twine, and have a metal rim at the end of the pounding implement which penetrates the hard pith and chops it into crude chunks. Each woman has several mallets and will often hand down a good sau to their daughter or daughter-in-law. The metal ends are particularly prized and passed on down lines of women.
with mallets, their bodies glistening with sweat and the pink and white flicks of

Figure 21. They pound the sago pith into rough chunks

![Image of people pounding sago pith]

the sago.40

When the section of the long trunk of the palm had been reduced to rough chunks of starchy pith, Kukupiyato invited me over to have a go. Less than gracefully, I made my way across the hastily constructed (and reinforced) pathway of sago branches to the fallen palm and sat on the frame made from sago sheathes facing the exposed pith. Placing my legs about thirty centimetres apart on the pink pith, I started pounding it with the mallet. Within minutes I was tired and my hands were slippery with sweat and the crushed sago. My agi, mother, and Sakuliyato looked both amused and a little concerned at my efforts to last more than a few moments. Soon however, agi removed the mallet from my grasp and pointed to the large blister already appearing on the heel of my hand. She grabbed my hand and caressed the soft, white palm saying ‘sorry for

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40 Women use a particular call when locating children or other women in the swamp (as well as the village or bush) when visual conditions are poor. It is a loud sound, the name being drawn out into a long ‘oo’ sound at the end. For example, my mother would constantly call to her grandchildren in this way, yelling out ‘Webowatoooo’ or ‘Igatooo’. They in return would yell ‘Auwaaaaaa’, (grandmother) raising the last letter of the name and drawing it out.
her - her hands are very soft' in Gogodala. She pointed to her own hand, toughened and stained from years of sago-making and laughed.

Somewhat offended but relieved, I retreated back to the original perch and watched while the three women began to pile the pith into large, porous bags made from sago fronds. They filled each bag and carried them over to the washing structure, again constructed from the strong sago sheathes. Then

Figure 22. Sakuliyato washes the sago pith, standing on a platform above a bark container

dipping a small container into the water, each woman placed the bag on two of the branches laid parallel to the small hole in the ground filled with muddy swamp water, and poured several container-loads of water into the top of the bag. Stepping onto the slightly elevated structure (see Figure 22), Sakuliyato began to squeeze the bag between her feet and lower legs forcing the water to
run from the loosely woven bag. The water that came out was thick and pink, falling into a bark container or *balago* below the washing apparatus. This, I was later to discover, was the sago cream being washed from the pith inside the bag and which, when dry, became the sago flour to which I was already becoming accustomed. After each bag has been washed about three times, the pith is tipped out and more, freshly-cut pith placed in the bag to be washed. When the water is drained away from the *balago*, the wet clumps of sago flour are exposed in the bottom of the container. Before it dries, the sago is scooped into another type of bag, or wrapped in banana leaf bundles and taken home. On the following day, the work begins anew on the next section of the palm until it is completed. This method of washing sago using their legs is unique to Gogodala and a few neighbouring groups like the Kamula. Weymouth (1978:15) has suggested that Gogodala women use this method to facilitate a larger yield of sago flour as access to sago swamps is difficult.

I didn’t see the end of this process, however, for my first experience of making sago came to an early end as I was tired and very hot. Charles had spent the morning at the garden place with the men and met us at the sago swamp for lunch, after which we traipsed back to the village under escort of Kukuwa while the three women continued the process, finishing the washing of the section already cut. Our trip to make sago was the topic of the everyone’s conversation for several days and the women in particular would make comments about it, laughing and describing my attempt at pounding the pith. It was one of the first indications I had that my body was a significant site of perceptions about me, my character and my capabilities.

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41 Having already established an appropriate site for this procedure, she cleared the brown but clear swamp water into a small well and set up sago fronds as crossbars. Stepping up onto the crossbars, Sakuliyato poured some of the water through the neck of the open bag and then began to stamp on the sides of the bag.

42 Swadling (1983:36) writes that the Gogodala and Boazi use a “Western or Indonesian” sago pounder, with a bamboo or burnt wooden cutting edge, and a triangular frame held together by a ‘tensioned cord’.

43 One of the primary differences articulated by my women friends between myself and them was our bodies. Mine was soft and heavy and weak, while theirs were expressed as hard and strong. Both Miriam Kahn (1986) and Margaret Jolly (1991) mention that they were the subject of much discussion about their physical inability in living the lifestyles of village communities of Milne Bay and south Vanuatu respectively.
Although sago-making only takes about one week out of every three or four, it is very difficult work and women have to check their fishing nets daily, feed children and other family members, get water, wash clothes and chop firewood. Women’s bodies, not surprisingly, are tightly muscled in the arms and shoulders, developed through years of paddling canoes, carrying around logs and children, and making sago. Agi’s palms are callused and stained black from the sago juice, her legs are thin but strong and feet large with muscular toes also stained and scarred.

Men, women and children are light and agile and have an acute sense of balance; a necessity in the swamps and narrow canoes. As the area is flooded and the ground wet for much of the year, the ability to traverse large sections of slippery and muddy ground is vital and villagers move easily from place to place during this time. We would walk, usually with Sakuliyato, once a week into Balimo to buy some food and kerosene from the tradestores there -the return trip was about twenty four kilometres, which took us between four and five hours depending on the state of the path. When it had been raining, the mud was almost impossible to walk on without slipping over. My lack of basic skills in something like walking was attributed to my menebega (heavy) body which prevented me from moving quickly and surely across the tracks between the village and water well, or even between houses in the village.

Men’s bodies are similarly marked by their constant forays into the surrounding grasslands or bush, or the canoe trips between the village and the gardens. They too are characterised by strong, wide shoulders and muscular arms and thin legs. When Charles was taken to the garden, he and the others dug some of Giliwa’s new garden bed, turning it over in preparation for planting. When he and the others came back to meet the women at the sago place for a lunch of sago and fish, he stayed with us in the swamp when the men went back. His body, however, was also a constant source of talk and conjecture; being tall and slim he was seen as more physically capable than me. He could walk more easily in the mud, although also having terrible trouble moving around, and fared better in the gardens than I did in the swamp. Yet he too was characterised
as weak and soft, not having the same defined musculature on his back, arms and shoulders as the local men.

After this day, we expected to be included in some of the in the following weeks as we had been introduced to two significant arenas of work. We were not invited to join either the men or women again, however, in either the garden or sago swamp for the three weeks that we stayed in their house. For the villagers, we discovered later, it was enough that we had done these things in the first place - as white people, we were not expected to continue. It was circulated, with some laughter and excitement, that I had made sago for the first time and Charles had been to the gardens with the men. We were jokingly referred to as a ‘real Gogodala man and Gogodala woman’. Women in Tai and Balimo shook my hand with some emotion after being told that I had made sago, although they also laughed once the details of my activities in the swamp were made clear. Now, I was told, I could understand what being a ‘Gogodala woman’ was - because I had participated in what they do.

Producing and collecting food is the responsibility of every adult and village people’s assessment of their bodies and those of other people is based on a moral hierarchy of responsibility and capacity to do hard work. Sakuliyato told me that the reason she had been attracted to Kukuwa because he was reputedly a hard worker and she needed someone to look after her and her children. Smith (1994:210) argues that Kragur villagers of East Sepik, although they speak wistfully about a life ‘without effort’, dislike inactivity and idleness. He says that “[i]n short, Kragur people like to work” (Smith 1994:212). Gogodala people also like to be active and there is a high value attached to consistent, purposeful action.

For women, making sago is the most important activity. When a woman marries, she supplies sago for her husband (and often his family); many women expressed the responsibility they feel for the well-being of their families. Providing only sago, however, is considered insufficient to ‘grow’ their children and keep their husbands strong; fish and other supplements like coconut cream are seen as much more nourishing than plain sago. Women are also often
obligated to supply other women with young children and sick people within her husband’s family with fresh sago.44

When Kukuwa’s cousin-sister stopped making sago after the birth of her child and then did not take it up again when her elderly mother-in-law started looking after the boy, she was railed at for being lazy although she was obviously very sick. Several young cousin-brothers said to her; “What, are you a child that people have to carry you around and get your food”. People who do not work hard and fulfil their responsibilities to the members of their families are characterised as lazy, an epithet which is more often applied to women than men. Young, unmarried men are allowed to spend some years consuming the food produced by their mother or brothers’ wives and contributing little of their own effort. Young women, however, take on the responsibility of sago-making early and are often the main contributor to their own family by the time they reach their early teens, especially if there are many younger children to look after. Village women whose bodies are fat, soft and weak are considered to be irresponsible towards their families and towards other women, as female relatives are then obliged to feed the woman’s family.

Hard work and strong bodies are part of the same process, as the work of producing food and setting up houses translates into fit bodies. Girls learn from an early age that these jobs are part of their responsibility, and they get used to accompanying their mothers to the swamp, to check the nets or pick wild fruit in the bush. Sakuliyato once said that she felt sorry for her seven year old daughter, Tracy, as her life would be like her mother’s - difficult.

Girls like Tracy are taught to be aware of their bodily emissions when relatively young as a responsible girl is one who contains her own efficacy and shows respect for others who can be effected by it. When menstruating, women and girls try to stay away from the gardens and swamps and often will not even change their clothes in the same room as their husband or children. Stepping

44 Home (1962) wrote about the lives of precontact Gogodala women as very difficult. She writes: “When they were married [young women] they had to discipline themselves. If the water vessels were empty they must fill them from the swamp at least fifteen minutes from the village. If the wood pile were low, they must cut and carry in more from the bush. It was always best to keep the bags hanging under the eaves, firmly rounded and brimming with pinkish sago” (Horne 1962:34-5).
over a man’s garden at this time can kill the vegetables, as can picking fruit from a tree. Asthma is the disease given to men by women as men can contract it from a careless wife or mother who prepares food or makes sago while menstruating. One man in Tai village had a severe case of asthma, caught when he helped his wife give birth in the village. Nakeyo suggested that the method through which women make sago, that is by using their legs to wash the sago pith, puts men in danger of contracting short wind. Several women, however, disputed that saying that it was only cooked food which was vulnerable in this way and not unprocessed food like dry sago.

Nakeyo was very angry one day because a woman, who was pregnant at the time, stopped to pick and eat some fruit from his tree. As a result, the fruit tree stopped producing. He held both her and her husband responsible for the decline of his tree and the loss of the fruit. Sakuliyato complained to her mother-in-law that girls had become increasingly disrespectful and inconsiderate of others and the danger they posed. She told me afterwards that she told agi: “we Gogodala women are careful for our families, for our children, for our husbands; it is very hard for us”. Using the English word ‘responsible’ she reiterated that women could not even prepare or cook food, let alone fish or move about in canoes, while menstruating.

New people (tatatata) have to be similarly careful with their bodies as long as this state of being exists. Newly pregnant women (for the first time) and their husbands also cannot travel in canoes, fish or even bathe near the lagoons, primarily because the ugu in the water can cause terrible harm to them. Girls experiencing the menses can also be in danger, as can newly-married people.

Unless a new person, however, men are not subject to the same sorts of restraints as their female counterparts. When young they are encouraged to stay with their mothers, travelling with her and their siblings to the swamps, the bush and the lagoons. It only in their early teens that they become distinct from their mothers and start to travel around with other young men. The focus on the achievement of moral maturity, though, through marriage and children but also consistent effort in house-building, gardening and hunting, is also strong.
Sakuliyato’s comment about the importance of Kukuwa’s capacity to do hard work underscores the significance of such perceptions. Those young men who do not make their own gardens and houses go to Balimo and ‘spin’ - sit around and smoke *mutrus* (TP) cigarettes outside tradestores. These young men are referred to collectively as ‘fatherless boys’ and are considered to be highly unsuitable husbands for village girls, an issue I will discuss in more detail subsequently.

Gendered personhood revolves around efficacy - your own and others. People constantly comment on other people’s size and shape as they articulate things about their capacities as a person but also as a member of a clan canoe and family. A man who loses weight or gets asthma is an indication that his wife is not caring for him properly. One man at Tai grew ill while we were there in 1996 and Sakuliyato made comments that implied that his wife was giving the nice foods to her favourite son instead of sharing them with her husband. Men can also be blamed for their family’s misfortunes, however, as a younger man’s new wife lost weight shortly after moving to live with him and his parents and people talked about how he was not caring for her. The women also suggested that she should not work too hard or she would not able to have children.

Women are Sawiya *ato* and men Saida *dala* when giving a feast to thank the other group for something. *Nagala baya* or *nagala poko* are feasts in which a collection of men or women thank their male or female counterparts by cooking up a large amount of food. When the women of a village or several related villages come together and organise these ‘thank you’ feasts, they call themselves Sawiya women. In the same context, men call themselves Saida men. Food and its nourishing capacities fashion local bodies and people as much a work does; the two are intimately linked.

**Sago in your system**

Sago, as a food, is perceived to have certain qualities that make it possible for local people to undertake their everyday activities; in combination with other
foods like fish and coconut, it imbues people with strength. As Knauf (1989:223) has argued for many Melanesian societies, people tend to appreciate the physical energy expounded in subsistence activities “and the way this is converted into bodily substance to maintain health and well-being”. Food represents a central link between the body and wider cosmological and social relationships and, at the most basic level, assumes that whose food you consume are those who constitute your being (Knauf 1989:223). As Jolly (1991:46) has suggested for many parts of Melanesia, food renders the boundary between object and subject problematic through the process of production, exchange and consumption. Food “bears an intimate relation to the human body”.46

The substantial contribution that sago makes towards strengthening and energising peoples’ bodies is greatly appreciated. Sago was brought with the ancestors and was a substantial factor in their ability to settle down and build villages. The importance of sago is inscribed in the canoe designs, the gawa tao, in the form of a substance called saege.47 This saege or baya mo is either a precious white stone or the pinkish white colour of good sago. It was suggested that saege is “something like life for Gogodala people” because the process of ‘living on sago’ is such an important one.

The intimate corporeal relationship between people and sago is expressed in the story which explicates the original nature of the relationship between sago, the ground, and human beings.48 In this story, the first sago came

45 Knauf (1989:223) suggests that giving gifts of food transfers the force of it to someone else and is essentially a gift of oneself. In Melanesia, giving food as gifts is quite common; “notions of physical and spiritual force articulate the growth and development of the individual body almost intrinsic to the growth and development of the wider social group”. For the Hua of the Eastern Highlands, Anna Meigs (1984:20) argues that this translates as the nu or ‘vital essence’ of the person who produced it which inheres in the food itself. However, food is also nu in itself, in some senses, as it is seen to be “an effusion of the body and its labour”. Food is then the “indexical symbol of its producer or preparer by virtue of its association with that person, and an icon (albeit a conventionalized one) of objects perceived to be similar” (Meigs 1984:25).

46 Similarly, Anna Meigs (1984:17) has noted that food and its consumption for the Hua and many other people in Papua New Guinea is part of “symbolic representations of another reality”.

47 In the gawa tao of the clan Lalamana, the white surrounds of the central ‘eye’ of the design is called saege. I will explain the significance of this in Chapter 7. Baya mo is another word for very good sago and baya mo is a central part of Lalamana canoe designs as well.

48 Jolly (1991:52) similarly notes that in myths of the Sa of South Pentecost, Vanuatu, there is a constant identification of bodies and food. So that yams, taro and pigs are seen as being originally derived from various parts of the human body.
from the inside a man’s body after he had consumed some dirt. He defecated and the sago went into the ground and made itself into a sago palm.\(^{49}\) Kaemisi of Aketa village told me:

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\text{sago came out from somebody’s poo, a man’s poo. That sago, how it came and joined us. I don’t know [how] it came and joined to us. So that sago is coming out from the ground - that’s a ground name mabi. That mabi came out from the ground and sometimes this old people used to pick these mabi out from the ground and eat them [to stop diarrhoea]. And it [sago] came out through the man, in his poo and make himself a sago (December 1995).}
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Sago, then, constituted the link between people and their landscape in the ancestral past as it does today. The story of the origin of sago still resonates with consequences for contemporary Gogodala. Kaemisi and Kimama, the two old men with whom Sakuliyato and I were speaking, refused to tell me the ‘real’ words of the sago story lest some local people hear or read them and use them to prevent sago from growing. Because I was using a tape recorder to record the story of Aketa village, they were afraid that the nature of the relationship between people and sago would come to light. If it did, they told me, sago could ‘finish’ and this would have dire consequences for village people.

Many people have noted the close relationship posited by many Melanesian people between gendered foods and gendered bodies. Knauft (1989:225) has argued that in many places particular foods are gendered according to the “metaphoric associations of the food’s hardness, color, texture, shape or pattern of growth”. Paul Sillitoe (1983:172) noted in 1983 that the division of crops into gendered characteristics occurred in many areas in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.\(^{50}\)

\(^{49}\) Jolly (1991:52) argues that for the Sa, myths of origin relate the close embodied relationships between humans and food.

\(^{50}\) He argues that for the Wola of the highlands, however, these crops are gendered primarily in the process of planting and harvesting the food crops rather than in the consumption of them (Sillitoe 1983:173-4). Crops that grow vertically are associated with men, as strength and being able to stand erect are valuable ways of being for Wola men. Women, on the other hand, are associated with creeping and recumbent plants (Sillitoe 1983:175-6).
Sago is neither a male or female type of food based on its qualities of strength and hardness. Women, however, primarily control access to the sago which they produce and prepare and there is close relationship established between the mother and her children who, although in a different clan canoe, are grown on the products of their mother’s labour. The relationship between women and sago is talked about in the same terms as the intimate relationship between a married couple. Sakuliyato said that her mother always told her that sago was a man, and that making sago was a difficult process because the sago had to be treated carefully, ‘like a husband’. She was told that when chopping the sago pith (aso) she should take care, making sure that the pith does not fly around or the sago will ensure that the flour collected after a day’s work would not be plentiful.

Village people’s consumption of sago is seen as essential for their survival. Not only in the sense that there is no other type of staple food to replace it, but also in the sort of qualities which the eating sago induces in local bodies. The word for sago is baya which is the general term for any type of food, particularly bread. Kamo said that “sago is more than just food”, suggesting that Gogodala people needed sago to make them strong, to make them work. He explained that even plain sago, baya bapi, generates energy. He said that if people were to eat only coconut, for example, they would vomit because the presence of sago in the body is important. “You [Gogodala people] need sago in your system”. Kamo said that consumption of sago, and therefore having it in ‘your system’, is an integral part of being Gogodala.

51 This may not have been the case in precontact or early contact days. Wirz noted in 1930s that male initiates used to be fed a mixture of sago, banana and sperm sprinkled with hair from an old man’s beard wrapped in sago leaf by their mother’s brother. This ritual food was fed to the initiates to imbue them with “strength and vitality” (Crawford 1981:247). The hardness of sago may have been more connected to male bodies in these days. There is no clear distinction now.

52 Sillitoe (1983:186) also notes that Wola people would complain about being hungry, despite being bloated with food, if the recent meal had not included sweet potato. Similarly, when presented with simply a plate of rice, although it was extremely large, Gogodala people would insist on consuming it with a piece of sago - as with every meal.

53 Kahn (1986:110) argues that for the Wamira, taro and people are part of a death and regeneration cycle, inherently dependent on each other as the other constitutive part of the process, a fundamental process of life giving for the Wamira.
The strength of the sago derives not so much from it being a 'hard' food although, when cooked by itself, it is seen as offering little nourishment apart from basic energy. Rather, sago draws its qualities from the ways in which people, particularly women, expend energy to produce it and the intimate connection sago has to the places from which it is derived. The cycle of the consistent consumption of sago in order to be able to go out and make more sago is not lost on many village people, and women in Tai often complained about the hard work this entailed. One of the them noted that all they do as women is hard work and then they die and it is finished! The comfort of knowing that sago would feed everyone in the village, however, was also emphasised. Hence the constant reference to the Gogodala way of 'living on sago' rather than on money.

There are various ways and contexts in which different garden and lagoon foods are characterised as nutritious: foods designated as 'healthy' tended to be those which were thought to be crucial for 'growing a person'.\textsuperscript{54} This category of food is mainly talked about as 'greasy' food; having the capacity to make strong and healthy bodies but only if eaten in moderation - too much creates fat and unwieldy bodies incapable of sustaining the lifestyle. All types of fish caught in the lagoons and rivers are 'healthy' foods, as is tinned fish bought from the trade store. Kane or sago grubs are also in this category of food as is any type of meat, chicken, and milk. Coconut cream, is the main form in which coconut is eaten, is also considered to 'grow a person properly'. All types of sago which are cooked with coconut cream are considered to be healthy food. As these types of sago usually include meat or fish as well as the coconut cream, they are considered to be doubly effective in the growing of people. These foods, especially the meat or fish wrapped up in sago and soaked in coconut cream, are also the primary feast foods.

\textsuperscript{54} Meigs (1984) notes that for the Hua, the nutritional value of food is not commented upon - in contrast to Gogodala comments about the nutritional value of sago and other foods. She argues that instead the intrinsic value of food is homoeopathic, that is, it is valued because it resembles or is an icon of something else. This occurs in two ways: a substance develops effects similar to those qualities which it has; and secondly that a particular substance has a specific effect so that similar-looking substances will also have that same effect (Meigs 1984:23).
Western foods, which are available at the local trade stores in the villages and the urban centres, are also considered to be healthy and are increasingly included in the preparation of feast foods. Sugar, tea, flour, ‘Ox and Palm’ (tinned cornbeef), rice and tinned fish are recognised as having the same nourishing potential evident in the types of bodies which characterise those people who live mainly on these store foods. Sakuliyato said that store foods have ‘fats’ in them which most of the Gogodala foods do not and people who grow up living on these store foods develop butalabega or fat bodies.

Sago, despite its energising qualities, however, is not seen as particularly nourishing in itself. Sakuliyato suggested that if a person only ate sago, they would not grow. When cooked and eaten alone, in a dry pancake style or rolled up inside sago palm leaves, sago is a hard and dry food. Sakuliyato said that as a woman she did not feel happy about preparing baya bapi, plain cooked sago, for her husband and daughter. She said ‘He [her husband] works hard, he has to have good food at night’. She suggested that if she fed her husband only sago each night, he would lose weight and her daughter would not grow up properly. She would buy a packet of rice from the local tradestore sometimes if there was nothing else to feed the family, so that they would eat ‘good’ food. Banana, another frequently eaten food is also considered to be dry and hard, as are yams.

The dry and hard or greasy characteristics of these foods are explicitly articulated particularly in the context of illness in which bodies are obviously not well or ‘healthy’. There are certain types of ‘sickness’ which are common to most experiences of being unwell and they are classified primarily by the symptoms, or the physical effects, of the illness. Vomiting and diarrhoea constitute one particular manifestation of sickness as they are often experienced simultaneously; fever is another; stomach ache; and cough or asthma (‘short wind’). For each of these there are certain prescriptions about the types of food which will exacerbate the effects of them and this is mainly when foods are described as sweet, greasy, dry or hard.

Increasingly as these western foods become the basis of many of the foods served at feasts the men have become associated with the preparation of the rice, tinned fish or tea. The women continue to prepare the sago mixtures which are still central.
For most types of illness, ‘greasy’ foods like meat, fish and coconut cream are considered to be dangerous and the consumption of dry and hard foods is recommended. When a person has a fever, the eating of wild pig is thought to be very detrimental as the body will become very heavy and the fever will be increased. The person suffering from pains in the stomach is not allowed to eat coconut of any description, flesh, juice or cream. The coconut is believed to make the ache worse. All types of sago cooked in coconut milk are also restricted. The flesh or cream of coconut is not suitable for the person afflicted with diarrhoea and if she or he is vomiting as well, all types of fish and meat are forbidden. Only dry and hard foods like banana, plain sago and yams are recommended. Again coconut is forbidden to those sufferers of asthma or coughs as well as kane sago grubs and bodolo ‘water lily seeds’. These foods are believed to ‘have a cough in them’.

Other food prescriptions tend to be more to do with a person’s particular experience of a specific type of food or the way in which the food had been produced and prepared. Food can cause illness if it has been contaminated by either being stepped over once cooked, inducing in people asthma or ‘short wind’, or prepared by menstruating women. In early contact times, there seems to have been prescriptions on the types of clan animals and fish that could be eaten and by whom. At certain times, a person was not allowed to kill and eat the flesh of one of their clan animals although little detail is known. Pregnant women could not eat the flesh of the clan animal of their husband as it was thought capable of harming the child (Weymouth 1978:20). In her fictitious account of Pinos’s life, Shirley Horne details some of the pregnancy prescriptions. In the passage below, Pino attends a feast while pregnant for the first time.

Don’t worry” Said Pino, “I have cooked myself some plain sago, but what fashion is a feast when the best is taboo? You break it for me Taota. All these moons I have been an eating-only-the-middle-of-the-sago-person. Surely the spirits will give my baby long life”. Pino

56 So that as Jolly (1991:55) has argued for Vanuatu, it is the qualities of particular foods which renders them inappropriate for different categories of people. Although I would suggest that in this case, the context in which the food is being classified is just as significant.
carefully avoided too the red flesh of the cassowary ... lest the latter should be infected with scabies (Horne 1962:39).

Pino also avoids the fish wrapped in sago, the *mewa baya*, and the pig meat. Prescriptions on women today when pregnant for the first time, are few and much less rigid. Restrictions on food do not emphasise the dry or greasy nature of food but rather the shape of the food consumed. Pino’s reference to the breaking of the sago stick by another woman and her consumption of the middle of the sago only is interesting. Most newly pregnant women will not eat the ends of the sago stick as this is believed to plug up the passage for the baby to come out, a path which has not yet been made; eating the bottom of the coconut has the same effect.

The use of words like greasy, sweet, dry or hard to describe the different types of food is inherently contextual. The different properties of food are emphasised in one situation and de-emphasised in another. Sago is dry and hard when cooked alone but mixed with other foods, like coconut cream and meat, it becomes a healthy and nourishing food. In the context of illness, however, these foods are perceived to be healthy and are rendered dangerous to the already ill body; in which case, plain sago is considered to be much more effective. Plain sago is energising, enabling village people to go about their daily activities. Yet it is not sufficient to sustain people in their hard work without the complementing nourishing foods which grow people. The right balance of greasy and dry, soft and hard foods an important part of sustaining life in this environment. Women in particular spend a lot of their time trying to get the appropriate types of foods together to maintain the health of their families.

57 Before steel pans and pots were commonly used to cook flat, ‘pancake’ style of sago, plain sago flour was crumbled onto the middle of sago leaves until about thirty or forty centimetres in length. The leaves were then rolled into a long sausage shape, tied with strong grass and cooked over the embers of the fire. Once cooked and unwrapped, the sago stick was broken into pieces and eaten with coconut scrapings or water lily seeds (or whatever was available). Sago is cooked both this way and in the flat style, both of which produce very dry *baya bapi* (plain sago).
If hard food is indicative of a Gogodala lifestyle, many village people imagine that soft foods characterise the way of life practiced by the majority of white people and other urban Papua New Guineans. Jolly (1991:58) argues that the Sa people of Vanuatu characterise western foods as ‘soft food’. She suggests that this places western foods in the same category as taro; as a ‘feminine food’. For the Gogodala, however, western foods are not as neatly classified. There is no definitive category of male or female food; especially in terms of hard or soft foods. Western foods, then, although characterised as weak and conducive to soft bodies, are not seen as ‘soft foods’.

Most local people have had some contact with expatriate missionaries. Several have actually lived with various mission families, like Sakuliyato and Kennsy, particularly in the capacity of domestic workers. In this way, and through the experiences of others living in Moresby, Daru and other urban centres in Papua New Guinea, there has developed an image of the sort of lifestyle associated with white people and other urban dwellers - they just ‘sit and eat’. This is mainly because urban people have access to, and are said to ‘live on’, money while villagers ‘live on sago’.

If local people characterise their own way of living as ‘hard’, then non-village people are seen as having an easy life in which food is readily accessible, tasty and found in larger quantities. Sakuliyato said that some Tai women, while pounding or washing the sago in the swamp, complained about the continuing necessity to make sago and the difficulties associated with this process. They would say that they could not just sit around and eat or go to the store and buy

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58 Smith (1994:136) notes that Kragur villagers characterise white people as unable to carry heavy loads or to travel across rough pathways like the Kragur traverse everyday: “Further, they perform very little hard physical labour. I could not count the number of times Kragur people pointed out to me that whites carry everything in trucks and lift things with winches, while they have to carry heavy loads on their backs over steep and slippery bush trails”. Also, from the experience of living with Europeans in the capacity of ‘houseboys’ villagers know that Europeans do not generally do their own domestic labour either. Villagers describe their own place as *pies ston* in Pidgin ‘a hard or rocky place’ or *lus pies* - a ‘lost or far away place’ (Smith 1994: 136-7).

59 Kahn (1986:26) mentions that Wamira people of Papua New Guinea also talked about their pitiable lot in life in relation to the ‘good life’ of the town dwellers.
the food that they would like to eat; to be able to just ‘sit and eat’ like white people, not have to make or find the food first.

The food that urban people eat is considered to be ‘healthy’. Rice, tinned fish, sugar, tea, milk, flour and margarine are all seen as ‘good food’, foods which ‘grow’ people. People who ‘grow up’ on store goods, however, are those whose bodies are soft and heavy. As a result, white and other urban Papua New Guineans are seen as menebega ‘heavy’ and butalabega ‘fat’. The Gogodala term for white-skinned people is mukusanada - the same word for a particular type of ripe and light-skinned fruit.60

Inherent in this characterisation of urban dwellers’ lifestyles as easy is the high moral value accorded hard work. As I have suggested, work is highly valued among village people because it is through this people are able to maintain their way of life. People who participate in the everyday activities of finding, producing or preparing food, building houses and caring for children and elderly people are held to be ‘responsible’ people; corporeally represented as strong, thin and fit.

The notion that hard work is always valued above and beyond any other type of lifestyle is, however, constantly challenged by the perception that living on money is certainly desirable, and in some ways more efficacious. ‘Living on money’ as Errington and Gewertz (1996) note, makes one susceptible to outsiders’ control. Although white people particularly are characterised as fat, soft and weak, unable to participate in village life to any useful degree (as my own attempts to do so only confirmed), there is an acknowledgment that this does not make them any less powerful or useful in their own place or context. Once Kukuwa asked me whether I could ride a bicycle and his wife snapped back reminding him that not only could I ride a bike, I could probably drive a car and write on a computer. Kukuwa was chastened by this reminder of my own capacities.

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60 Jolly (1991:59) says that for the Sa, white people are called aisalsaliri ‘those who float’ and such mobility is seen as resulting in soft and flabby bodies.
I have already discussed in earlier chapters, particular imaginings of white people’s places and spaces are common. These places are seen as particularly powerful and are replete with money, other material goods and nice, plentiful food. Sakuliyato spent some time near Darwin staying with a missionary family, and had experienced the kind of excess she associated with white people. One day, she recalled, the family ate several large barramundi while their dogs ate two large catfish. Sakuliyato was horrified as catfish are a delicacy and very difficult to catch in local places - she could not believe the types of food consistently available. In the months before we left Tai to come back to Australia, she and Kukuwa joked with us about the nice food that we were going to eat when we got there, the car were going to buy, and the house we were going to live in.61

The ancestors were also powerful beings who were characterised by their huge bodies. Sanada emphasised that the original ancestors were “very tall, big people” - ‘giants’ was the English term that Nakeyo used to translate. Aida men like Saida and Uwa were described in the stories as so large (and presumably heavy) that the floorboards in the longhouses buckled and moved under their feet.62 Mala described Bani, another ancestor, as “a fat man and tall man [with] long legs [and] long hands”. Sosola was also a very tall man which drew European attention to him and led to his disappearance - there was a coconut tree in Oseke village that marks his remarkable height.

There are also certain images of gubali or ‘ghosts’ in many of the village stories which describe them as ‘very tall and fat’; they inhabit local swamp lands or islands like Gegasi near Tai village. New people are especially vulnerable to these gubali, as these powerful creatures can recognise anyone who trespasses. Gubali is also a term which many young children apply to white people.63 Like

61 Smith (1994:150) states that “most villagers consider white society vastly superior in its wealth, comfort, technological accomplishments, power, and mobility”.

62 O’Hanlon (1989:113) has noted that among the Waghi, men sometimes talked about their fathers and other male ancestors as ‘overpowering figures’: “deep-chested, straight-backed, massively bearded, red-eyed, hairy men, whose skin glistened when charcoaled for warfare. Noted warriors of the past were sometimes said to have been enormously tall”.

63 Karen Bickerton, an expatriate missionary and business woman at Balimo told me that she had an experience in which a child was very obviously terrified of her when she tried to pick it up. She had
these *gubali*, white people and urban dwellers have access to other sources of power through their experiences of these places. So that while urban people are perceived as having generally useless bodies in the context of the local environment and lifestyle, their more comfortable way of living is also seen as efficacious.

Weymouth (1978:332) argues in his thesis that, early in the relationship between white colonisers and locals, many of the Gogodala villagers realised that they were physically stronger and fitter than the Europeans. He notes, however, that the village people also realised that these white people had access to a different source of knowledge and power (Weymouth 1978:332). I suggest that such perceptions of white bodies and lifestyles are bound up in imaginings of white places and the significance that these have for lifestyle. In early chapters, I explored some of the ways in which local people imagine European spaces to be connected to Wabila as Australia and Bolame as New Zealand. When Sakuliyato’s older sister came over and stayed with us at Tai for a while (from Aketa), she began ‘making friends’ with a young man at Tai. He wanted to marry her, although she was several years older than himself, but Sakuliyato and her brothers became very agitated by this attention and warned him away. When I asked why they were so hostile about Yukamato getting married, Sakuliyato told that she had been married before but her husband had died while working in Moresby. There is some dispute, however, if he did die as, although his body was returned to the area and buried, many in the family were convinced that it was not his body that lay in the coffin. Because the family had not seen jokingly said to the women around the child that he obviously thought that Karen was a *gubali* ‘ghost’. She said that the women had become very quiet and embarrassed and later assured her that they were very sorry about talking about white people in this way.

Likewise, early expatriate visitors to the area acknowledged the physical capabilities and magnificent physiques of the Gogodala people - particularly the men. Many of the earlier visions of local women revolved around either their mourning dress, which covered much of their body, or the way in which they were ‘beasts of burden’ for their menfolk. In an article in the APCM newsletter, Shirley Snowdon (1968:5), expatriate missionary, wrote a poem in 1968 about Gogodala women: “Old Gogodala hag, how many graves conceal your children? How many fever-ridden nights have you yourself spent unattended, save for unkind scratches etched in ignorance. A throbbing head, for ease of pain, awake in weakness and take up for endless toil again”. Gogodala men, on the other hand, were described as the “finest physical specimens - broad-chested, strong and intelligent” (Price c.1944:8).
and prepared the body, there was some speculation that a particular friend of his, a white person living in Moresby, wrapped the body up and took him away to Australia where he is still living in relative ease.

Other urban Papua New Guineans, even those living in Balimo or Awaba, while not living in white places are still seen to be ‘living on money’. Gogodala people who work in Balimo as teachers, nurses or businesspeople are seen as having soft, weak bodies. Urban Gogodala can be labelled ‘floating grass’ under circumstances in which they are seen as becoming increasingly corporeally distinct from village relatives, despite sitting in canoes and being able to demonstrate ties with places and ancestors. They have the blood, skin and names which delineate belonging in canoes but they do not (and often cannot) do what their peers do. Belonging, then is not just about sitting in canoes metaphorically and through blood and names; but encompasses being in canoes in a more everyday, practical sense and thereby having the capacity ‘to do’.

When Kennsy came back from her stay in Australia with Karen and Paul (see Chapter 3), the day after she returned she was taken out by her mother, sisters and sisters-in-law to make sago. That night, her hands were blistered and sore, her back ached and she was exhausted but knew that she had been re-established as a capable person - and that people knew she had not forgotten how to make sago. When I was talking about my own experiences of making sago with Kamo’s wife, Genasi, she became embarrassed and confessed that her ten year old daughter had never made sago. Sakuliyato also confided that she had not made sago until she was sixteen because she had been staying with her sister, Yukamato, while the latter worked as a missionary’s domestic help, and they had lived on rice as well as sago.

Other Papua New Guineans who participate in village life in different parts of the country are classified as having similar experiences as those of Gogodala villagers. Important corporeal distinctions are, however, made. Villagers from the highlands area, with whom there has been some contact, are said to be differentiated by their consumption of sweet potato (kaima). Sweet
potato is classified as a relatively sweet and soft food in comparison to sago. Highlanders who live in villages and consume sweet potato are said to grow big and ‘fat’ but not soft, as they too live a village-based lifestyle. Highland bodies are then characterised as big and fat, yet strong and capable.

If ‘living on sago’ is empowering, it is also recognised by many Gogodala people to be a mixed blessing. Making sago, building houses and collecting other types of food is difficult, creating thin, light and strong bodies—a highly valued corporeal image. There is a realisation, however, that the ‘fitness’ associated with living on sago is emplaced in the local environment. The strength or power inherent in this type of body and lifestyle does not necessarily translate to other places. Other types of bodies, including those not valued highly in village situations, can be strong and powerful in this respect.

**Selling bodies**

Village life is constitutive of people’s bodies through the dual processes of producing and consuming sago and other foodstuffs. As such, local people posit an intimate relationship with their place through certain images of corporeal fitness and strength, a highly valued image. Unlike the Sa of South Pentecost, however, Gogodala villagers recognise that such notions of strength and ability are based on the embodied experience of village, garden, sago and fishing places, rather than on a sense of ‘rootedness’.65

The consumption of tradestore foods and ‘living on money’, although at times disturbing, is not seen as an entirely negative proposition. Gogodala people are proud of their hard life and strong bodies but they also recognise that soft and weak bodies can be powerful in their own context. Although eating western foods and ‘living on money’ represents a considerable transformation of people’s bodies and lifestyle, this corporeal softness is also seen as desirable in

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65 Jolly (1991:59) says that Sa people see the consumption of western foods and the living of this type of lifestyle to be essentially a lamentable proposition.
its own way. Yet development, and the ways in which it will generate money for the area, is seen as the means by which the unequal relationship between Gogodala people and white people will be dissolved and a new, more equitable relationship established. Kamo once said; "Right now, in a physical sense, we are living in poverty. When Jesus comes, we will be happy; but [for] now [we] need development".

Much of the confusion and uncertainty with which local people approach development and money came to the fore when Phillips Petroleum set up the test oil drill between Yau and Adiba. A house at Balimo was hired by Carson Pratt, the company that Phillips hired to set up the drill. Two men from Queensland lived at this house during their time in Balimo, flying by helicopter to the site everyday. Residents of Balimo started suggesting that these men were very 'rough' and that they brewed their own beer. It was intimated around Balimo that their local housekeeper, herself a Balimo villager, was giving them sexual favours in return for her job and money.

At the Women's Regional ECPNG Conference held in Balimo in August 1995, the women present were enjoined to ignore the seduction of money and the white men living in Balimo. The theme of the Conference was the book of Revelation, particularly the part pertaining to the sin and subsequent fall of the city of Babylon. When I went to Norma Briggs' (an expatriate missionary) sermon on the last morning of the conference, she equated the fall of Babylon with the problems of contemporary Papua New Guinea. She urged older members of the community to control the younger ones and put a stop to the smoking and drinking, otherwise the local area would become like the rest of the country.

Smith writes that the difficulty of acquiring money is a source of 'great concern' for Kragur villagers, although life still revolves around subsistence activities. Like the Gogodala, the Kragur often speak of their inability to sustain local businesses or instigate development or community programs (Smith 1994:155,159). In Balimo, three people have managed to sustain longterm business interests in the area; one is from the Southern Highlands, another from Kerema and the last is a 'mixed race' Gogodala man, Roy Biyama mentioned in Chapter 3.

Kragur villagers also suggest that they need 'a good strong dose of development' (Smith 1994:6). They talk about the fact that white people are 'superior' in their capacities to produce material wealth (Smith 1994:11).
Not long afterwards, an orderly at the Balimo Health Centre confessed in Church that he had a dream in which the grounds (of the Carson Pratt company house) were being frequented by local women ‘selling their bodies’ to the men from the oil company. The dream was taken as a revelation and local panic ensued. One local woman living on the premises was very scared and upset by the allegations, despite the fact that she had not seen anything happening.

In the following chapter, I look at the issue of development and money in terms of a ‘cultural revival’ which occurred in the early 1970s, in which a longhouse was built to house carvings and present Gogodala ‘culture’ in a particular form. The longhouse was and is more than simply a location for carvings; its spatial forms evoked discussions about the significance of the ancestral past, gendered spaces and knowledge, and reflections about local Christianity; as well as the significance of the practices discussed above. The revival resulted in the establishment of a Gogodala Cultural Centre, an idea that has continued into the present and underlies many people’s perceptions of development and custom.
Chapter 6

‘The selling days’

False idols
There was something like a revolution here - a cultural revolution. They were the selling days.
Kamo Bagali, Balimo April 1996

I recall the sermon Norma Briggs gave at the Women’s District Conference held at Uladu in March 1995. She began by stating that ‘false idols’ in God’s Church were to be destroyed, then she asked: “Why don’t we have Aida?” When none of the women gathered proffered an answer, Norma continued saying, “because we are God’s people and cannot have false idols in God’s Church”. Throughout the sermon, she derided unbelievers like those people at Mt Bosavi to the north who heard the Christian message but didn’t believe it. These people, she argued, are as stubborn and ignorant as those who still practiced Aida gi. Then pausing for effect, she posed another question to the waiting women: “Why do we have to change completely? Ladies, you cannot come to God with dirty clothes”.

At the time, I remember being surprised by this reference to Aida gi by Norma as I had not heard any comment about it before this instance. I want to situate the following discussion about the ‘cultural revival’ in this context, because the issues and debates that arose out of it are germane twenty years later.

When I attended the women’s conference in March, I had not even visited the longhouse which was under construction in Kini village (close to Balimo). Indeed, it was not until June 1995 that we finally travelled across to Kini and saw the Cultural Centre (longhouse). We had been told about the longhouse by people at Tai and Dogono but they had evinced little interest in taking us there; many them had not seen it for themselves. It was not until Charles and I struck up a friendship with Nakeyo Kakana, who worked at Ewa
Saba for a period of time, that we finally resolved to go to Kini. Nakeyo, who later introduced us to his elder brother Kamo, was from Kini village although living with his wife’s family at Balimo, and he was eager to show it to us. When we got there, the longhouse was only partially constructed: only a small section had a roof. Although only a small version of the original longhouses, it was still an impressive sight.

This was the beginning of a discussion with Nakeyo and Kamo about the role of the longhouses in the Gogodala ‘customary ways’, couched in terms of carvings painted with gawa tao. Until this moment, representations about a local ‘way of life’ had been made to me in various contexts, encompassing food, bodies, ancestors, canoes and names. Nakeyo and Kamo were concerned that we become aware of the significance of carvings, the longhouse and the ways of the ancestors to their ‘customary ways’. Many from Saweta, Kimama, Kina and Balimo villages were involved in the production and sale of these carvings, as well as dancing at shows and other occasions. The villagers with whom we had most contact up until then, those from Aketa, Dogono, Oseke and Tai had shown little interest in carving and dancing.
It also marked a growing realisation that the longhouse and the carving of particular objects for sale to tourists and other outsiders like myself, is the project of one distinct group of villages and that other villages, like Tai and Dogono, are not involved. This spurred my interest in the events of the revival and the concerns and consequences that continue to hound debates about the past and, ultimately, the future of local communities.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Anthony Crawford (1975, 1976, 1976a, 1981) proclaimed in several publications that the Gogodala people of the gulf of Papua New Guinea had experienced a ‘cultural revival’ after the destruction of their ‘culture’ by evangelical missionaries in the colonial period. This ‘cultural revival’ was discussed and valorised in various international, national and local contexts, as was Crawford’s agency in the construction of a Gogodala Cultural Centre in the form of a *sai'da genama*, a longhouse. In this way, the cultural revival had a significant impact on debates about self-reflexive articulations of culture, tradition and custom in a increasingly independent Pacific. Despite this, local public articulations about the past, tradition, or a unitary notion of their culture, were largely undeveloped at this time.

In 1995 and 1996, people talked about their ‘customary ways’ in English but there is no phrase in Gogodala which encapsulates this concept; many referred to it as Gogodala *iniwa ela gi*, which literally means Gogodala ‘ways or things of the ancestors’. When evoked, the notion of ‘customary ways’ can encapsulate many activities and objects: from kerosene lanterns; the singing of Christian hymns in village churches; to the telling of ancestral stories in Land Mediation meetings; or the sale of Gogodala carvings.

When the UFM missionaries came to the area, they brought with them certain assumptions and beliefs about the people with whom they sought to live. Carvings and other ceremonial practices, around which these groups of people organised themselves spatially, temporally and corporeally, were perceived to hinder the processes of conversion. The evangelical message brought by the missionaries dwelt on the ‘blood’ and ‘pain’ of being a Christian, focussing on the idea of the ‘wages of sin’. The image of a fiery ‘hell’ is an enduring and
frightening one for many local Christians. In the process of developing an indigenous Christianity, aspects of local peoples’ experiences and practices were reified and labelled ‘heathen’ - particularly those concerned with the carving and use of objects which embodied ugu or ‘spirits’. Increasingly, converts to Christianity disassociated themselves from these types of activities and objects.

Tony Crawford came to Balimo in January 1972 on commission to the Art Advisory Board of Australia to collect Gogodala carvings. He also came with certain images of Gogodala ‘art’ exemplified in early photographs and carvings collected by early administrators and travellers to the south coast. In what was subsequently called the ‘cultural revival’, groups of local people inverted the meanings and characterisation of these objects and practices; and began to negotiate with other Gogodala Christians about the contemporary significance of these things. Some, like Kamo, have argued that these carvings are God’s way of ‘helping’ the Gogodala, who have inspired and experienced little ‘development’ from Daru or Port Moresby.

The ‘cultural revival’ was not just about objects and practices, however: it was also about negotiating the meanings and significance of particular spatiotemporal constructions. The cultural revival was part of a process of transforming spaces and times - it was about effecting new ‘images’ of Gogodala people and practices. Through the building of a longhouse and the establishment of a Cultural Centre, many became involved in teasing out pre-existing relationships and establishing new ones - between different Gogodala villages; and between the Gogodala and other people, white or Melanesian.

A cultural revolution

[Here is a country and people largely untouched by missionary effort waiting in heathen darkness for the gospel. It is for these we plead. Why may not they be as saintly as the Britisher?]
F. B. Lea, Un evangelised Fields Mission
This quote by Bernard Lea, an early missionary with the UFM, foregrounds the movie *Gogodala - A Cultural Revival?* which was made in 1977 by Chris Owens for the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies. A quote by A. P. Lyons follows, detailing a particularly magnificent piece of carved and pigmented wood, sets up the audience to view the Gogodala cultural revival within these terms of reference. Christianity has been instrumental in the disintegration of not only ceremonial life associated with these practices, but the materials produced in the process. Jolly and Thomas (1992) note that the issue of the colonial experience, and the impact that this had on the objectification of ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’ in the Pacific, is a difficult one. They suggest that although a sense of difference predated colonial contact, a more extreme contrast between indigenous and European ‘ways’ was a feature of early colonial relations.\(^1\) So that while “some practices were attacked as ‘heathen’ or ‘barbaric’, others were celebrated as hallmarks of potential Christianity or civilization” (Jolly and Thomas 1992:242). In the process of objectifying certain practices, entire ways of living and experience were objectified.

Clark (1997) has suggested that in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, fetishisation of culture began often at the instigation of missionaries and, to some extent, early administrators, rather than the Papua New Guinea state or through the media. He writes; “[m]any aspects of Highlands culture have been

\(^1\) Linnekin (1992:253) has noted that Wagner has argued that objectification occurs in all societies, but cultural objectification is most prevalent in ethnically complex/colonial situations.
fetishised as ‘evil’, or at least as something to do with the unsophisticated and parochial *kanaka* (native)” (Clark 1997:75).

When Crawford first came to the area in 1972, he was interested primarily in the collection of Gogodala artworks, carvings that early travellers to the area had collected or captured on film. As he travelled around several villages in search of these carvings, he found only “suppression, confusion, despair, self-pity and even tears” (Crawford 1976:4). Crawford attributes such feelings of fear and ambiguity towards carvings to the influences of the UFM missionaries; he argues that both the nature of the local environment, which rendered travel and communication difficult and tedious; and mission influence made the ‘art style’ disappear (Crawford 1976:1).

Carved and pigmented headdresses, drums, and figures of male initiations and *Aida* ceremonies were targeted by missionaries and local pastors as ‘idols’. This focus on material objects, I suggest, became an integral part the dialogue between Gogodala Christians from different villages and expatriate missionaries, and later informed the terms of the dispute over the revival of carving practices in the 1970s.

**Burning Aida**

The earliest images of the Gogodala derive from administrative and other encounters with the environment and with carvings. Local people were characterised as being of an ‘artistic’ nature and many of the early accounts describe in detail canoes and other ceremonial objects. References to these carved and painted objects prefaced descriptions of everyday activities. A. P. Lyons (1914:9) wrote about large carved and pigmented canoes;

> which measured 70 feet in length and 3 feet 9 inches in beam, which had been hollowed out of a cedar log. Along the sides and at the prow alligators had been carved and then pigmented. These canoes have no outriggers, but this big one was safer than an ordinary canoe with outrigger. For workmanship they surpass any canoes I have seen. There... I saw the carving of a huge iguana - called Posia (sic) - of an alligator.

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2 Beaver (1914:412) notes in one of his articles on the Gogodala in 1914 that the Gogodala are “decidely artistic, perhaps almost more artistic than that of any other people I have met with in New Guinea, but I am inclined to think that their art is associated in some degree with a phallic order”.
hollowed out as a canoe, and of an alligator swallowing a man -
hollowed out on the back as a canoe, and with the heads of four men on the
bottom of the hollow. The latter represents a canoe with four oarsmen in it ...
Everything was pigmented. Indeed it was the most wonderful piece of
carving I have seen anywhere.

Europeans already associated these racing canoes, the intricate gi gawa, smaller
ceremonial canoes, or the ligaele (large masks) which men wore in the Aida
ceremonies, with Gogodala people. These images of the Gogodala retained a strong
influence over outsiders’ perceptions. Indeed, Crawford came to the area bearing
over one hundred photographs of carved objects taken by these early explorers and
administrators.27

The first UFM station was established in Balimo in February 1934, and
another one was set up at Awaba, near Pisi village, on the Aramia River soon after.
Weymouth (1978) argues that the missionaries, inspired by a fearful belief in hell
and the imminent return of Christ to the earth, approached their task of
evangelisation with great zeal.28 He suggests that this was one of the reasons behind
the impact of the missionaries on the practices of local communities (Weymouth
1978:106).29 They attacked ‘heathen customs’ associated with the smoking of
tobacco, chewing of betelnut and drinking of kava or sika, but focused their
antagonism on the main ceremonies and rituals (Weymouth 1978:140-1).30 Thomas
(1991:153) argues that for the missionaries, particularly evangelical ones, in the
Pacific:

27 In 1930 the Swiss ethnologist Paul Wirz came to the area, gathering a large number of carvings and everyday
items like fishing nets and clubs, the last systematically collected until the 1970s (Crawford 1981:40).

28 In an article titled “Blood and Tears”, Leonard Buck (1966:3), the General Director of the UFM wrote that
this concept “embodies the experience of the authentic Christian Church, living ‘under the cross’.

29 Bernard Lea (1940:7) wrote in 1940: “[t]he entire span of native life acknowledges the domination of the
spirit world, every event of importance being related to it. Unless the curse of the spirit is to fall upon him,
rigid adherence is given to age-old customs designed to placate the evil genius ... The reflections of the
Apostle Paul upon the unnatural practices of pagan races, in his correspondence with the early Christians,
are sadly observed as one moves beneath the surface amongst these people”.

30 The mission was not interested in the new forms of anthropology being espoused by many of the mainstream
missions in the Pacific. They saw the aims of anthropology as in direct opposition to their own (Weymouth
1978:146). Bernard Lea wrote in Papua Calling (1940:19) that the “underside of pagan Papuan life reveals a
mass of corruption which, if it is to be overcome, assures the missionary of a formidable task ... Scientists
may propound their theories as to the origin and effect of filthy degrading practices, and seek to break or re-
make them; but the missions carry them a further step into the sphere of moral responsibility”.
he heathen condition was characterized in various ways; particular ritual observances or customs were represented as being central to it and the adoption of Christianity was expressed through the dual step of repudiating these emblematic customs and professing adherence. It particularly suited missionary discourse when the local religion could be characterized as idolatry, because this meant that 'idols', as objectifications of the false religion, could be abstracted from their context in native worship and destroyed or displayed.

Bernard Lea (1940:21-2), a UFM missionary, wrote in 1940:

[...] all through the Fly River country, fetishes and articles employed extensively in initiation and similar ceremonies abound. In themselves such objects have no intrinsic value, but by reason of the witch-doctor's prowess, the nature of the ceremonies and the part allotted them, they become in the eyes of the native imbued with immense and dreaded powers ... Eventually the foolishness of conceding powers of life and death to such things came to be felt and confidence in them began to wane.

There was, however, a strong wave of opposition to these changes. Villages like Isago, Dadi and Pisi on the Aramia river, close to the mission station established at Awaba, imposed fines of sago on those who converted to Christianity. Local Christians would also be punished for failing to participate in dances and ceremonies, having to complete extra cleaning duties around the village. Frank Briggs, an expatriate missionary at Balimo Station, was threatened by nearby villages and only escaped injury through invoking the name of the administration.

The influence of the UFM missionaries themselves, however, was initially limited. Crawford notes that more than one year after the missionaries had established a station at Balimo they realised that there was a loft in the longhouse in which Aida ceremonial objects were still stored (Crawford 1981:41). It was rather the actions of local converts that had the most effect on village populations. Bernard Lea (1940:22) wrote that “Gouba and another named Eremoa (sic) moved the hearts of the village elders as no missionary ever could”. In 1936, two young Gogodala men, Elemowa and Emo, returned to the area after completing two years of training at the London Missionary Society
Kwato station. Although they were not employed in any official capacity with the LMS, they, in association with several missionaries stationed at Balimo, went around the Gogodala villages preaching and destroying many objects, especially those connected with *Aida* ceremonies. Elemowa joined Len Twyman, another missionary, at Awaba station and started travelling around to nearby villages (Weymouth 1978:154). Crawford quotes Twyman recalling the burning of the *Aida lopala* at Kimama village:

*[o]*n the 8th July 1936 which was a Wednesday, Frank [Briggs] and I went to Kimama, and I noticed that Elemowa was also with us. After giving out some medicine Frank talked to the various people and we tried to get the women to come back to the village. They evidently had been told that we were going to do something with the *aida* gear and ... they had fled the village ... There was a little urging needed for them to get on with the job. They were, to some extent, rather frightened. Pasiya, it seems was a bit afraid, but Gauba was the one who made the first move, and Elemowa, I noticed, clambered up to the loft to help him hand it down and Pasiya, one of the early converts, was soon helping ... Gauba got some of his family to come back first and one or two more came in, in fear and trembling, but we persuaded them to walk past the gear and have a look at it before it was actually burnt (Crawford 1981:41-2).

Weymouth (1978) suggests that during the war years (1942-44), between which the missionaries were evacuated from the area, elders were appointed by the missionaries to look after the village churches in their absence. He writes that with a "keen sense of vocation" and without the presence of the missionaries, these elders took over 'evangelising' the village populations (Weymouth 1978:197).

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7 Elemowa was a very influential person. He had been employed as a rubber tapper on the Madiri plantation under Drysdale. He was sent to Kwato in 1933 with another Gogodala man for training as a teacher. Kwato Extension Association at that time was being influenced by ideas of the need for moral change or conversion, public confession and racial 'brotherhood' (Weymouth 1978:152). Weymouth (1978:153) writes that such evangelists were "intolerant of traditional ways and zealously destroyed the symbols of their former religion. The burning of ornaments was therefore a common practice".

8 Lea (1940:22) describes the same event in a very different manner: he writes: "[t]he village of Kimama called its old men. So few were in favour of clinging to the old ways that all the dread articles were brought out and a fire prepared. They would henceforth all follow in the 'New Way' - the way in which Gouba was walking. They called forth the women folk ere lighting up the pile, but only Gouba's wife and a few others would come. They came tremblingly, for in the past it had been death to gaze on upon such charms. They saw the rubbish, for it was little else, dirty and begrimed with smoke from a thousand fires, and were relieved to suffer no harm, either then or later".
Many of the villages held a public burning of the *Aida* objects, often preceded by a public viewing. Thomas (1991:156) notes that ‘idols’ provided an “extremely powerful mechanism, through which the fact of conversion could be materially expressed and displayed”. The *Aida lopala* consisted of the *aida* itself, a rattle made from the seed pods of the *kulumusu* tree and set on a short pole. This was the source of the ‘du-du-du’ noise associated with the coming of Aida to the village during the ceremonies described in Chapter 3. The large drums, *diwaka*, were also stored in the loft and only used in the context of *Aida maiyata*, as were the *gi gawa*, small decorated canoes. Also displayed in these ceremonies were intricately carved paddles, tobacco, water vessels and lime gourds all of which belonged to Aida and which were brought out to illustrate that he was the “provider of all” (Crawford 1981:253). (See Figure 24) As well, a figure of Aida was carved and placed in the *komo* along with the grass skirts and large *ligaele* which he was to wear when he returned.

Kotale village had little contact with Europeans, either missionaries or administrators, as it was situated on the north of the Aramia River. Pisili, a man from Kotale, was baptised at Balimo and then went back to Kotale and

**Figure 24. Gi gawa (ceremonial canoe); courtesy of The National Museum of Australia**
converted a few young women and men. These young men secretly burnt the
Aida lopala stored in the lofts of the Kotale longhouse. The tale of this spread to

Figure 25. Aida keyali (Aida paddle); courtesy of The National Museum of Australia

neighbouring Kewa village, where two young men took out the ceremonial objects in public and then burnt them (Weymouth 1978:204). At Kebane village, further east on the Aramia River, Elemowa and Gauba again went to help burn the Aida objects. Lea writes that an old man tried to stop the burning of his diwaka drum at which point Elemowa took off his shirt, a rare piece of clothing, and offered it to the old man in exchange for the drum. Lea writes: “[t]he exchange was mutual - the drum went up in flames” (Lea 1940:22).

There was some resistance to this destruction, however, and some local communities, like those in Balimo and Dogono, hid their ceremonial objects in the bush (Crawford 1981:41-2).9 Similarly, the men at Aketa village sent their diwaka down the river to protect it from the evangelical zeal of the missionaries

9 At Isago village on the Aramia River, Elemowa and Twyman managed to burn the first set of Aida lopala, Aida "things".
and their local converts. Many ornate prows of canoes were also attacked and destroyed during this time. Lea (1940:22) notes that after the *Aida lopala* was burnt at Kebane village, the missionaries could not approach the village for more than two years and he acknowledges that “there might have occurred a reaction in Kebane”.

Pastor Danaya, one of the first Gogodala Pastors and the most prominent of those, spoke to Weymouth in 1972 and told him that the village people had burnt the ceremonial objects, the *Aida lopala*, because the missionaries had frightened them with talk of hell-fire. Afterwards, they had returned to these ceremonial practices and had replaced the *Aida* objects with new ones (Weymouth 1978:220). The burning of these carvings and other objects associated with the male ceremonies was taken by the missionaries as tacit acknowledgment of the efficacy of the Christian message. This was not necessarily the experience of many of the local villagers, however, as it seems the destruction of longhouses by enemies and through accident was fairly common, and the reconstruction of *Aida* objects was not new.10

**We are like a post**

When Tony Crawford arrived among the Gogodala in 1972, he found that this type of carving was no longer produced.11 He writes: “[m]y greatest asset was a photographic inventory of over 100 black and white half-plate prints of all known published photographs of Gogodala cultural material” (Crawford 1976:4-5). He says that he and other Gogodala people spent a lot of time looking at these images of Gogodala carvings, some of which were easily recalled and others not at all. When he questioned the people as to the

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10 Weymouth says that when the band of Twyman, Elemowa and several others moved onto Aketa village, after burning the objects at Uladu village, they met some fierce opposition from the elders at Aketa and especially from Ilumi the village *mamusi* (TP) or ‘constable’. He wrote: “the band was defeated, moved on to Dadi but its sacred objects had been burnt when the village had been burnt down, the result of a fire” (1978:157).

11 Crawford (pers.comm) recalls, however, that when he visited Ali village shortly after arriving in the area, he found several pieces of art which were magnificently carved and painted. Ali is a village on the western boundary of Gogodala speakers, a great distance from any of the mission stations, particularly Balimo.
whereabouts of such pieces, most replied that they had been burnt in the mission fires. He writes:

[w]hen asked if similar pieces could be re-created I was promptly informed that they were not permitted to do so as it meant they would be associating themselves with an evil spirit, and this would be contravening the Christian belief. They now believe that their GAWA TAO is nothing other than an evil spirit. To talk of AIDA was near forbidden and the ceremony a threatening influence to the new belief if ever performed. To be a Christian the past was not to be allied with the present (Crawford 1976:5 emphasis in original).

In 1995-6 several people from Balimo, Kini and Kimama villages explained that prior to Tony Crawford’s arrival in the area, canoes and kuku - figures which could ward off human and non-human agents - were the only types of carvings being made. Some of the carvers were local pastors, although they primarily made bowls and small figures depicting crocodiles, snakes or birds rather than pigmented masks or drums. Bill Taylor, an expatriate who spent some time at the Vocational Centre at Balimo although stationed at Awaba High School, brought with him a Girl Guides book outlining the methods associated with carving these bowls and small animals. Several men from neighbouring villages were taken into the Vocational Centre and taught how to carve bowls and other unpainted objects. These carvings were then sold to missionaries at Balimo, Tari, Kiunga and Tabubil. Beverley Paterson, an expatriate missionary involved in nurse education at Balimo, ran a business course from her home to help the carvers get used to selling their work and being able to market it well. The local carvers learnt about quality control, varnishing, packing and sending carvings to other parts of Papua New Guinea. 12 Canoe races were also held prior to Crawford’s arrival and had been held intermittently before and throughout the colonial period.13

12 Karen Bickerton was also involved in selling local carvings to other expatriate missionaries in Tari and Hagen ECP Bookshops in 1995 when I arrived.

13 These canoe races seem to be a direct descendent of the Gawa maiyata ceremonies and canoe races which were part of the process of male initiations. They seem to have been connected also to headhunting and war raids at the time of the early colonial period. Crawford (pers. comm) is unclear as to whether these canoe races had as much prominence before his arrival but suggested that many of the racing canoes were only decorated with the name of the canoe design rather than the actual design.
Crawford was particularly interested in the pigmented pieces displaying the canoe designs or *gawa tao*, and he formalised the production of these carvings and the transmission of knowledge about them within the context of the Balimo Cultural Centre. He also introduced different types of carvings based on the photographs he brought with him, carvings which had not been made for forty years. Bege Mula said that when Crawford came, he encouraged the people to carve ‘their own things’ derived from the stories of the ancestors rather than the plain, unpigmented carvings bought and encouraged by the missionaries.

Crawford (1976:5) writes that he discussed issues of history and culture with local people, pointing out to them that the carvings could be incorporated into Christian life and practices. In the film *Gogodala - A cultural revival?* (1977) Crawford said that an old man, after listening to a recording of an *Aida* ceremony, exclaimed “[w]e are like a post, we are like a *timi*, we have nothing”. Some people objected to this type of talk, he writes, but they were mainly older Pastors and deacons of the Church. After eighteen months, some carvings of high quality were being produced by young men under the tutelage of elderly men (Crawford 1981:164).

Numerous meetings village leaders and artists were held to decide on a method of maintaining the production of carvings and establishing a way of displaying and marketing them. Crawford (1976:5-6) writes,

> [w]e talked of the Angoram haus tamboran and again photographs were used to illustrate its existence and achievements. It was therefore decided that a Gogodala longhouse should be constructed, on strict traditional lines and it in itself would become not only one aspect of their culture, but at the same time it would envelop all other aspects.

The Local Government Council provided land and assistance in Balimo and people started to collect bush materials for the longhouse. Through the newly established National Cultural Council (NCC), funds were received for the construction of the longhouse. In October 1973, construction on the longhouse

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14 He was referring here to a plain house post, one which had no decoration or *gawa tao*.

15 About $7000 was given to the construction of the Cultural Centre by the NCC.
began and by December the structure, apart from walls and roof, was complete. In June 1974, the longhouse was opened by then Chief Minister Michael Somare (Crawford 1976:6; Crawford 1981:164).

People from Kini and Kimama village recalled that after the longhouse was built, old men and women were paid to sit inside the Centre and instruct the school children, who visited weekly. Once the Cultural Centre was opened, carvings were made by men in neighbouring villages and brought to the Centre. The Centre would purchase these carvings and then find buyers for them, either in Balimo, Moresby or internationally. Crawford trained Ken (Kebila) Abilo to take over the Cultural Centre before he left the area.

Between 1975 and 1980, the Centre started to decline due to a general lack of incentive after Crawford left. Internal wrangling between Abilo and the carvers marred the Centre's promotion of the carvings and the carvers stopped bringing their work to the Centre and went back to selling them to the missionaries who had created a market in the Highlands with their Christian Bookshops. Orders became less frequent and funds were not available to the Centre to purchase the carvings produced by village men, and the increasing number of grass skirts and nets made by women. Local carvers wanted to make the carvings and sell them immediately; the Centre could not afford to do this. Bege Mula (1991), in his report on the Gogodala Cultural Centre published in *Museums and Cultural Centres in the Pacific*, writes that the longhouse built in 1974 was demolished in 1982 because they could not afford to refurbish it. Another Centre was built after Sir Julius Chan, then Prime Minister, visited Balimo in 1982 and promised support from the Rural Improvement Fund (Weymouth 1984:214-5).

Bege Mula took over the administration of the Centre after Ken Abilo left the Centre in 1982.16 A young man from Saweta village, Bege had brought to Crawford a small model of a racing canoe prow for sale.17 It was his first

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16 Bege recalled that he had met Tony when the latter was living in a house made for him at Balimo. Crawford later moved to Balimo village.
17 Bege told me that he was born in 1948 in Waligi village (which became Saweta). He was married in 1968 and now has six children.
attempt at carving and painting the *gawa tao* onto a carving, and he returned a couple of weeks later with another, larger canoe prow decorated with feathers, shells and abrus seeds, which Crawford also purchased (Crawford 1981:166). Bege recalled that when Crawford came to Balimo, he had not been a carver although he had helped his father, Mula, a *gawa sakema* or canoe carver, who made racing canoe prows as well as some *kuku* figures. He said there were no carvings being made at the time other than these two types (canoes and *kuku*) but the old men still knew all of the canoe designs and carving techniques.¹⁸ He suggested that his father and another old man were very good carvers; Mula taught Bege some of his own skills and imparted the knowledge necessary to carve and paint the canoes, masks, headdresses and other objects.¹⁹ Bege went on to display his own work in Port Moresby, Australia and Germany in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁰

When Bege took over the administration of the Balimo Cultural Centre, he had trouble trying to persuade other Gogodala people to help him get the bush materials to fix the longhouse although he received K4000 from the Rural Improvement Fund to repair it. Many told him that the “white man [Crawford] has gone, so leave it”. Bege recalls that the majority of the women around Balimo, Saweta and Kimama would not collect *aso*, sago palm leaves, for the roof even when offered money and neighbouring village people suggested that the Cultural Centre was promoting the ‘worship of idols’. The missionaries maintained constant pressure on the Centre and its carvers throughout this period. Eventually, Bege could do nothing more and the Centre closed.

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¹⁸ Bege said that the carvers did not formerly make the amount and different types of carvings now made.

¹⁹ Old man Mula died in 1995 while we were in Balimo. Mula had fought in WWII and had four wives and twenty children when he came back from the war. Bege was the first-born son. Mula was a well known and much respected carver. He carved thirty racing canoes in his lifetime and ten of those canoes had won their races continually. This rendered Mula a notable *sakema*, a man known for his ‘strength’ and skill. Mula used to dream at night while he made the canoe, dreaming that the canoe would win its race. As a result, these canoes won. Bege said that Mula was always ‘confident and strong’ and therefore, his canoes always won.

²⁰ Crawford (1981:166) writes that Bege suggested that carvings brought to Crawford for sale had to be accompanied by a house post. In this way, many of the materials from the bush were collected for the longhouse.
Kini village people became increasingly interested in the construction of their own Cultural Centre and longhouse, however. In June 1983 the new longhouse called Iniwa Sakema, was established at Kini village and opened by a Member of Parliament.\textsuperscript{21} It was constructed on Siboko land at the instigation of Ken Abilo. Although tourists only came approximately once a year, the carvers continued to produce for the local missionaries, hospital staff and other visitors. In 1989, the Centre fell into disrepair as the roof had deteriorated and the carvers took their carvings, previously on display in the longhouse, to their homes. The future of the longhouse became increasingly contested. Bege wrote in 1991 that the Centre was rundown and no carvings were being made for or by the Centre: although often the Centre had the opportunity to purchase artefacts but were not been financially able to do so (Mula 1991:73).

Between 1990 and 1992, Ken Abilo was forced out of the operation of the Kini Centre by the landowners.\textsuperscript{22} The landowners, through their son-in-law Kamo Bagali who had recently returned from Moresby, sought more funds from the NCC. Kamo organised the establishment of an executive committee to decide the future policies of the longhouse. They received two separate payments of K5000 but the money proved inadequate to complete the building of the longhouse. Between 1993 and 1994, after some conflict with his father-in-law’s older brother, Kamo also left and moved to Balimo, determined to set up a Balimo Cultural Centre in the same spot as the original longhouse.\textsuperscript{23} In 1995, Kini longhouse received another K5000 but the funds were misspent and little construction work was achieved. When I left the area in May 1996, the Kini longhouse had a roof but the walls and inside structures had not yet been built. The young men continue to carve from their own houses, bringing them to

\textsuperscript{21} "Skills of the ancestors". Sakema is the Gogodala word for carvers who have the knowledge of the ancestors which is necessary to produce these types of carvings.

\textsuperscript{22} Abilo claimed that the land on which the longhouse was built at Kini village belonged to his mother, and he therefore owned the land. His mother’s brothers objected and Abilo left Kini village. Ken Abilo would organise and fulfil all of the orders himself, constantly flying between Balimo, Daru and Port Moresby. Many carvers distrusted his motives and refused to sell their carvings to the Centre.

\textsuperscript{23} Kamo said that this was his primary intention but his father-in-law had prevailed upon him to help with the Kini longhouse before he set up one at Balimo. He was happy to be involved in this until his father-in-law’s elder brother accused him of being untrustworthy with the funds for the Kini longhouse. Kamo left Kini village and returned to Balimo.
the longhouse only on the occasions when tourists, missionaries or anthropologists come to the village expressly for that purpose.24

When we visited Kini in 1995 and 1996, the central hall of the longhouse had an altar and it was explained that the Church services were being held there as the new village Church was under construction. When I inquired whether there was any conflict over this, Nakeyo told me that there was no problems anymore between the mission, the ECPNG Church or the people at the Cultural Centre because they all agreed that it was “God’s way of helping us make money”.

God’s way

The image of the saida genama as the Gogodala Cultural Centre has been a dramatic and enduring one, both in the local context and further afield. The idea of building a longhouse to store and display the carvings that had begun to accumulate was a local one. Crawford says that he augmented the idea with descriptions of similar reconstructions of longhouses or other types of ‘traditional’ dwellings in the context of cultural centres. The construction of the longhouse, with associated spatial and temporal dimensions, angered local pastors, missionaries and other village people; it challenged many of the teachings of the Church and mission. The Christianity espoused by the mission, pastors and local people was based on the reformulation and subsequent rejection of these buildings.

There were significant national and regional overtones to the construction of the Centre. Indeed, the building of the longhouse was financed by the National Cultural Council. Local people involved in running programs, educational facilities, and the sale of carvings, became part of regional and

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24 A road/ track was built connecting Balimo and Kini so that tourists could travel between these two villages more easily. However by 1995, the road had become impassable even by foot and there were no funds left to clear it again.
national discourses about, and images of, culture, custom and art in Papua New Guinea.

There were serious divisions created and heightened in the Gogodala community as the result of this cultural revival and the construction of the Cultural Centre. Thomas (1992:64) has suggested that objectifications of certain practices and articulations about ways of living often highlight these schisms in societies. He writes: “[a]ttitudes toward it, or competing constructions of it, may also register crucial lines of disagreement or conflict within a particular society”. Crawford tells of how the building of the Cultural Centre was hampered by continuing land disputes about who owned the land, from which the materials were being collected as well as on which it was to be built. At first he was puzzled by the multitude of these claims until he realised that the young men were local pastors and deacons who hoped to delay or stop the construction of the Centre. Many local people believed that the longhouse was instigated by Crawford and were opposed to the continuation of the Centre’s activities once he had left the area. Others saw the period as one characterised by conflict between expatriates, particularly Crawford and influential missionaries like Dudley and Majorie Deasy. Bege and others were told by other Gogodala to “leave it, they [white people] are fighting among themselves”.

'Destroying the culture'

This was certainly one element of the events and debates surrounding the establishment of the Cultural Centre, and, although little was written by the missionaries about this period of time, there are several articles in the APCM newsletters which deal with the issues more generally. In the 1977 film, *Gogodala - A cultural revival?* Murray Marx, the head of the APCM in the early 1970s, stated that Christian and ‘traditional’ sides of Gogodala life were incompatible; local Christians were strongly discouraged from participating in any of the revival activities. In *Light and Life* newsletters, there was a statement about the validity of missions in the context of Independence and a debate about whether the message and aims of missionaries continue to be important in the
In a 1981 article in *Light and Life* entitled “Have the missionaries destroyed the culture?” Joan Rule (1981:2), an expatriate missionary, wrote:

> [f]rom time to time someone publicly accuses the missions of destroying the culture of the people ... The same kind of attack will come again, however, and we should know why the charges are made and how much truth they contain. They are made because the observer sees former tribal items and activities largely abandoned: perhaps beautiful carvings or important dances, religious rituals, various kinds of magic, attractive designs, or certain songs, the possibilities are endless. The observer sees that Christians have led others in abandoning these things and so he blames the missionaries. It seems their artistic culture has been destroyed by the missionaries’ influence if not their direct taboos ... My Christian friends in PNG cultures have to abandon the objects and activities devoted to evil spirits. Carvings, dances, songs, rituals are often devoted to the spirits, and where they are, Christians can no longer participate in them, however colourful they may be.

She argues that although missionaries are often held to blame, it is usually local Christians who come to realise that such objects or practices are detrimental to their ‘Christian growth’. ‘Cultures’, she further suggests, are not destroyed by such changes but rather ‘grow’ another ‘limb’ to substitute for the loss of this one (Rule 1981:3). Ken Macnaughtan (1981:3) wrote in the same article that:

> [w]hen outside experts, who often want PNG to be a kind of living museum, have sought to blame missionaries for destruction of local culture, it has been the local Christians who have been quick to point out that they themselves have initiated the changes evident in their cultures. One went even so far as to remind a visiting expert that he would have long since been simmering in the pot if it were not for changes his particular people had made in their culture.

Karen Bickerton intimated to me in 1995 that the cultural revival encouraged by Tony Crawford was doomed to failure because carvings like canoes, masks and shields were closely connected to Gogodala ‘spiritual life’. She suggested that much of the ceremonial life and objects had been (and continues to be) defined as the worship of powerful and essentially ‘evil’ spirits. Karen argued that Crawford’s attempts at ‘reviving’ Gogodala culture, through the renewal of techniques of carving, ignored the intensely spiritual implications of such a revival.
Dancing had also become associated with the Centre. In September 1974, forty Gogodala men flew to Moresby, performing Gogodala dances to the assembled audience of the Fourth Niugini Arts Festival. In an article in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Kirsty Powell (1974) wrote:

> [a]nd the crowd was rapt. The Gogodala dancers have never before been seen outside Western District. In their grass and leaf skirts, with their highly elaborate painted and feathered masks, and their bobbing tail pieces they danced to the compelling rhythm of *kundu* drums (two of them eight feet long - the longest *kundus* I've seen) gourd rattles, percussive ‘walking sticks’ of split bamboo, conch shells, and haunting song. They moved on stage like seasoned performers, following patterns evolved for performing in their great longhouses. The performance is splendid in itself. But it is also the expression of a remarkable cultural revival.

Local women and men performed dances associated with *Aida maiyata* when the Cultural Centre opened in 1974 (Crawford 1981:177). Crawford wrote in 1976 that the *komo* of the longhouse had become the stage for these performances and ceremonies connected with *Aida*.

The revival of this dancing style was one of the main reasons that missionaries and local Pastors opposed the establishment of the Centre. Ross Weymouth (1984:283), a missionary himself, argues that it was not the renewal of artistic or carving techniques that the Church or APCM objected to as racing canoes were carved by Pastors and the Church President. Rather, what disturbed Church leaders was the revival of the *Aida maiyata*.25

The building of the longhouse was central to perceptions of and debates about the revival. The Centre was constructed along the lines of a ‘traditional’ longhouse; the *timi* or house posts were carved and painted, as were the floor joists or *musili* running under the length of the longhouse. Crawford (1976:8) wrote that the four centre row of joists “are fully painted and carved to represent the various totems and clan fathers. Only the central end posts are also carved

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25 Weymouth (1978:284-5) claims that “without the incentive of an immediate cash return for their efforts”, men stopped carving and teaching in the Cultural Centre. He suggests that those who still did (his thesis was brought out in 1978) were only concerned with demonstrating their prowess.
and painted, to resemble a standing figure”. In the longhouse, carvings were stored and displayed and dances performed.

Today the central hall is one of many things besides having its traditional use. The side walls resemble those of an art gallery giving a display of over 1,000 colourful dance masks (IKEWA & LIGA:LE) ranging from 6 inches to well over 6 feet and each bearing the artist’s insignia or clan pattern. Suspended from the roof structure are many of the GI and AIDA LOPALA, carved replicas of crocodiles, snakes, iguana etc., with heads of either the clan father or of another totem protruding from the jaws (Crawford 1976:9).

He suggests that in 1976, the komo was used as an ‘environment of the past’ in which old men sat and discussed ancestral and past practices and deeds. The side cubicles, once the living spaces of women and children, were used as storage space for saleable carvings and costumes for dancing, as well as living areas for men visiting from other villages (Crawford 1976:10).

The longhouse transformed past practices and experiences while upholding the idea of the continuity of past and present. Instead of concealing male lopala, it became the space of display and revelation of ancestral knowledge. Schoolchildren came once a week to the Centre and were taught by men and women of the Centre and surrounding villages. The longhouse, then, as exemplar of Gogodala ancestral and early contact time-space was an important agent in local conflicts and discussions arising out of the revival; it was also an integral and defining way in which these events were perceived on a regional, national and international level.

**Folklore museum or cultural workshop**

The cultural revival proclaimed by Crawford and some of the Gogodala people involved in the sale of carvings and the construction of the longhouse, became part of a wider dialogue on culture, tradition and Christianity in Papua New Guinea and other emerging Pacific nations. The politics of identity and indigenous objectifications of ‘culture’ have become important issues in academic and non-academic discourses in the Pacific and elsewhere. The Gogodala cultural revival provoked debate about the reconstruction of
'traditional' ceremonies, artefacts and identities in the context of Papua New Guinea's Independence and construction of a national culture.

After the longhouse was built, Crawford stayed in the area for eighteen months and then moved to Moresby. He published several small books on the Gogodala and the 1981 monograph *Aida, Life and Ceremony of the Gogodala*. Andrew Strathern (1981:13) wrote an introduction for this publication in which he suggested that, even if the life of the Gogodala cultural revival was short and its future uncertain; "its story is an inspiration for those concerned with the true development of indigenous culture in Papua New Guinea". In the Foreword to *Sakema, Gogodala Wood Carvers*, Ulli Beier (1975) also noted that there was much talk in Papua New Guinea about cultural revivals but "[t]here is hardly another case in which a genuine revival has been more dramatically achieved than among the Gogodala". In an article in *Pacific Islands Monthly* in November 1976, Peter Livingston reviewed *Sakema*.

A. L. Crawford has done a wonderful work in reviving the Gogodala culture, if, in fact, a culture can be revived. The fact that they are carving drums and masks and other objects in ancient design and patterns may or may not be a revival of culture, but may be no more than an attempt to please A. L. Crawford in the same way that they destroyed them to please that particular missionary (Livingston 1976:48).

Nationally, the Gogodala Cultural Centre was the basis of the 1977 film, *Gogodala, A cultural revival?* produced by the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies. In the film, which showed footage of the opening of the Cultural Centre in Balimo in 1974, Michael Somare, then Chief Minister, represented the Centre as indicative of the Papua New Guinean "power to preserve our culture". He went on to suggest that Papua New Guinean 'sophisticates' would learn that the future of an independent country such as Papua New Guinea had to be based on the revival and survival of culture. His speech appealed to all Papua New Guineans to recognise and uphold the uniqueness of their cultural heritage and

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26 In the Land and People series, Crawford published *Gogodala, Lagoon dwellers of the gulf* in 1975; *Sakema, Gogodala Wood carvers* in conjunction with the National Cultural Council also in 1975; presented a Discussion Paper for the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies entitled 'Artistic revival among the Gogodala' in 1976; and wrote *The Gogodala of the Western Province* published by the National Cultural Council in 1979.
to realise its importance for a united national identity. He claimed that the Cultural Centre was an important manifestation of “the National Cultural Council’s work at village level” (Pacific Islands Monthly October 1974). In the 1974/5 Gogodala Cultural Centre, Annual Report, Geoffrey Mosuwadoga (1976:4), then Director of the Papua New Guinea Museum, wrote:

establishing cultural centres in Papua New Guinea for the purpose of cultural development is one of the National cultural council’s major priorities. Gogodala Cultural Centre has proved to be one of the most progressive centres under the canopy of the Council.

Western commentators also showed particular interest in the cultural revival and the establishment of the Gogodala Cultural Centre. Alain Babadzan (1988:217), in an article on “Kastom and Nation building in the South Pacific”, argued that the Gogodala cultural revival is a prime example of what he calls ‘cultural folklorization’. He noted that the construction of the Gogodala Cultural Centre and performances of previously forbidden Aida maiyata dances at regional festivals celebrating Independence, had a significant impact on other regions and groups. The Gogodala Cultural Centre was a prototype of its kind and Babadzan (1988:219) points to the numerous small cultural centres found all over the Pacific, “half folklore museums and half workshops”. Culture, he argues, has become a ‘political stake’ around which people mobilise in order to gain access to a new source of income (Babadzan 1988:220). Some local people “agree to play the game, to ape themselves, to produce an image of their culture that others in town have conceived as being relevant to their true identity and therefore as being the right way to salvation” (Babadzan 1988:220).

Babadzan’s implication is that the cultural revival which occurred among the Gogodala in the 1970s is a self-conscious reconstruction of the past and somehow inauthentic; “a folkloricist revival legitimated by the State, Australian art-aid, and purveyors of traditional (rather than touristic) art works” (Jolly 1992:54).²⁷ Crawford saw the longhouse as an ‘environment of the past’,

²⁷ Jolly (1992:53) has asked why the re-evaluation of tradition in many Pacific countries and the Gogodala cultural revival perceived to be essentially inauthentic or as a sign of hypocrisy? She suggests that perhaps Pacific people are not so much glossing over differences in the process of an undiscriminating
the vehicle through which Gogodala culture would come ‘alive’. Other expatriates, like the missionaries, also construed the building of the longhouse this way. They objectified the carvings and the dancing as Gogodala ‘customary ways’ and, as such, either opposed or fought for them. Commentators like Babadzan also focused on the activities which grew out of the establishment of the longhouse, as well as the Centre itself, to emphasis the inauthentic nature of revivals.

Local people, however, were not disputing the reconstruction of certain carvings and dances, as much as they were arguing over notions of the past and, hence, the future. The longhouse was a different proposition from that of past experiences; for the simple reason that it was not a lived space, but an area in which things and performing bodies were displayed and valorised. It exemplified the idea of the past and culture as residing in ceremonies, carved and painted objects, and particular bodily movements. Distinct from the past embodied in the landscape, known through movement and experience, the longhouse was more static and focussed on objects as the past. As such, many local people were not convinced by the possibilities evinced by its construction. The renewal of carving techniques and the production of all sorts of objects, on which *gawa tao* were painted, raised the painful issue of how compatible sitting in canoes and following the word of God actually was. It was not that *gawa tao* were not used or even painted on things; rather, it was that by placing them at the forefront of a ‘cultural revival’ based on *Aida* dances and carvings, they were being reconstructed as incompatible with Christianity. It also raised concerns about *ugu* and dangers that people in the 1970s knew little about experientially, issues which I explore in the following chapter. In one sense, then, Karen’s comment about Crawford underestimating spiritual implications of the revival was quite accurate but not for the reasons that she stated. It was not so much that they were frightened by the prospect of carving or dancing, but that it indicated reconceptualisations of Christianity and the past.

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valorisation of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial pasts; rather, they are more willing to accept both indigenous and exogenous elements as integral parts of their experiences.
‘Our life, our things’

I think they made a big mistake because it was our life, our things. They just told us ‘burn it’. They were wrong.

Kamo Bagali, Balimo

The state’s nationalist agenda and drive towards economic development were an integral part of the construction and constitution of the Gogodala Cultural Centre. However, when Crawford initiated interest in learning techniques and knowledge about the carvings, stimulating regional, national and international interest in their sale and display, many local people became involved in this process. 28 As I previously intimated, some of the earliest images of Gogodala people portrayed by colonial and other western commentators involved detailed descriptions of the elaborate carved and pigmented canoes, masks, headdresses and other ceremonial objects. In the process of constructing a particular image of themselves to others, both internationally and locally, many of the local people involved in the revival took this image as their own.

The villages of Balimo, Kini, Waligi (now Saweta), and Kimama assisted Crawford in building the longhouse and became involved in learning about the carvings and associated dances. This was not without serious opposition, however, and conflict on the local level raged between these villages and people from Tai, Dogono, Kotale, Aketa and other Aramia River villages. This latter group, on the whole, opposed the idea of reviving certain types of carving and dancing. They argued that the carvings being made by those at the Cultural Centre were ‘evil’ and went against the teachings of the pastors and missionaries. In the twenty years which have passed since the Centre was built, these latter villages have had little to do with continued production and sale of carvings through the Kini Cultural Centre, although much of the rancour has

28 If the Gogodala cultural revival was, as Babadzan suggests, a complicit element of a larger national agenda, this does not mean that there is not a problematic relationship between constructions of tradition at national, local and regional levels (Jolly and Thomas 1992:243). As Jolly and Thomas (1992:243) note, local traditions do not easily fit into nationalist programs even though, at some levels there seems to be a great deal of congruence between them and “even a further continuity with regional values about the Melanesian or the Pacific Way”.
faded. Kamo Bagali and Bege Mula, who are trying to establish another Cultural Centre in Balimo, are from Kini and Waligi respectively.

Local pastors were generally opposed to the Centre and its promotion of carvings associated with the *Aida* ceremonies, and the subsequent performances of these carved objects in dancing displays such as the one described above. Crawford encouraged his Gogodala associates to learn about *Aida* dances and other ceremonial dances as they were Gogodala dances rather than Kiwai. Many of the earlier missionaries had encouraged Gogodala people to dance Kiwai dances, as they were less overtly sexual in nature and content.

The debate between these different villages was framed in terms of the types of practices considered appropriate for Gogodala Christians to participate in, and the ways in which these were perceived by other Papua New Guineans. Christianity demarcates boundaries between local practices and experiences and those in other parts of the country - evident in the oft-used expression ‘Christian country’ when referring to themselves. The Christianity espoused by pastors, both in Gogodala villages and outside the area, is seen as definitively Gogodala. The revival of these carving practices, *Aida* dances, and the building of the longhouse instigated self-reflexive discussion about the extent and characteristics of this ‘Christian Country’. The revival, then, stimulated renewed interest in local examinations of central precepts of their faith and evangelical Christianity. Crawford (1976a:14) wrote in the 1974/5 Centre’s Annual Report that on the ‘cultural patrols’ which the staff at the Centre undertook once a month, village people were read passages from the Bible in which certain practices previously seen as non-Christian were seen to be “in actual fact tolerated by God and not at all condemned”. At the same time:

> [o]n a blackboard a square was drawn representing the Gogodala tribal boundaries; to the north they have the Kamula tribe, in the south the Kiwai, to the east the Bamu, and in the west the Suki, all encircling the Gogodala with their life of traditional ceremony, therefore why should not the Gogodala, for all those neighbouring groups are also Christians (Crawford 1976a:14).
The revival also initiated a general discussion about the nature of the relationship between Europeans and local people. In the 1980s, Kimama village Church elders held a long meeting (over several days) in the Church in which they wrote up the names of the Gogodala ancestors on one side of the blackboard and the names of some of the Biblical characters on the other. They then proceeded to draw the connections between these people, their activities, the places from which they came, and those to which they travelled. In this typology, the Biblical figure of Moses was likened to Bogela as he had carried a staff like Bogela; Jesus was held to be similar to several of the male ancestors, most notably Saida; and God was said to be like Ibali, the first father who sent the original ancestors to the Gogodala area and initiated the establishment of the villages. Ibali and Adam were also equated along with Gaguli (Ibali’s sister-wife) and Eve as the ‘first people’.

Biblical places were also discussed and their similarities to Gogodala places plotted on the blackboard. Israel, the original birth place of Jesus and the home of the Jewish people, was likened to the first place that the ancestors stopped on their journey after leaving Wabila. Other places, like the Salona canoe place from which the original ancestors derived their large canoe, were associated with Australia or New Zealand. This reflexive teasing out of the similarities between Biblical and missionary places and people and their own ancestral spaces and characters, was an enduring part of the revival.

Negotiation between villages; between white and Gogodala people; and between Gogodala and other Papua New Guineans continues. It informs local perceptions of other places and people. Comparisons drawn between the Biblical and ancestral figures are based on the idea of the original kinship of white people and local villagers, discussed in Chapter 4. Although there were often differing notions of the connection between these different characters and places, after the session at Kimama Church, other villages began to debate the similarities and reasons behind the differences, a process that continues. Kamo stressed that the Bible and the ancestor stories ‘said’ the same thing - that “God

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29 Most of the missionaries derive/d from Australia, New Zealand and some more recently from America.
created the world and that the important idea was that “both the Bible and the Gogodala stories are about how we get to live together”.

**Independent country**

There were several facets to the cultural revival: local people were divided along village lines and those not involved with Crawford either opposed or ignored the Centre. Local proponents derived mainly from Balimo, where Crawford established himself, or surrounding villages. The nature and character of the Christian community was a central concern for those both participating and in opposition, and both sides framed their arguments in these terms. This kind of discussion opened up debates about relations with other places and people, and, as I have suggested throughout the thesis, these questions continue to provoke interest in Gogodala villages and urban centres.

The revival, however, resonated with wider issues in the Pacific in the 1970s. Hailed by some as a great example of indigenous courage in the face of cultural destruction, derided by others as merely a surface gesture to please Crawford or a cynical exercise to gain access to money through tourism; the Gogodala revival continues to be discussed. Many local people realised some of the ways in which events were used by outsiders: from Crawford and the expatriate missionaries, to Michael Somare and the NCC, and urged others to let the “white people” fight over it themselves. Many of the Church leaders and missionaries saw the contest as one between ‘culture’ and Christianity and framed arguments in these terms, as did Crawford. For the NCC and Somare, the cultural revival was part of a nation-wide project to encourage cultural diversity in order to embrace national unity; the Gogodala Cultural Centre represented one of the first of its kind.

Through the revival, Gogodala people entered into regional and national discourses about the nature of ‘tradition’, ‘culture’ and history. Particular groups of people became involved in articulations about the future of Gogodala communities, couched in this wider discourse. This version of Gogodala
'customary ways' was contested both locally and more widely, and continues to be in the 1990s. The villages associated with Crawford and the building of the Centre continue to produce carvings - these are made and sold intermittently in Kini, Balimo, Tari and Moresby.

Clark (1997:73) has recently argued that although urban people in Port Moresby live very differently from those in villages and a distinct sense of collective identification is emerging, it is not nationalism. Rather it resembles a sentiment that can be appealed to in various contexts; such as the death of Gogodala soldiers in Bougainville. At the local level, as for the majority of Gogodala villagers, people do not talk about being part of a Papua New Guinean state because they have little experience of it. Their histories are not national ones but rather embedded in local bodies, places and experiences. The cultural revival, then, from the perspective of Gogodala people, was less of a nation-making project, as Babadzan suggests, and more about the exploration of possibilities and efficacies. It was about testing the limits and establishing new sets of relations between different groups of people, objects, spaces and times rather than reviving a 'culture'.

There is no Gogodala or English word or concept for the 'revival'; for local people it was part of an ongoing reflection on the types of practices and beliefs that are perceived to be characteristic of their communities and lifestyle. This is not to suggest that the events of the 1970s were not significant or definitive of a particular moment in this process; indeed, they were conducive to it. Many local people were involved in the building of the longhouse, the production of carvings, as well as the teaching of school children. Others, however, were not and experienced few of these activities. Even those who did not participate, like Tai and Dogono villagers, came into contact with the issues. When we were walking back to Tai village one afternoon, after spending the day in Balimo, we were joined by a man from Oseke. He spoke to us about my research and then told us about the 'good times' in the 1970s when there were dances and beautiful carvings and he was taught by elders in the longhouse while at school. Sakuliyato also enthusiastically recalled some of the celebratory
occasions, like Independence Day; in which people dressed and danced, singing songs about being Sawiya *ato* and *Saida dala*. This period of time is not something that has been objectified in the experiences of the local people as an event, however. Rather, as the quote from Kamo at the beginning of this chapter suggests, it was the time when carvings were made and sold, and there were intervillage discussions about the efficacy and significance of these carvings.

Robert Foster (1992:287; 1995b) has noted that generally articulations of *kastam* or 'custom' are set up in opposition to business and/ or the Church in many places in Melanesia. I would suggest that particular expressions of Gogodala 'customary ways' arising out of the revival, enable local people to encapsulate money, 'development' and business as well as Christianity within its framework. In the 1970s, however, certain factions in the Church defined their Christianity through the continual rejection of ceremonial carvings and performances. More absolute distinctions were made between Christian practices and objects, and ones associated with the ancestral past. Activities like sago making, fishing, belonging in clans and canoes however, were not considered to be 'un-Christian' and remain the basis of everyday observations about bodies, food, places and lifestyles.

With the events of the 1970s, however, carvings and dance ornamentations bearing *gawa tao* in boldly painted colours were rearticulated as uniquely 'Gogodala'. In this discussion, which continues in various stages of intensity today, the notion of Gogodala 'art' as the carvings and objects associated formerly with ceremonial practices has become a central one which is hoped will aid the process of 'development'. For many in the 1990s, the revival was about initiating a peculiarly Gogodala way of getting money through making and selling carvings, performing dances; basing development in local terms and grounding it in a certain notion of Gogodala 'customary ways'. In reflecting upon the past, the revival precipitated local contemplation of the present and the future. Those actively involved in the Centre reassessed past relationships with both white people and ancestors. In Chapter 3, I noted that through Sosola - who opened the door for white people - Gogodala people
contemplated the possibility of bringing the ‘end’ back to the beginning; thereby
initiating something new but connected to the old. Through the return of Jesus/
Prince Charles, equity between Gogodala and others would be restored (like in
the days of the ancestors) and an easier lifestyle established. For many, the
revival was an attempt to actively participate in the making of this ‘new time’
and the forging of different relationships through money and development. By
learning about issues of ‘custom’ and tradition in terms used by people like
Crawford, state officials and national politicians like Somare, they sought to
explore their own possibilities and efficacies. Others were opposed because they
disputed such constructions of Gogodala ‘customary ways’.

Kamo made the observation to me in 1995 that the revival initiated by
Crawford was not over, because it was involved with the notion of being an
‘independent country’. Kamo said that, through his and Bege Mula’s interest in
the rebuilding of a Gogodala Cultural Centre, this process would be continued
in the 1990s. In the following chapter, I will look at the ways in which carvings,
particularly those depicting gawa tao or canoe eyes, have been and continue to
be associated with Gogodala ‘customary ways’ and argue that the production of
these pigmented carvings mark a continuing dialogue about the practices and
activities deemed ‘Christian’.
Chapter 7

In the eye of the canoe

Kanaba

Gawa tao, canoe designs or canoe eyes, are central to a recent process of Gogodala self representation. This process has involved an inversion of early mission and Christian interpretation of carvings and associated practices. This has been part of a dialogue which continues on many levels in village Churches, Council Chambers and between different villages. Gawa tao speak to, and about, local experiences; bodies, names, places, canoes and ancestors. They are efficacious in the renegotiation of the relationship between Gogodala, white people and other Papua New Guineans. Nakeyo explained to me many times that without gawa tao, all Gogodala would be like floating grass, because they would not belong to clan canoes.

Crawford brought photographs of Gogodala carvings, painted in the colours and designs of the gawa tao, with him in the 1970s. Ownership of these carvings and other lopala has become an important site of reshaping relationships between white people and Gogodala - especially that between expatriate missionaries and local people.\(^1\) Through the process of claiming these images of early canoes, Aida objects, headdresses and other carvings as 'their own things', particular groups of Gogodala people are redefining the parameters of these relationships. From Crawford’s pictures, new types of carvings and other objects were produced and different images constituted in the process.

Gawa tao are not only representative, however: they are central to lived experience. Sanada emphasised the role that they play in the mediation of

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\(^1\) In the context of Malanggan sculptures of New Ireland, Kuchler (1997:49) makes the point that when an object, such as a carving, is rendered absent through destruction or sale, the image of the object may become very significant, and it is often around these images that strategies of ownership and belonging are employed rather than around the object or carving itself.
different claims to sections of the landscape, calling *gawa tao* the ‘foundation’ of the clan system.

In this chapter, I will look at some canoe designs, canoes, and other carvings, both pigmented and plain, to elucidate how the revival and subsequent periods of carving have utilised certain photographs, ignored others, and discuss some of the implications of these choices. Beginning with a contemporary racing canoe, Kanaba, I want to capture some of the ways in which people engage with canoe designs and other objects; through the ancestor stories from which they derive, and the relations of these designs and carvings to people, their bodies and their places. Rather than entering into a debate over the nature of aesthetic (or other) objects and issues of form versus context (see Coote & Shelton 1992 eds.; Losche 1997), I look at the ways in which people talk about their connections to these designs and carvings; the ways in which they are used, made and destroyed or stored and how they are conceived of as empowering for Gogodala communities, both in the past and now.

Figure 26. Kanaba racing canoe at Balimo canoe place, September 1995
Thomas (1996) notes that certain forms of art in the Pacific, such as canoes, were empowering to those who made and used them, and disempowering for those confronted with them in the context of warfare, headhunting raids or formal exchange situations. Kanaba racing canoe (see Figure 26) in the past was the vehicle whereby such intervillage warfare and headhunting raids were carried out.

In the contemporary context, this canoe won the 1995 Balimo Show race. The racing canoe is predominantly red, with the Kanaba gawa tao adorning both sides of the canoe prow, much like two eyes in a face. The prow of the canoe has been fashioned into the likeness of the head of the clan pig, out of whose jaws protrudes the penis of Ibali, the original 'producer'. Jutting out from the top of the pig's head, the salago lapila (canoe prow ornament) is wreathed in startling white heron feathers which also frame the smaller appendages that writhe and wriggle with the movement of the canoe. On either side of the canoe, leading away from the central 'eyes', animals associated with the Kanaba clan canoe have been painted onto the surface of the canoe, two prawns and a large fish. Black, yellow, red and white stripes surround the bottom half of the canoe, utilising the streamlined shapes of aquatic creatures to speed the path of the canoe and its paddlers. White spines, like those found on the once ubiquitous crocodile, jut out dangerously from behind the salago lapila, these also an indication of the speed and dexterity of the canoe. For the moment, the power of the canoe is spent and it lies on the muddy shore of the canoe place.

**War games or cultural games**

In Chapter 1, I opened with a description of a canoe race held at Aketa village in June 1995 and discussed some of the issues and events arising from it. Canoe races have been in progress throughout the colonial and missionary presence. Crawford and Bege confirmed that only two types of carvings were being made in the 1970s: *kuku*, small figures placed in gardens, along paths and near houses;
and racing canoes. Why were these canoes being made, let alone raced, when other carved and painted objects were destroyed and discouraged? Weymouth admits that even Church pastors and deacons were active in making racing canoes.

When A. P. Lyons travelled through the area in 1916, he came across and photographed preparations for an initiation ceremony. He also noticed several large magnificently pigmented and decorated canoes. Lyons wrote in 1926 that the Gawa maiyata was held after the racing canoes had been made and painted the preceding gogo season (northwest winds) by sakema for each clan in the village. At the launching of these canoes, the Gawa maiyata took place. It involved smoothing and clearing a path between the place in which the tree had been felled and the canoe constructed, and the place that it was to be launched into the water. This entailed the placing of pieces of wood on the track along which the canoe could be pulled, and which also prevented the canoe from touching the ground before it was launched. Along the path at regular intervals, clan plants or salago had been planted. The men who had been involved in the making of the canoe, usually belonging to the clan of the canoe, had stayed the previous night with it in the bush, watching to see whether it attracted a gubali or ghost. To do so was an unhealthy omen for the launch. These same men then helped haul the canoe down this path to the river, or lagoon, early in the morning (Lyons 1926:351). Lyons (1926:351) wrote:

[i]t was my good fortune to visit the village of Barimo on July 25th, 1916, during the progress of a Gawa-moiata (Canoe festival). My coming was a signal for the postponement, if not the abandonment, of the festival, which I regretted. The preceding day I sent my native sergeant, Gera, to Barimo by canoe from the Aramia River, where I anchored the ‘Nivani’. Gera returned at sunset the same day, and reported that he had come upon the Barimo people when they were merry-making in connection with the launching of some big canoes, which the sergeant reported that he saw. He related having seen the men and women dancing together near the shores of the lagoon in front of the village, and the ‘women had thrown away their clothes’, meaning that the women were dancing in a nude state ... In the lagoon I saw eight large canoes, all gaily decorated. Near by were two shelters, which I learned had been used for storing food for the festival. From some of the old men I learned that the actual launching of the canoes is done by the men, and that, besides the feasting and dancing, trial races between
crews picked from each of the clans are held, to test the speed of the canoes.

Later Lyons requested the old men to select some crews for the displayed canoes and they did so, instructing the men to hold a race for the benefit of the observer. Lyons (1926:351-2) continues:

\[
\text{[e]ach crew took its canoe to an arranged starting place out in the lagoon and near some reeds. The canoes were lined up alongside of one another with the prows comparatively level. At a signal from the old men the crews commenced to paddle, calling out the name of their canoe as accompaniment. Those on shore did likewise, and shouted and laughed when one canoe got too close to another.}
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Bernard Lea, one of the first missionaries, also interrupted a male initiation ceremony and photographed the racing of several canoes along the river. These races were part of the maiyata ceremonies in which young boys were initiated and the Gawa maiyata closely followed the preceding two stages.

I have quoted Lyon’s description of the launching and racing of these canoes at some length because accounts of contemporary canoe races that I have represented are quite consistent with images evoked by Lyons. Crawford (pers. comm) has suggested that over the period of intense evangelisation and the burning of much of the Aida lopala, canoe races were muted by the presence of the missionaries and local Pastors, and the canoes were not pigmented and decorated like they are today. Other Gogodala people argue that canoe races have been going on for as long as they can remember.

Racing canoes are made after a tree had been selected and named - the name is written on the tree.\(^2\) Once the tree is mature, it is cut down and hollowed out into the shape of a canoe, the man who named it working in conjunction with the other men of his clan. A man can only make and paddle in a canoe of his own clan or that of his mother or wife: it is a sign of respect to paddle in the canoe of your spouse or mother. During the construction of the canoe, the men stay together until it is launched and are forbidden contact with

\(^2\) The land must be either his own of his clanspeople, or that of his mother or spouse. The canoe can only be named from the land on which the tree is grown; a Wagumisi canoe can only come from a tree on Wagumisi land.
their wives. Sexual relations are similarly prescribed and even a man who has recently become a father (a new person) cannot spend time with them. Food prepared by the women is carried to the men’s house (sometimes referred to as the saida genama) by male relatives or young boys. Lyons notes, in 1916, the men involved in the making of the racing canoes had to stay either in the komo together or in a small shelter built near the canoe. Their food was prepared and brought by other men and boys (Lyons 1926:349).

Women spend the night before the race preparing for the feast for those who race and thinking about the men in their overnight vigil at the canoe place. The paddlers, and other men associated with the making of the canoe, stay together singing canoe songs and preparing for the early morning start. One man told me that a person who contributed to the experience of the paddlers by bringing them food the night before the race, is seen to be substantially contributing to the strength of the canoe and its crew. If the canoe wins in the morning, that person has been instrumental in the victory and is very 'proud' because he has shown his respect to the canoe of his mother or wife.

Each canoe has a song which relates to the time of the ancestors. The men say that such songs enable the paddlers to conserve their strength throughout the race and empower the canoe to speed through the water. The racing canoe Aeimala, from the Siboko clan, for example, has a canoe song which comes from Miwasa who, after hearing about the untimely death of Dalogo, sang a song mourning her passing. As he came back from the grasslands:

he sang a song while he was crying. He was feeling sorry for her, his wife, and he was singing some songs like this one while he was crying. That song is related to these people from [the] Siboko clan. They have a big canoe, this Aeimala [a racing canoe]. When they are paddling towards the racing place they are using that song, because that song is related and in the right canoe (Sawiyato, Kini village March 1995).

During the race, however, the paddlers usually repeat one word: the name of their canoe or an animal related to that canoe which, issuing from the throats of the forty or fifty paddling men in a canoe, is an incredible and powerful sound.
Much like Lyons’ description of the race, the canoes leave the canoe place early and paddle to the designated starting place on the river. In the contemporary context, the racing canoes are divided up into A, B, C and D Grade canoes according to the size of the vessel and the number of men it can hold. A Grade canoes are the largest, often carrying up to sixty paddlers and as a result are usually very swift in comparison to the other grades. In 1916, at the time of Lyons’ account, the canoes were smaller and less easily made as steel tools and axes were not available in large numbers. Populations of villages were also considerably smaller.

Local people travel long distances to attend and participate in canoe races, as they are usually part of other celebrations like the Aketa School opening. The dancing of women was described to us before we had a chance to see it as both Aketa and the following race at Awaba were subdued by the conflict between the two A Grade canoes. It was not until the celebrations for the Balimo Show in September that women danced for the canoes; dancing in the water and on the surrounding banks, celebrating the return of the men and the victory of certain canoes. The dancing of the women is very sensuous, stripping down to their skirts, and jumping into the front of the canoes with the
men, often toppling the whole group into the water. The enjoyment of the watching villagers is considerably heightened by these antics and they encourage the women to more radical feats, laughing and shouting during the whole performance.  

There are two levels of identification for those paddling and watching: that of the particular canoe design and name of the canoe, and that of the village from which it and its crew derived. Often people will encourage the victory of one canoe from their own village even though it is not their own clan canoe. On the other hand, canoes from other villages can be cheered on if the audience ‘sits’ in that clan canoe. Essentially, however, it means that everyone present has several canoes with which they can identify, and can usually find a canoe in each grade to cheer for.

Racing canoes are called sawiya gawa, translated as ‘get ready canoes’ but also referring to Sawiya, the prominent female ancestor. It is also her name that is called out to begin the race. Bege said that “it’s a mother’s name that they call out; they call that name because she is the mother, they call out her name and that means ‘go’”. Bege Mula suggested, in a conversation about carving, that racing canoes were the only type of carving that was treated by sakema and paddler alike as having ugu or spirit. The efficacy of the canoe, then, is still determined by the following of certain ‘rules’; during the race paddles can not be broken, and the canoe is not allowed to be turned upside down. Bege referred to the canoe races as ‘war games;’ in which a man’s mother’s clan is most efficacious. Through calling on the name of an animal associated with his mother’s clan, a man can access strength as “she [is] standing at the back” of him.

Canoe races, unlike revived carvings and dances, are not played out for the benefit of tourists or other types of outsiders, like myself. Bege stressed that “the canoes are very important to our lives. It [racing canoes] talks about us - what your clan [is], who you are”. Canoe races are the only surviving arena in

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3 Both expatriates and Gogodala people told us that women got very excited by the canoes and danced on them - and both groups of people suggested that this was an integral part of the racing celebrations.
which the idea of objects embodying *ugu* still play a considerable role in both local level experiences and public expressions of a Gogodala ‘way of life’. I mentioned in the initial description of the Aketa canoe race that one of the missionaries referred to the race as ‘cultural games’, no different from football, netball and basketball albeit peculiarly Gogodala. Local people, however, recognise the war-like nature of these races, and acknowledge that they still embody *ugu*.

The eye of the canoe

*Who is returning our gaze through an object? Is it a whole person or a part of a person? What is the nature of those phantom beings who return our gaze in aesthetic objects?*

Losche 1997 p.12

The creation of *gawa tao*

The *gawa tao* were created in ancestral times through the interplay and transformation of bodies, or parts thereof, of trees, coconuts or non-human agents into canoes. The canoe designs reflect the ways in which canoes came into being, combining elements of these beginnings and transformations in pictorially constituted forms and colours.

The Gogodala word for these designs, *gawa tao*, literally means ‘canoe eye’ although *tao* can also refer to a seed, a bellybutton, or string depending on the context in which it is used. It was affirmed that in this case, however, the word *tao* refers to the ‘eye’ of the canoe. Bege suggested that the “eye is [an] important part of [the] body, because of [the] eye you can see”. I mentioned in earlier chapters that seeing is a central way of engaging with the world for Gogodala people - the experience of vision is fundamental. It is connected to the idea that things are made visible and known through being seen: conflicts and affairs are ‘brought out to the people’ which makes them visible. Ancestor stories have many references to surreptitious activities or secrets being ‘found out’ by being seen by someone. Significant ancestral places can be seen, and
therefore, verified; things that cannot be seen, like *ugu* or Bolame, are not easily known.

All Paiya or white clan canoes have *owame tao*, a ‘fish eye’, at the centre of their designs; likewise, all Segela or red clan canoes have *daelila tao*, ‘bird of paradise eyes’, in the centre of theirs. The meanings of these central eyes, however, do not necessarily remain constant in different situations and are often referred to as bellybuttons, people’s eyes, the eye of the coconut and so on.

To elucidate the numerous ways in which these canoe eyes are depicted and explained, I will look at several designs and discuss the ways in which specific people spoke to me about these designs and their contexts, significances and genesis. I will begin, as would many Gogodala, with the image of the racing canoe and the *gawa tao* called Kanaba (see Figure 26). The most commonly depicted form of Kanaba *gawa tao* is that pictured below and the one displayed on the canoe above. These images were drawn for me by Sanada Giliwa from Kimama village and Mala Sogowa from Tai; the explication of which were discussed with Sanada, Mala and several others at different times and places. Mala and Sanada are not related and do not know each other well, however their exegesis and drawings of the *gawa tao* were very consistent. Mala spent many hours drawing and colouring nine designs for me on white paper that I had provided, and Sanada was persuaded to outline some fifty *gawa tao* which Nakeyo, Kamo, and several others filled in with coloured pencils. Both men sit in the Wagumisi clan and therefore are most knowledgable in these clan designs; but as acknowledged ‘big men’ they are also well versed in the different designs and ancestral stories. Several of the designs that these two drew overlapped and I have put these in together to illustrate both the consistency and the differences between them.

Kanaba *gawa tao* denotes the primary canoe from which all other Gogodala canoes derive; the canoe eye depicts several elements of the earth. The circular design in the middle of Kanaba is the body of the earth, and the thick black line connecting the centre of the *gawa tao* to the small yellow crescent is called the ‘life-giving line’. It is the connection between the earth
and Wabila, the first place and the space of the ancestors and the dead. It was suggested that this link between Wabila and earth “is still growing”, indicating that the connection is one made in the present as well as the past.

**Figure 28. Kanaba gawa tao; drawn by Sanada (left) and Mala (right)**

The yellow crescent at the bottom of this life-line is “the light that gives life, feeding the earth to make it live: this ground is fertile and the life-source is Wabila” (Sanada Giliwa). In opposite corners of the larger black areas of the design, are the rising and setting sun and all of these elements are positioned within the six gudibibi, or points of land, which mark the spaces of the Gogodala environment. The shape of Kanaba is also often likened to nabudu, or breadfruit leaves, which belong to this clan. As the primary gawa tao, the earth, the ground and the sun belong to it; it is the continuing link between Wabila and the earth, a link that can be drawn upon to effect strength and victory in sports, racing canoes and hunting.

The designs of many of the other Gasinapa canoes are generally based on the shape and design of Kanaba; it is the kaka or ‘big brother’ of these other designs. In these gawa tao, the basic elements of Kanaba are often used to
depict several different things. The genesis of Wabada canoe design, for example, was different from Kanaba and therefore has similar but distinct elements to it. In Wabada, the Kanaba shape representing the points of land (or leaf of the breadfruit tree) constitutes the *gabi lapila* or fighting club of an ancestor called Espanadae. The bottom of the design, which appears in the shape of the *nakenake* fish tail, is also part of the club’s design. Other *gawa tao* related through a common clan membership, show very similar structures and elements. When these are brought together in canoe designs, however, they express distinct experiences, bodies and stories.

Kanaba *gawa tao* came into being when Ibali, the first person, gave the primary canoes out to his sons. He sent Kelaki, one of his sons, to get some water for him to drink. While Kelaki was at the well, he dipped the container into the water moving it across the top to clear it. Startled by the sudden emergence of Kanaba canoe from the water, Kelaki dropped the container and ran to his father:

Ibali heard him crying and then called out: “What’s wrong with you Kelaki?” And Kelaki said “Father, I saw something in the well water”. Ibali asked “What did you see?” [Kelaki said]“I saw a canoe design inside the well water and that design opened his eyes to me”. And Ibali said “Come Kelaki”. And Ibali gave him that *salago* [clan plant] to Kelaki. Then Kelaki got that *salago* from father Ibali and [he] told Kelaki “Go down and put this *salago* on that Kanaba design, poke it in”. And this Kelaki took the *salago* down and poke it in the front of the design [like a racing canoe]. He [Kanaba] came out and make himself into a canoe. And Ibali told him [Kelaki], “that’s your canoe, Kanaba”. So when Kelaki saw this Kanaba canoe, Kelaki said “this canoe doesn’t fit with me. This canoe I’ll give it to Bilidama”. So Kelaki gave that canoe to Bilidama (Mala Sogowa, Tai village March 1996).

Other canoes came into existence through the transformation of bodies (or body-parts) into canoes, the result of the agency of specific ancestors. The designs of these canoes contain the elements of the stories, as well as more general clan characteristics. In one such story, Waliwali, on his way from Wabila to the Gogodala area, caught up with the rest of the ancestors in Suliki canoe. They had stopped the canoe at a particular place in order to meet up with their hunter, Maimiya, who had been searching for food. This hunter had been
tricked and subsequently killed by Dimagi, another ancestor. While the ancestors were standing around in some confusion, Waliwali came upon them and asked them what had happened. After the ancestors related to him Maimiya’s fate, Waliwali cut Maimiya’s body into several pieces and distributed these pieces between the ancestors, imbuing each recipient with certain magical capacities corresponding to the part of the body they received. Waliwali took the intestine, put it in his canoe and went back to Wabila where he pushed bamboo through the hunter’s intestines. He then told the intestines:

‘If you become a canoe you can follow Suliki’. That canoe was named Kulumusu. Kulumusu [canoe] came by itself [from Wabila], straight past the ancestors and went to Masanawa, [the canoe place where the ancestors left their canoe]. It stopped there, hid itself at Masanawa (Sanada Giliwa, Kimama village March 1996).

Kulumusu gawa tao belongs to the Awala clan, from the white moiety. The design depicts the events of the transformation of death into life, and body into canoe. The body of Maimiya is evident in several aspects of the gawa tao: the central eye or tao of the design is Maimiya’s anus while the surrounding circular sections encompass the spaces of his body. Although Kulumusu is similar to other gawa tao in this clan, in which the same shapes depict the beak or wings of a bird, the nature of the genesis of this canoe accounts for its unique exegesis.

For several designs, the events of the creation of the canoe do not necessarily correlate with the image it depicts. For example, the Kiwalema design drawn by Sanada Giliwa (see Figure 29) was explained by him as being conceptually and pictorially based on a ‘Kanaba man’, Kiwalema, who used a turtle called dipalo as his canoe. The Kanaba design inside the turtle is Kiwalema sitting inside the canoe, travelling from Wabila. The story associated with the creation of this Kiwalema canoe, however, is somewhat different: Bani,

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4 A further story illustrates one of the ancestors who, upon receiving the fingers of Maimiya, plagued the rest of the ancestors in the canoe once they resumed their journey by pinching them and causing horrible sores to appear on their skin. He too was killed later by a wrathful Dimagi who travelled with the rest of the ancestors from this point.

5 Sanada suggested a similar design was found on the upside-down shell of the dipalo turtle.
a prominent ancestor for the Asipali clan, refused to give his son, Waewa, a canoe. Bani’s father, Ibali, was displeased and, after killing another of his sons for being disobedient, he transformed the intestines into a canoe and gave it to Waewa. “Then Ibali took his bellybutton part, cut down the middle and hung it on the fireplace. The fire dried it out and turned it into a canoe” (Mala Sogowa, Tai village October 1995).

Figure 29. Kiwalema gawa tao drawn by Sanada (left) and Mala (right)

There are several instances of the transformation of human bodies into canoes in the ancestor stories. Paiyale design of the Asipali clan is based on the story of Gelege, the sister of the Asipali ancestor, Bani; who, after killing Gelege, turned her into a canoe. Gelege’s legs, backbone, womb and vagina are all evident in the Paiyale gawa tao. In Miwasa’s story, as discussed in Chapter 2, he fought with a man called Waya whose leg was stretched across the Aramia River. When Waya refused to move his leg so that Miwasa could pass, Miwasa cut it off and put the leg in the bottom of his canoe. Shortly afterwards, the leg began to make a noise and Miwasa called out, ‘Hey, its my Pagawa’ and it became a canoe. The leg plays an integral part in the design of this gawa tao.
Like the canoes from which the *gawa tao* derive, the varieties of designs, shapes, colours and forms are numerous. Some canoe designs show marked similarities with other designs in the same clan, and indeed the same design can be in two clans at one time. As I have suggested, however, the genesis of these canoes constitutes the extent to which colours and forms can be attributed specific meanings. The stories detailing the origins of some canoes and their designs are less elaborate than others, and this does mirror to some extent a hierarchy of canoes within clans. Some of the lesser canoes, like those who have few people and names ‘sitting inside’ them, are particularly concerned with the transformation of bodies into canoes; they are referred to as *ewano gawa* (literally ‘human canoes’). These *ewano gawa* have detailed genealogies in the ancestor stories.

Not all *gawa tao* are static and some of the forms and colours, within certain prescriptions, can be depicted differently. See, for example, the Kiwalema designs drawn by Mala and Sanada - the elements are the same although each emphasises a different part of the ancestral narrative. The essential elements and colours of the canoe designs, however, have remained constant and must be used correctly to be acknowledged as *gawa tao*. Disagreement over particular colours and specific structures or elements of the designs occur, but it is usually over a single section or colour rather than a whole design.

**Embodied connections**

On Kanaba, the *gawa tao* is at the front of the canoe. Other, associated, agents of the landscape that belong to the canoe are arranged along the sides. *Gawa tao* are not often depicted on their own, when on carvings or canoes, although they

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6 MacKenzie (1985:81) has noted that the *gawa tao* are constructed from a limited number of graphic components which are “combined systematically according to culturally determined conventional formal rules of composition and colour use”. There are certain graphic forms which are repeated throughout the designs, often indicating different elements. It is often easy to distinguish the *gawa tao* of one clan as they make use of certain distinctive combinations of these elements. MacKenzie (1985:82) has also suggested, and I agree, that each canoe favours certain categories of meaning for the same visual element, so that “it is not the individual pattern elements which articulate meaning in a semantic arbitrary way, but rather the individual formal elements are ascribed only an overt referential ‘iconic meaning’.”
can stand by themselves. Rather, they interact with other elements in the environment to activate these relationships and initiate increased power, speed, or efficacy in dancing, racing or playing sports. People involved in racing canoes like Kanaba draw strength by calling upon the animals of the canoe in which they paddle.

Maureen MacKenzie (1985:81), in an article based on Crawford’s fieldnotes, made the point that *gawa tao* are not isolated elements; rather, they are part of a relationship which comes into being between the observer and the canoe design according to the level of knowledge he or she has about it. While this is certainly the case, *gawa tao* do more than form part of an interactive system between viewer and object or design. They mediate between people and colours, smells, animals, shapes and ancestral beings. The designs embody and imply places, gendered bodies, sago and fish, birds and crocodiles. Dancing men wore *gawa tao* on their bodies, articulating and experiencing connections to their mother’s clans from which they were born. In these contexts, the *gawa tao* served as the embodied experience of ancestor stories, the places to which they travelled, named and created, and the clan animals with whom they came into contact.

The term for a person who has the requisite knowledge and skills to carve objects and paint the *gawa tao* is *sakema*. It acknowledges that the person is both knowledgeable in carving and painting objects and bodies, as well as in the details of the ancestral stories which form the basis of the designs. There is an intimate relationship between the canoe designs, the carvings onto which they are inscribed, and the person who designs and creates them.

There is no all-encompassing Gogodala word for the different types of carvings, however, as the ways in which these carvings or *gawa tao* were used was the definitive factor in their creation. *Ligaele* or large masks, carved by each man and painted with his mother’s canoe design, were worn on the heads of dancing participants. Metre-long drums called *diwaka* were created by *sakema* and belonged to the clan rather any person - these were integral to the *Aida* ceremonies. Pigmented and decorated ceremonial canoes were referred to
as *gi gawa* and used in the initial celebrations. They were not imagined to be a single group of objects. Rather, each pigmented carving had either a ceremonial or more everyday function, whether in a canoe race or in the everyday *taodanapa gawa*, canoes bearing their owner’s *gawa tao*. Neither were these carvings entirely distinct from the men who made and painted them. Indeed, it was the *sakema* - the creator of the masks, headdresses, canoes and paddles - who imbued each object with *ugu* or spirit; it was dependent on the strength and ability of the carver as to how powerful and efficacious the object became.

The *gawa tao* was the medium through which *ugu* was transmitted from the *sakema* to the carving, as the canoe design linked the object to the person through his, or his mother’s, clan canoe. The *gawa tao* was the place from which *ugu* operated, in which it resided, and from where its power sprung. The *gawa tao* embodied the link between the *sakema* and those sitting in the canoe, and the particular carvings in the context of their performance. Each design had (and still has) *awano* or ‘magic things’, as Sanada referred to them, which only those who either sat in the canoe or knew the stories could understand and use.

Accordingly, in the days of early contact with colonial agents, most of the *sakema* were older men who had the requisite knowledge and experience of objects and the contexts in which they were used. The notion and person of the *sakema*, and the idea of *ugu* in carved objects, was transformed in the colonial period. When the missionaries came, they “sent away the spirits”. The carvings that have been made since the revival do not have *ugu*, as most of the *sakema* are Christians and do not profess to know how to transmit *ugu* to their carvings. Racing canoes, however, do have *ugu* and *gawa sakema*, like Bege’s father Mula, transmit *ugu* to these canoes. Indeed, without such knowledge, the canoe would never win a race. Increasingly, since the building of the Cultural Centre and the ‘selling days’ of the 1970s, young unmarried men learn about the *gawa tao* and the production of carvings. There were very few elderly men who carved and painted *gawa tao* for sale in 1995 and 1996. Sanada, for example,

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7 Unmarried men would not have been fully initiated in earlier times, and would therefore had little access to the types of knowledge necessary to carve the objects associated with the ancestors and the ceremonies.
was a notable carver as a young man but did not make much anymore as his hands were shaky and carving awkward for a man his age. The English word ‘carvings’ is also used to denote this category of objects which are made to sell to expatriates, Papua New Guineans and other visitors. Young men now make these carvings to sell to outsiders rather than to be used in the context of male ceremonies, the implications of which I will explore in the following section.

Canoe designs contain certain elements of the landscape, ancestors’ bodies, colours and places in specific relationships with one another according to the genesis of the canoe. The colours of the designs are always red, black, yellow and white, the colours derived from various parts of the environment. All of the landscape, including the animals, birds, fish and sago, were incorporated into the clan system through their colours, the depiction and use of these colours in the gawa tao is significant. Gawa tao from ‘red’ clans make much use of this colour, as do the objects like canoes which utilise other figures and elements from the environment alongside the central ‘canoe eye’. All four colours are, however, used in these ‘red’ designs. The canoe designs belonging to the Paiya or ‘white’ clans primarily use white and yellow pigment. Red moiety racing canoes, like Kanaba above, are painted red on the inside and outside, while white clan canoes are painted white or yellow on the outside and red on the inside. All white or yellow canoes have red interiors as they originally ‘came out of’ Kanaba, the first red canoe.

Animals, birds, bees, trees and the sun are all significant elements in gawa tao: several Wabadala canoe designs depict different types of beehives.\(^8\) Kiwalema of Wabadala, shown in Figure 29 above, is based on the shape of a dipalo turtle. Many Asipali clan designs feature the gabale bird (parrot) which is a central figure and name in their clan, and malebe (general word for snake). Siboko clan designs also use their bird, sekewa, and the white clan, Awala, features the waliya or white eagle, a bird which dominates their clan designs. Trees are also prominent in the gawa tao. Each type of tree belongs to a

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\(^8\) Gogowali gawa tao, for example, is based on a beehive with the miluli bird wrapped around it. Even the name of the design, gogowali, is a particular type of bee.
particular clan, as does each bird, pig, type of grass and fish. The *bisele ginadae* tree, and its distinctive brush-like appendages, are a common feature in Lalamana clan designs, as the *kesa* tree is for Wagumisi. Fish, such as the barramundi in Alo design, also figure prominently in some clan designs. The Waisa Owala design of the Tabama clan is based on the depiction of two yams (*waisa*), and sago is a major focus in all of the Lalamana canoe designs. Coconuts, *seniwa*, cassowary, pigs, leeches, and sago grubs also feature.

The bodies, heads, legs or intestines of ancestors are also represented in the designs. Many Asipali canoe designs, for example, depict the patterns found on the waistband that Bani, an Asipali male ancestor, wore while fighting, travelling and dancing. In several of the *gawa tao*, these parts of ancestor’s bodies have the capacity to be two things simultaneously: a few of the Awala clan designs focus on the story of Kaliya, an Awala ancestor who was killed and decapitated by Bani. The body of Kaliya moved around after the head had been detached and, through this motion, created a large lagoon. In these designs, the shape which is seen as Kaliya’s head shifts between this and the figure of a split coconut. In the original story, after Kaliya’s head was severed from his body coconut shoots grew out of his ears and eyes forming the first coconut.

The canoe designs can be interpreted in different ways, depending on the context and the level of knowledge of the viewer or producer. *Gawa tao* are inherently multidimensional. They are also gendered, as much as the bodies and experiences of the ancestors were gendered. Lawi design, from the Wagumisi clan and white moiety (see Figure 30), can be interpreted in a couple of ways: it was originally represented to me as the intestine of Yaebuwa *wai*, the Wagumisi pig. Some time later, however, Kamo and Sanada (both Wagumisi men) explained that another layer of meaning lay ‘under’ the intestine of the pig: “These designs all came from Sawiya” - although Sawiya did not create them herself. Rather, these Wagumisi *gawa tao* derived from her body, more specifically her genitals, womb and stomach. The ‘inside’ meaning of the Lawi *gawa tao* relates to contemporary Wagumisi people’s special relationship with Sawiya.
The central black, yellow and red circles are the iyapo or opening of the vagina, while the larger oval spaces of black, yellow and red represent the outer lips of her vagina. The bottom part of the design depicts either the backbone of Sawiya or that of a fish, something that is seen as interchangeable according to the context. The oval areas of black and red and yellow surrounding the fish/Sawiya bones represent the skin and flesh which encompass both human and fish bones. The yellow half crescent shapes on the sides of the central oval

Figure 30. Lawi gawa tao drawn by Mala

pattern are the kaeso iyapo, the ‘glands’ in the groin of Sawiya. Mala, also a Wagumisi man, called Lawi canoe a ‘woman’s canoe’ suggesting that “women hide in it - it is their grass skirt canoe”.⁹

Often gawa tao present the genesis of canoes pictorially, depicting vital elements of the story, at other times utilising certain elements common to the

⁹ There are no other canoes that can be characterised as women’s (or men’s) canoes. Mala refused to explore his comment further at the time.
clan to draw a number of similar forms together, incorporating aspects of the landscape, bodies or food.

People used to wear the *gawa tao* of their mother’s clan when dancing, racing canoes or fighting. By calling on the animals of the mother’s clan, men and women were encouraged to greater feats of physical endurance or speed. Thomas (1995:101) argues that the sorts of canoes, shields, spears and other weapons used in warfare were powerful because of what they could do rather than what they represented. He writes: “like erotica, these artefacts have effects which are indexed in a viewer’s body, which precede and supersede deliberate reading”. The bright, bold colours of the enormous racing canoes, on the masks and headdresses obscuring faces and bodies must have presented an awesome and frightening sight. The *Gawa maiyata*, canoe ceremonies which preceded warring raids on neighbouring villages and other headhunting activities, were highly theatrical affairs with elaborate costuming, departure and returning rites and feasts. The canoes were mobile objects which enabled people to produce and exemplify both ancestral and human power and efficacy.

The *gawa tao* perpetuate the link between bodies, places, canoes and ancestors. Marilyn Strathern (1997:99) has noted that the decorations of a Hagen dancer remake the body of the man who dances; so that the exchange, kin and corporeal relationships which went into making the person are made visible and explicit. When Gogodala dancers or ceremonial participants wore their mother’s *gawa tao* on their bodies, they were making explicit the source of their corporeal and ancestral efficacy; “mobilising relations” in Strathern’s terms (Strathern 1997:99). Just as today, when young men and women play football, soccer or basketball, they wear the colours or the name of their mother’s canoe and canoe design on their shirts or uniforms.

Talking about *gawa tao* has also been an empowering way of expressing the idea of a Gogodala community; everyone sits in a canoe and has a *gawa tao*. The redevelopment of carvings painted with these *gawa tao*, which now receives little criticism from local Church leaders, has become a central facet of a unitary notion of a Gogodala ‘way of life’. Even those villages who were not
involved in the revival of the 1970s, and do not paint or carve many objects for sale, paint gawa tao on their paddles, canoes, windows on houses and tradestores, and, for young men, on T-shirts, caps and jeans.

Making their own things
MacKenzie (1985:55) has characterised Gogodala 'art' as distinct from other neighbouring artforms in several ways: the most distinctive element is the centrality of gawa tao - unusual because, in other areas in the Gulf of Papua New Guinea, the "geometric regularity of concentric elements" like those displayed in the canoe designs are more likely to be part of a more general part of an anthropomorphic form like the eyes or navel. The gawa tao, however, can, and do, stand by themselves. MacKenzie (1985:61) notes that Gogodala sakema are 'painters' rather than 'carvers' and that the gawa tao are fluid, concentric designs which are always abstract in nature. The use of yellow pigment also distinguishes them from other forms of Gulf art, as does the elaborate ways in which carvings are decorated with abrus seeds, tassels of fibre, feathers and threaded cane around the outside of the gawa tao.

Crawford was interested primarily in this type of carving; pigmented and decorated with the abrus seeds, heron and cassowary feathers, and cane stitching. Keith Briggs, an expatriate missionary in charge of the Balimo mission in 1995-6, published an article in Paradise magazine in 1995, in which he extolled the virtues and skills of Gogodala carvers. The article, however, privileged the plain style of carving unadorned by gawa tao. Little was said about the large dance masks, headdresses, and small painted canoes which were, and still are, regularly made by the carvers of Kini, Saweta and Balimo.

During the revival, the people of Balimo and surrounding villages began to 'make their own things' - Crawford (pers.comm) recalls that the revival of these types of carving and painting skills was largely based on these

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10 Paradise magazine is published by Air Nuigini and features articles from all over Papua New Guinea.
photographs, many of which were collected by Landtman, Lyons and Wirz. Bege, however, noted that old men knew the designs before Crawford came.\textsuperscript{11} It would certainly have been very difficult for local people to construct the fundamentals of canoe designs, which as I have already demonstrated are based on complex and detailed ancestor stories, from the images that Crawford brought with him. Knowledge of clan canoes; the original migration of the ancestors and naming of places, canoes, and animals, remained central to local practices and experiences over the period of colonial interaction. Bege suggested that the pictures that Crawford showed to the people were not unknown, they were just not made any more as most were unrelated to their lived experiences. Crawford (pers.comm) concurs and argues that his primary contribution was to introduce the idea that such carvings were highly valued by white people and other purveyors of indigenous art in Papua New Guinea.

The carvings made since the 1970s comprises a distinct group of objects from early colonial images and certain carvings have not been reproduced. (See for example Figure 31) Early Gogodala carvings, such as those found in the Papuan Collection held in the archives of the National Museum of Australia in Canberra, show a considerable diversity of objects that are not made in the contemporary context. Much of the intricate carving and painting associated with the male \textit{maiyata} activities and celebrations, including that of \textit{Aida} objects (see Figure 24 and Figure 25), have not been reconstituted. The \textit{Aida lopala}, the objects used in the ceremonies associated with \textit{Aida}, were owned by the initiated men of the longhouse and stored in the secret lofts above the \textit{komo} in the longhouse. These objects were neither ephemeral or alienable (see Kuchler 1997).\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} Crawford (pers.comm) agreed that people, when shown the photographs of the masks, headdresses and ceremonial canoes or figures, knew what these things were and how to make them; as well as the stories underlying them - they were simply afraid to make them for fear of displeasing the Church and mission.

\textsuperscript{12} Kuchler (1997:40) argues that deliberately ephemeral objects were produced throughout Oceania - made to be destroyed or rendered absent in some way. Although Aida objects could be remade if necessary, these carvings were not ephemeral. Lyons (1926:355) notes that one of his expeditions to the area in the 1920s, he tried to purchase some of this Aida \textit{lopala} and was rebuffed consistently; other objects were readily produced for purchase, however.
Masks, headdresses, small *kundu* (TP) drums, on the other hand, were made by individual men and used by them in these ceremonies. These objects were more temporary objects, and belonged to the person who produced and wore them. This latter group of objects and carvings have been more readily reproduced than the *Aida lopala*, due perhaps to the fact that many men would have had the knowledge and experience necessary for making these types of carvings, but few would have had the expertise and knowledge to reproduce the more intricate and complex *Aida* carvings.

A more diverse collection of carvings was produced, however, in the 1970s than in 1995 and 1996 - when markets for the carvings have been harder to find. The *gi gawa* for example, which Crawford and early commentators have suggested were significant elements of the first stage of the initiation cycle, were much more intricately carved. Others have been transformed by the innovation of some carvers, although the integrity of the canoe designs is never challenged. Yet other carvings have been made to represent certain things but
reduced in scale in order to sell and transport them to areas like Moresby and Tari. Small decorated canoes are made, representing the huge racing canoes, showing simplified versions of the pigmenting and carving associated with the large canoes. Small timi or houseposts are also made, tiny objects in comparison to the massive posts produced for the construction of the longhouses.

The images that MacKenzie uses from Crawford’s notes, and several photographs in his publications in the 1970s and 1981, suggest that there was a wide range of dance masks, headdresses, and figures of ancestors and animals.

Figure 32. Small timi made at Kini village (approx. 30cms in length)

At the back of Crawford’s 1981 publication, he sets out a section on the different Gogodala carvings held in museums and private collections. In these carvings, many of which were collected by Crawford prior to 1976, the gawa tao remain constant, although the technological dimension has been transformed with the advent of paintbrushes and western paints. MacKenzie (1985:61) makes the point, however, that although the artists have access to these paints,
they only use those paints produced from the clay, lime, and other elements which make up the four colours of the canoe designs.

The types of carvings produced in 1995 and 1996 during my stay were less diverse than those made and sold at the time of Crawford and the revival. Since the early 1980s, there has been little money given to the Centre to buy or encourage the production of carvings. Tourist interest, tepid at best, has waned since the disintegration of the Balimo Cultural Centre. A fairly wide collection of carvings are still made in Kini and displayed at the half-completed longhouse when small groups of interested expatriates arrive in Balimo. Hooks, painted with *gawa tao* and displaying the head of an ancestor at one end and the head of the heron bird at the other, are common, as are small canoes bearing their canoe eye. *Waluwa* or *kundu* (TP) drums are also made, along with many of the *ligaele* (large headdresses), *ikewa* (small headdresses), and ancestral figures. Decorated paddles and masks are also made for sale (See Figure 33).

Carvings decorated with canoe designs, however, are not the only types of objects produced and sold at the longhouse and at Balimo: small carved
crocodiles, bowls and leaf plates are also made and some men are acknowledged to be experts at carving these objects. Among these carvings, I found and purchased a Papua New Guinea bird of Paradise and the coat of arms which adorns the PNG flag. It was painted in the four colours of the *gawa tao* with the area under the breast of the bird painted a dark green. On the back of the coat of arms, the PNG flag was displayed. I noticed that in many of the mission houses in Balimo these PNG coat of arms were displayed in more sober colours.

The sale of these types of carvings, plain and pigmented, however, has also given rise to the realisation that ‘tourists’ - a term which Gogodala people apply to most expatriate visitors to the area - also like to buy what, until lately, have been considered to be objects of daily use. That these objects are primarily produced by women has meant that women are frequent contributors to the longhouse at Kini and, more recently, to the office which Kamo is setting up in Balimo. Crawford was interested in the fishing nets, *atima* or woven grass mourning hoods, grass skirts, and sago or woven everyday bags. He bought several items from local women and displayed them in his 1981 book. These objects and their female producers, however, are not considered to be *sakema*. Crawford (pers.comm) recalls that before he came, nets and bags were produced

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Figure 34. Bird of paradise/ coat of arms
for use only. He encouraged the women to make and sell these nets, baskets and grass skirts. I was told to buy a particular miniature version of a saeiya, an enormous fishing net made skilfully by women from bamboo, because the woman seller told me that ‘tourists’ liked to buy these small nets to put ‘over lights’ (as a lampshade).

Older men also often make chestbands, woven from grass and coloured in red, yellow or white, which used to be worn by both men and women. The grass skirts made in some profusion by the women in Kini, Balimo, Waligi and Kimama are dyed before they are sewn together and the ornamental waistband attached. None of these items, however, are painted with gawa tao, as women do not become sakema and do not draw their own canoe designs in any formal fashion. Bege Mula told me that he had once attended an art workshop in Moresby with other Gogodala people and had tried to teach the Gogodala women there how to paint the gawa tao onto the woven grass bags. He says that they resisted the idea and refused to draw the gawa tao. Women are often very knowledgeable about the elements within these designs, especially the older women, but I never noticed any woman ever drawing or painting a gawa tao onto a paddle, a piece of clothing or a canoe. The production of these gawa tao remains predominantly a male activity.

Not all objects produced by village people, however, are made for sale to tourists or other visitors to the area. Awaba High School produced a set of T-shirts with ‘A:i Baiga’ (first place/village) and a Kanaba gawa tao depicted in full colour (see Figure 35). These were made by the school primarily for and by the students, most of whom are Gogodala. Many local women have also learnt how to make bilums (TP) although they are generally made for daily use rather than sale. The women buy the coloured wool from the local trade store at Balimo, and make the bilums (TP) for themselves, friends or spouses in which to carry babies, firewood, coconuts and beddings when moving between

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13 There are several other language groups who attend Awaba High School as it has its origins in the APCM mission and is one of only a few High Schools in Western Province.
villages. Paddles and everyday canoes are also carved by men and these too are designed for daily use. The canoes are often made without any elaboration, pigmentation or carved prow. Paddles, however, are usually decorated with the *gawa tao* of the owner’s mother or spouse.

**Figure 35. T-shirt made at Awaba High School for independence**

![T-shirt](image)

**Out of Kanaba canoe**

Gogodala carvers have a sophisticated and complex understanding of the types of images and carvings that entice ‘tourists’, expatriate missionaries and anthropologists. They have developed a style of carving which brings together various elements into visually stimulating objects for a variety of western tastes. They have entered into the politics of tourism, albeit in a limited fashion,

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14 When I learnt how to make a *bilum* (TP) and would sit on the front steps of our house rolling the wool on my leg, passing women would make comments about me being a ‘Gogodala woman’. At our farewell feast at Tai, Mala gave a speech about the *bilum* (TP) that I had made for him and showed it to everyone.

15 The two canoes made while I was staying at Tai village, had small carved pig heads on their prows but they had no *gawa tao*. 
through the medium of carving and painting particular canoe designs that, although largely remain unintelligible to western tourists, are eminently saleable. These *gawa tao* are significant for relationships between contemporary people and places, and inform the experiences of villagers and urban dwellers alike. They speak to the ‘hard life’ and strong bodies of contemporary Gogodala; depicting complex relationships between the times and places of the ancestors, and those of the present inhabitants. *Gawa tao* are the link between bodies and canoes: people’s bodies can become canoes by wearing *gawa tao* as much as bodies were transformed into canoes in ancestral times.

Increasingly these carvings, both plain and pigmented, and other objects like nets and grass skirts are being seen as one way in which they can gain access to money and community development. Church members and missionaries are inclined to favour the production of these carvings, painted and plain. Sakuliyato recalled that the Women’s District ECPNG conference held at Kini village several years ago was conducted in the longhouse and that many of the women stayed there overnight.\(^\text{16}\)

Bege and Kamo have also noted that although the carvers, and more generally the village people, do not believe that these carvings have *ugu* in them anymore because they are Christians; “it’s [carving] good for making money”. Kamo and Bege are trying, along with several other groups in different villages, to reinstate the significance of these carvings for contemporary Gogodala: not as the basis of a revived ceremonial life but rather as a means of gaining access to money.

Increasingly, ‘culture’ and ‘development’ are being talked together in Papua New Guinea. The language of ‘culture’, of constructing a unitary set of practices or images, is more often than not expressed in terms of people’s access to development, to money, health services, roads and transport. Many Gogodala people, like Bege and Kamo, see ‘culture’ as a way of getting access to development - the way that God has given them. By engaging with certain

\(^{16}\) She also said that she was scared by the size of the building, particularly the height of the centre, and she and the other women were unsettled that night.
images of themselves, they are effecting a relationship between carvings, *gawa tao*, and other locally produced objects, and money.

Thomas (1995:103) has argued that indigenous objects such as canoes and houses were not ‘symbols’ of a group as such; rather they were “vehicles for a collectivity’s power. They simultaneously indexed a group’s vitality and ideally or effectively disempowered others”. By utilising such forms today, local people are trying to renegotiate and establish relations with other people and places as primary agents and initiators. Strathern (1997:99) has recently suggested that efficacy is the ability to bring about something, to have an effect; that efficacy is the province of the dancer who decorates himself and presents his body and its ornamentations to the audience, or by the headhunter or the descendants of particular ancestors. Efficacy is what Gogodala people are evoking when they paint *gawa tao* on carvings, headdresses or masks as bodily decorations or for sale to tourists and other outsiders. By using their ‘own things’, designs which embody the ancestral narratives and the creation of the canoes as well as resonating with contemporary experiences and imperatives, they see themselves as active agents in the development of their communities.

To return to the question I posed at the beginning of this chapter, why have canoe races continued, albeit in an altered form, since the first missionaries arrived in 1932. Early missionaries construed *ugu* as evil and the carvings in which *ugu* resided as idols. *Ugu* was fearful and dangerous. The racing canoes and the *kuku*, however, although vehicles of *ugu*, were seen to be helpful rather than debilitating - racing canoes were arresting and may have easily been seen to be sporting rather than threatening. Similarly, *kuku* were beneficial to village people, protecting them from malign spirits and other beings, as well as human enemies and dangers. Canoe races may have been more easily defined as ‘cultural games’, as Keith’s comment at Aketa canoe race suggests. Whatever the reason, racing canoes remain the only facet of Gogodala material life that embraces the lived experience of *ugu* and enables young men to call the name of an animal in their mother’s clan and gain corporeal strength from the *ugu*. 
Kanaba was one of several racing canoes which sped along a stretch of the Aramia River, the paddlers in each canoe straining with the effort of maintaining their pace and bodily rhythm, before they burst into the smooth, muddy waters of the Balimo canoe place amid the noise and dancing of the watching women. This canoe race took place early on the morning of September 16, 1995, as the culmination of several days of displays, sports and other activities associated with the Balimo Show in celebration of the twentieth year of Papua New Guinean Independence. In the following chapter, I will explore the ways in which this Balimo Show was conceptualised by the organisers, and the audience and participators. Extrapolating from the images of the 1995 Balimo Show, I look at the ways local people talk about 'culture' and 'development', and what they perceive to be the result of bringing these two notions together.
Chapter 8
The Balimo Show

Unity in culture and development
The title of this chapter and section comes from the program distributed to Local Council members before the start of the 1995 Balimo Show. Pictured on the cover page of the program, above which was typed ‘Balimo 1995 District Show PNG’, was a prominent gawa tao bordered by a circular design showing the word ‘Gogodala’. The gawa tao is Suliki, the canoe design of the original white canoe that brought the Gogodala ancestors to the area. The designs that surround the gawa tao are consistent with those inscribed on carvings or headdresses; and the letters of the word ‘Gogodala’ are embedded in this design. Directly below the central gawa tao is the theme of the Show: ‘Unity in Culture and Development in 20 years of Independence’.

The Show opened with the official greeting of guests and visitors, and then proceeded to a couple of days of dancing and performances by local schoolchildren. The children, ranging from seven or eight to eighteen, were primarily from the Balimo district and by far the majority were Gogodala. They and their families, as well as school teachers, had been preparing for the Show for many weeks; making headdresses and grass skirts, and practicing the dance movements. In some instances, large carved and painted canoes were made to be carried around on the shoulders of the taller children or the school teachers.

The participants were organised into school groups, each performing their chosen dance or drama as they entered the football field; the venue of this part of the programme. At one end of the field Suliki, the original ancestral canoe, made its way between swaying sago fronds set up at the entrance of the ground, the teachers holding the prow of the canoe so that the following ‘paddlers’ (children) kept in formation. The children pushed their small paddles through the air to each side of the ‘canoe’, imitating the rhythmic movements of
paddlers in racing canoes, at each row punctuating the movement of their paddles with a loud shout. Through another break in the bamboo fence surrounding the field, a fierce crocodile head made its way onto the football ground, its body trailing behind with the smaller stragglers. The watching parents cheered as their children came onto the field and some women became increasingly excited, several running onto the ground and joining the children and teachers in their dancing groups. The appreciation of the audience was noisily apparent.

Early the next morning several young men ran the considerable length of the local airstrip outside Balimo to complete their cross country race. Later, teams of men and women organised into clan or village groups competed with each other in basketball, football, netball and soccer. All day in the relentless sun, the young people participated in the games, watched by their families and fellow villagers manifest in the scores of brightly coloured umbrellas.

The next morning was September 16, Independence Day. Early, before the sun rose above the lagoons; five large racing canoes, manned with at least thirty paddlers in each, made their way out of Kabili lagoon and onto the Aramia River. Once at the river, the race commenced and the massive canoes, each highly decorated and pigmented, strained under the weight and effort of the paddling men. The race was won convincingly by Kanaba canoe, and the canoes and their paddlers made their way back to Balimo canoe place to be greeted by a large group of friends and relatives. Many of the younger women, excited by the return of the racing canoes, danced for their husbands’ canoes. In their increasingly frenzied movements and celebrations, many of the men were pulled into the water and one of the canoes capsize. The crowd roared with approval and laughter. The women and paddlers danced together, informally, in the knee deep water, some still managing to stay in the canoe.

Later in the day, after the speeches by the District Manager and other dignitaries and the raising of the PNG flag, the ‘traditional dancing’ category began with Church and other social groups performing. Wearing a wide variety of decorations and costumes, ranging from Gogodala headdresses and grass
skirts, to skirts made from green sago fronds, these groups entertained the crowd with their noisy and exuberant dancing. One group, grasping white crossed pieces of wood, imitated the movements of a frog leaping around a swamp; another acted out the ancestral story of the ‘monster’ Ame Sibala; who, in the form of superb piece of carved wood, was powered by a lone dancer who mimicked Ame Sibala’s silent approach towards hunting men.

Sunday morning dawned and many made their way to the field yet again, this time for the Church service. The singing filled the air as the people gathered for the Show sang their hymns in Gogodala, English and Tok Pisin. Sunday afternoon and the Gogodala Suliki (eels) took on the Daru Barramundis in a fiercely contested rugby league match. Again the crowd was large and vocal.

Two days later, after other similar activities, the Balimo Show and Independence celebrations were officially brought to a close with the blessing and sharing of food in an outdoor feast of sago, rice and meat. The Balimo Show raises many of the sorts of issues and problems that many local groups in Papua New Guinea encounter today. In the following discussion, I explore the complex interconnections between national, regional and local contexts and experiences in terms of the types of activities that were organised for the Show.

**Independence Day**

On Saturday September 16 1995, the twentieth year of Papua New Guinean Independence was commemorated in the Balimo. For the Gogodala, who are the majority of those in this area of Western Province, this was the first Balimo Show for almost twenty years. Many of the villagers were sceptical about the types of activities planned for the Show, particularly those revolving around the dancing, displays associated with gawa tao and other types of carvings. They were, however, enthusiastic about the sporting activities and the canoe races organised for the celebrations.

The celebrations for Independence day began with the predawn race I described in the previous chapter. Although there were only five canoes which
attended this particular race, and only one of these canoes was an A Grade canoe, it was still held to be a success by those organising the proceedings. The racing canoes from Awaba and other village on the Aramia River did not take part in the race, as Show organisers had refused to donate some of the prizemoney to Awaba so that a parallel race could be run there (for those villages too far away from Balimo). Nevertheless, a significant number of people lined the river to watch the progress of the canoes, and many others waited, like us, at the Balimo gawa saba or canoe place in order to catch the men in their canoes as they arrived.

The race in the morning was followed by what was labelled ‘Floats show, March Past, Flag Raising’; this largely consisted of several short speeches by the District Manager and other dignitaries. After the Papua New Guinea flag was raised (along with two others which I could not determine), the national anthem was sung by a local choir and the Balimo Show was officially opened. In the afternoon, there was a section of ‘Traditional Dancing’, followed closely by the rugby league match between the Suliki Squad and the Daru Barramundis; both of which I will explore in greater detail in the next two sections. A ‘Greasy Pole/ Greasy Pig Chase’, designed to attract attention after the football game, was not held and the day’s activities concluded with a selection of ‘String and Ordinary Bands’ which continued to play until well into the night. The music was very popular, especially with the younger members of the crowd, and many people stayed to listen.

‘Traditional Dancing’
The Balimo Show was organised to run over eight days; from Monday 11 September until the following Tuesday. ‘Traditional Dancing’ played a significant part in its production. On Thursday morning, the community schools

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1 While down at the Fly River, we came across the celebrations for the opening of a second-hand clothing store in Wasua. The ‘greasy pole’ was one of the prime attractions and excited much attention from the young men in particular. Only these men tried to climb the pole, while the women and children stood around and cheered them on. The young men tended to climb in small groups, helping out the members of their small group to get to the top. The men who finally got to the top was not Gogodala and this caused a bit of trouble - with the Gogodala men retreating behind the store and throwing rocks over the roof of the building to the people gathered on the other side.
from most of the Gogodala villages, and Awaba High School, marched onto the Balimo football field, already festooned with sago fronds and a temporary fence. One group of dancers emerged from the grounds of Balimo Community School while others lined up outside the field until it was their turn. One by one, the community schools and the high school groups entered the Show arena, moving along the sides of the field performing to the crowd. Once all of the performers were on the demarcated ground, they moved into the centre in careful formations and finished with a final set of performances before leaving in sequence again.

Figure 36. School group coming out of Balimo Community School

There were several different types of performances; ranging from the coming of Suliki canoe to a drama revolving around an old ‘spirit’ woman who attacked several hunters taking fruit from her tree. There was one long canoe, perhaps three metres in length, which was carried on the shoulders of several of the older children and teachers. The canoe was decorated with a salago lapila on the top of the prow, and bore the Aegae gawa tao from the white moiety. Another canoe, similar in length and function although sporting a Kanaba canoe design, also made its way onto the football field. The children and teachers
walking alongside the central canoes wore grass skirts and small headdresses with matching gowa tao painted on them, carrying split bamboo sticks which they beat on the ground as they walked. Several of the older children, and some of the teachers, also carried and beat on small waluwa; drums similarly decorated with matching canoe designs. Students and teachers alike danced bare-breasted, swaying their long grass skirts in time to the split bamboo and kundu (TP) drums. They sang songs to accompany the progression of the canoes or crocodiles, or simply shouted the name of the canoe as they came; imitating the noises and songs of the racing canoes.

In the afternoon, the dancing canoes and crocodiles were replaced by performances of selected stories, and some singing groups. One such drama represented the creation of Papua New Guinea and documented the movement of people from South East Asia to the islands of PNG. A teacher, standing apart from the children, narrated the events leading up to the arrival of these people; equating this with the original migration of the Gogodala ancestors. The two canoes of these ancestors, Suliki and Madulabali (white and red respectively),
were articulated as the primary canoes of the ancestral migration from South East Asia to Papua New Guinea.

During these performances and earlier dances, there were several statements made over the loud speaker about the importance of ‘cultural activities’ for school children. While one group of children danced, an elderly commentator said that these dances were the dances of their grandfathers and that it was sad that these people were not here “to dance with us”.

The dancing of the adults, although held two days later, was similarly organised. Each group lined up and moved into the arena while performing and dancing, moving along the sides so that all of the audience had a chance to see and hear each performance. These were mainly Church fellowship groups; and over the previous weeks, many practices and preparations had taken place. The women made grass skirts and the men carved and painted the headdresses, masks, drums and ceremonial canoes. A group from the neighbouring Dibiaso village, Bamustu,

Figure 38. Aegae canoe is carried on the shoulders of school children

also came and performed one of their dances; initially parading down the main street of Balimo before entering the football field.
Again, there were several canoes and crocodiles or monsters; such as Ame Sibala, whose group performed the death of a hunter by the legendary monster. Another group of men, their upper bodies and lower legs coated in white mud and light green frond skirts around their waists, performed a set of movements resembling martial arts with short bayonet-like swords. They represented the Bahai Church in Balimo. A small collection of Highlands women working at the Nursing School and Balimo Health Centre presented a dance from their area which was referred to as ‘the Highland’s dance’ by the Gogodala audience. Most of the other groups of dancers performed Gogodala or Kiwai dances, one particularly impressive group of older men and women stealing the crowd’s appreciation with their beautiful headdresses, drums and the stately movements of their bodies in time to the split bamboo rattles.

This diverse set of performances operated under the auspices of a ‘Traditional Dancing’ category in the Show Programme and were held on Independence day. Later in the afternoon, under the same category, Balimo Health Centre staged a drama about the possibilities and dangers of contracting the HIV virus through sexual contact. The crowd were raucous in their approval of the acting of the Health Centre workers; clapping and laughing when the
‘wife’ of a promiscuous man, who had contracted the virus and then infected his wife, gave him a verbal barrage.

During these and other performances, many of the watching women showed their appreciation of the skills and beauty of the dancers and actors by joining in the activities, imitating and parodying the movements of the dancers. Some took off their shirts, or lifted their skirts to allow brief glimpses of their thighs while the crowd encouraged them to further exploits. Even older women became involved, dancing with the Kamula dancers as well as the Gogodala ones. The hilarity of their parodying actions and exaggerated facial expressions only heightened the apparent enjoyment of the performances and encouraged dancers, school children or adults, to perform more elaborate actions and movements.

**Catfish versus Eels**

Sporting activities are very popular. Sakuliyato, who had travelled in from Tai village to watch these games, at one stage suggested that the ‘Traditional Dancing’ should have been replaced by more games. Many of the villagers were involved in these sporting activities, as most village people, men and women, play some sort of sport. The games also tend to get a large audience, particularly rugby league. At the Balimo Women’s Regional ECPNG Conference in August 1995, the women were urged by the organisers and speakers to resist attending the Saturday football game held at the Balimo oval. Their warnings were ignored and on the Saturday and Sunday of the Conference, most of the young women and many of the older ones made their way over to the football field to watch the games. Some of the leaders ran behind the group of women, yelling at them to come back to the Conference but, again, were largely ignored.

The day before Independence, Friday 15 September, was given over entirely to these sporting contests; soccer, basketball, netball and rugby league

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*Rachael Cleland (1996:172) writes that she was instrumental in initiating netball competitions in Moresby in 1955 which soon spread to more distant areas. Other sports, like rugby league, were introduced by colonial administrators. These sporting activities are immensely popular in both urban and rural areas.*
were all on the agenda. Village teams played against other villages, or took on competitors from Daru or Kiunga who had arrived in Balimo for this reason. Many of those men and women who played in the Kiunga or Daru teams, however, actually worked in Balimo as teachers, nurses or administrators and as such were quite well known; others were simply Gogodala people who worked in Daru or Kiunga. One of the organisers of the Show noted that by organising teams in this way, conflict was often avoided. Again many of the women became excited by the proceedings of the football games and showed their appreciation by running onto the field and breaking into an impromptu performance of their own.

Other sporting events were interspersed between canoe races, dancing and string-band music throughout the week of the Show. On Independence day, the Daru Barramundis played the locals, the Suliki Squad. The Suliki team (*suliki* is an eel) was drawn from several village-based rugby league teams of young men as a Balimo District regional squad. The Balimo rugby league is quite a strong one, and A grade games draw large crowds every Saturday, with people travelling from Awaba, Aketa and other Aramia River villages as well as Tai and Dogono, Adiba and Yau to attend these matches. As a result, the Suliki Squad’s activities are closely followed by both village people and Balimo dwellers. The meeting of the Suliki Squad and the Barramundis from Daru, then, was an eagerly anticipated event; especially for those villages and families who had young men playing in the local team. The fact that this sporting event plays such a significant role on Independence day itself is indicative of the consistent interest Gogodala villagers display towards these types of sporting events. Other celebratory days, such as the opening of new trade stores, community schools or Church buildings are punctuated with these matches, usually organised between villages. As with canoe races, these intervillage games are as much antagonistic as friendly, and overwhelmingly competitive. The women play soccer, netball and basketball, while the men primarily compete in rugby league although many also play soccer and basketball.
After the Suliki and Barramundi clash, a Kiunga Catfish and Suliki Squad match had been planned: the Kiunga team failed to turn up, however, and another intervillage match was hastily organised in its stead. Most of the audience seemed unperturbed by the change in teams and the game went ahead as planned. Rugby league finals were also held on the Monday, the second last day of the Show and, as a prize, some money was given to the winning teams. K3000 was donated by Phillips Petroleum towards the prizes for the ‘Traditional Dancing’, the Schoolchildren, and the canoe race, as well as the sports events. These sorts of sporting events and competitions remain one of the most significant intervillage exchanges, alongside ECPNG Conferences. Most of the people who attended the Balimo Show from Tai, Oseke and Dogono villages (from where we also came), and who walked in several days in a row to Balimo (a five hour round trip), came to see and participate in these sporting events.

**Christian country**

The Balimo Show was organised by a variety of people, primarily men, who are interested in establishing links between experiences of, and practices associated with, Gogodala people, and wider, regional concerns. Both Kamo Bagali and Bege Mula were on the organising committee of the Show, as were several other local business people; mainly from the Balimo District. The local Council members for each ward were also involved and each received a program like the one we have been discussing. The District Office at Balimo participated in planning and financial capacities of the Show committee, as did certain provincial authorities.

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3 At that stage, September 1995, Carsons Pratt had been hired by Phillips Petroleum to set up the test drill between Adiba and Yau.

4 Gogodala villages are divided into different ‘wards’ for the purposes of local government in the form of the Local Council; generally, each large village constitutes a ward. Tai and Oseke, for example, are in Dogono Ward.

5 Kaplan (1995:95) notes that if nation-states require narratives of past, present, and future, then rituals are moments in which such stories are contested, told, upheld or transformed.
The organisation and operation of the Show fell to a small group of Gogodala people who were interested in the types of activities, sports, races and displays in which they encouraged local school groups and village people to participate. In the following discussion, I want to explore the ways in which the activities of the Balimo Show, as well as the intentions of the organisers, participants and audience, allow us to glimpse some of the ways in which ‘culture’ and ‘development’ are being brought together by local, as well as regional and district, agents. This, I would argue, is an increasingly important context in which people in less developed areas of the country are articulating interest in the conflation of these two concerns. Local people see themselves as the primary agents in this process, and hope to initiate some change for their own area and communities.

The interaction between these differing intentions and projects also produces a fruitful arena in which the complexities of the making of a national culture are brought to the fore (Hirsch 1995a:185; see also LiPuma & Meltzoff 1990). Hirsch (1995a:185) writes: “[i]n most cases, it would seem, the making of a national culture is the unintended consequence of local cultural products being pursued within the wider context created by the nation-state and its project of culture” (emphasis in original). As I noted in Chapter 1, Gogodala people have had little experience of their nation in the course of their daily lives. It is only when national politicians like Chris Haiveta visit the area to open community schools or national elections are held that people express any opinions at all about it.

Local people have, however, had some interaction with state institutions and their officials throughout the colonial and post-colonial period, primarily in terms of Christianity and the UFM/ APCM mission. The earliest schools in the area belonged to the mission, roads and buildings were constructed on mission advice and the Balimo Health Centre was solely mission-funded and administered for many years. Even Awaba High School, the only high school in the region, was originally a mission-based enterprise and today several of the staff are expatriate missionaries with the APCM.
I noted in Chapter 2 that Gogodala people often refer to themselves as ‘Christian country’. This concept, articulated generally in English, was employed when we were discussing other places and people in Papua New Guinea and was the basis of the distinction between themselves and others. The idea of ‘Christian country’ was crystallised during the revival in the 1970s. In the 1974/5 Annual Report of the Gogodala Cultural Centre, Crawford (1976a:14) notes that the ‘cultural patrols’ that travelled to local villages emphasised neighbouring Christians who also had ‘traditional ceremony’.

To further engender confidence, slide evening were held illustrating traditional life in each of Papua New Guinea’s Provinces, including as a catalyst, slides of St. Mary’s Cathedral in Port Moresby, which illustrates a blending of traditional and Christian beliefs ... Books, magazines, journals and newspapers were other mediums used to make clear to the village folk the existence of Papua New Guinea’s rich cultural heritage (Crawford 1976a:14).

Other people, even neighbours like the Kamula, are perceived to be characterised by their drinking habits, and magical powers and abilities. Gogodala people say they only practice ‘good magic’, using specific words that control the rain or help the victims of snake bite. People like the Suki (to the south-west across the Fly River) and the Kamula, however, still practice ‘bad magic’ with which they kill people who have angered or harmed them. A young man in Tai village once mentioned that he through Kamula people had a ‘hard culture’ and he wanted to travel there and learn magic words from them. These neighbouring groups do not embrace Christianity with the fervour that the Gogodala see themselves as doing. That they live in Christian country is both a source of pride and some regret: others are seen as being more powerful and having a ‘strong culture’, as well as having money, cars, or motor canoes.

**Beef and bibles**
Experience of the local cannot be divorced from that of the regional, national or global: even those people who have never travelled beyond Balimo have formed relationships, however distant, with expatriate missionaries, doctors and nursing staff, teachers and other outsiders involved in development projects. Expatriate
missionaries have been primary agents through which Gogodala villagers have accessed and envisaged international spaces and practices. The Bible has been integral for these imaginings and its translation into Gogodala has been both influenced by and transformed local notions and expressions of Christian spirituality. The Balimo Health Centre has also been substantially connected to expatriate missionaries; evangelisation has been inextricably tied up with the dispensation of education and health in this area.

There is some feeling that white people have been instrumental in keeping Gogodala from a more advantageous position, in terms of money and development. Missionaries have promised many things and, as many local people perceive it, little has been achieved. Along with the notion that white people tend to ‘trick’ village people, there is a general idea that the missionaries ‘did not teach’ them the right things. Several people made the point that although other Christian denominations in Papua New Guinea are well off and have large Churches, the ECPNG has little money and less influence. A school teacher noted that the missionaries had withheld the ‘secret’ from Gogodala people, teaching them only insignificant fragments of the Bible. Another mentioned that if Gogodala people had been taught by Catholics or Lutherans, they would be better off than they are. She said that missionaries had argued that local people did not need money and that, until some had travelled to other parts of the country and had seen how others live, most had concurred with this opinion.

Despite this perception, the building of roads, schools, health centres, a nursing school, and airstrips has been, as in many parts of Papua New Guinea, primarily the work of the mission - although sometimes funded by provincial and national governments. As Weymouth (1978) has noted, due to poor accessibility, the lack of good and fertile soils, and the constant inundation of the land, little substantial development has occurred in the Gogodala area. In the 1950s and 1960s, the hunting of crocodiles for their skins yielded large returns and not many people were interested in developing the copra and rubber industries that had some potential (Weymouth 1978:253-4). When rubber
plantations were established at Bamustu and Kotale villages on the Aramia River, production was high and they became the biggest rubber producers in the Western Province.

In 1975, the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) initiated a cattle project near Kewa village on the Aramia River, providing 132 cows and 16 bulls; within a couple of years, several villages including Tai and Dogono had bought cows with the intention of breeding them for beef (Weymouth 1978:260-2). There were several slaughterhouses also established but only a couple are still in operation. The slaughterhouse in Balimo is rundown and has not been operating for years. Meat for large, organised feasts, like that of Aketa School opening was purchased from one of these villages and dissected according to DPI guidelines. Other smaller feasts run by family groups are usually cut up by the young men who kill the cow (despite DPI prohibitions on such activities).

Some southern Gogodala villages, situated on the Fly River or its tributaries like Pedaeya Creek, receive monthly compensation payments from the Provincial Government for the pollution of their water courses, gardens and sago swamps by the tailings and silting from the Ok Tedi Gold and Copper mine at the head of the river. Eight Gogodala villages receive Special Support Grants (SSG) from the national government by way of monetary compensation for the transformation of their landscape and access to sago, fish and garden foods as a direct result of Ok Tedi Mining Ltd’s (OTML) activities upriver. With the most recent agreement reached with OTML and BHP, OTML’s largest shareholder, however, these types of payments are set to change and I am unsure how these lower Fly villages will be affected. OTML also established the Lower Ok Tedi/Fly River Development Trust to set up and finance certain projects in one hundred villages on the Fly and Ok Tedi river systems (PNG Resources 1994:6); but Gogodala villages have seen little benefit from this Trust. OTML has also supplied several forms of equipment up and down the length of the Fly river, and blue plastic containers (to catch rain water running off sheets of iron roofing) are a common sight in these villages. Large water tanks have also been
given to selected villages, and places like Wasua Station received a tractor and mower to maintain the airstrip.

There has been little interest in the area for large-scale development projects apart from the test oil drill near Yau and Adiba I mentioned earlier. Long term development projects have had little opportunity in either southern or northern Gogodala villages. Local sawmills tried to sell logs around the area but, until recently, there has been little interest in these products. Within the last few years, the logging industry has become more active along the Aramia River. Although to date logging has been mainly restricted to Dibiaso and Tlumsa villages, such as Makapa or Bamustu, the Gogodala are becoming increasingly affected by these activities. Wood (n.d:3) has suggested recently that the Gogodala villagers living along the Aramia River will be profoundly affected by any large-scale logging in the Makapa TRP area (Makapa Timber Rights Purchase Area), as they rely on the river for the production and collection of their foodstuffs. Some of those affected also have interests in the land which could be logged.

As there has been little mineral extraction or logging activities in the district, there has also been less pollution and transformation of the landscape than in some other areas in Papua New Guinea. However, many local people are becoming frustrated with the ways in which this has limited their access to money and things like vehicles, iron roofing, water tanks and tradestore food. They are aware that communities in other provinces in Papua New Guinea, particularly urban areas, have more access to these things.

Local businesses have also exhibited a singular lack of success. There are only three main business people in Balimo and none of them are Gogodala. Edward Bauwokali is from Tari, Southern Highlands Province, and although he has lived in the area for many years and had a Gogodala wife he is still an outsider. He runs several large tradestores at Balimo and Awaba (on the Aramia River) and has a large western style house at Balimo. Roy Biyama is ‘mixed race’ with an Australian father and a Gogodala mother. Although he was

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6 Bauwokali is Edward’s Gogodala in-law name which he uses for his business despite the fact that he and his wife are now divorced.
born and grew up in Balimo village and has not been out of the country, many local people believe that his unknown father has somehow helped him with business ideas. He also owns several tradestores in Balimo and Awaba. The other major chain of stores are run by a man from Kerema who, with his family, settled in the area many years ago. Pasuwe, a mission-based company, had a store at Balimo which was taken over by Ewa Saba and managed by Karen and Paul Bickerton but it closed down in 1995.

The lack of local businesses owned by Gogodala people is seen as vindication of the general feeling that locals do not know how to establish and maintain a business. Some felt that Gogodala people did not act like white people and therefore could not do the same things; others that local people were never meant to administer business.

**Raising Suliki**

Kamo and Bege see their role as that of mediators between village and urban groups in the Balimo district; to establish development based on Gogodala things. Kamo has suggested several times that through the Cultural Centre, local people can engage other people on their own terms as the stories, carvings and other activities are based on past and present experiences. By selling or dancing ‘their own things’, he argues, local people empower themselves.

As I mentioned in Chapter 6, there has been some attempt to re-establish a cultural centre in Balimo; Kamo and Bege are interested in setting up a longhouse similar to that established by Tony Crawford in the early 1970s. Since the inception of the Kini Cultural Centre, it has been perceived locally as a Kini village exercise and generally only the carvings produced at Kini village are displayed and sold at the longhouse. Kini, although only a few kilometres from Balimo, is quite difficult to access by a canoe in the wet season and tourists have not visited Kini village for several years. The last group of tourists who did travel to Kini to see the longhouse set up tents in the football field close to the longhouse, refusing to sleep in the longhouse as advised by the villagers;
they also bought every piece of carving, fishing net and grass skirt on display at the longhouse.\(^7\)

In September 1992, Ivan Kesa, Culture Officer with the Tourism Development Corporation in Boroko, came to the Balimo area and wrote a report entitled ‘Gogodala Cultural Arts Festival and Kini Cultural Centre’, describing his arrival and experiences in relation to the Kini longhouse:

It is Monday, 14th of September, 1992 when arriving at Balimo airport, we walk 200 metres to join the beginning of the Independence Celebration which also coincide with the Gogodala Cultural Festival. The purpose of the travel was to capture these cultural events as well as report on the present state of Traditional Art in Balimo area, since the establishment of Balimo Cultural Centre. On Tuesday, 15th of September, more [film] shootings were taken on the cultural activities. Wednesday, 16th of September, the celebration began with the famous Gogodala Canoe Race. This was, and still is the highlight of the Festivities held between every Gogodala village. On Thursday ... we visited the Kini Cultural Centre. Shootings were taken on the present state of the house and the people’s sacred dances as they danced ... Queries were raised on the present state of declination (sic) in the interest of sustaining the traditional art forms, activities and the long house (Cultural Centre).

In his account, Kesa notes the deteriorating state of the Kini longhouse and draws attention to the lack of interest in the production and display of carvings and other objects. Many of the elders that he spoke to questioned Kesa as to why support from national and provincial governments had not been forthcoming since the building of the first Centre in Balimo in 1974: he was informed that the people at the Kini Cultural Centre had been upholding the purposes of the original Balimo Centre but it was falling down - “[i]t may be the last of this type of cultural centre existing for the Balimo people”. Kesa was also asked why, since the NCC had made a film about the Gogodala (Gogodala-A cultural Revival?1977) as well as a book (Crawford’s Aida, Life and Ceremony of the Gogodala 1981), “making money and national fame from us, why are we not financially supported to help uphold the cultural centre?”. The comment was also made that, as a direct result of conflict between the Church and the Centre

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\(^7\) Hence the prevailing belief that white people in the guise of tourists buy anything for any price.
as a result of the Centre’s activities, the transmission of knowledge and skills about the carvings was under threat. “Knowing that so many churches are born everywhere every minute including the disturbance caused by the so called developers. We feel sorry for our culture”.

The local Lands Department has granted Kamo and Bege the ground on which the original Centre was built in the 1973-4 to establish the new longhouse. An important part of Kamo’s intention in setting up the Centre in Balimo is to ensure that people from all villages can identify with it. This would also make the Centre easier to access for visitors and tourists. Bege and Kamo have repeatedly petitioned both the Provincial Government and the National Cultural Council for funds to start building. Recently, according to a letter Kamo sent in April 1997, the plans that he and Bege submitted to the National Museum in Port Moresby have been approved and an officer from the Museum is expected to spend some time in Balimo later this year to assess the practical application of such plans. As yet, though, no funds have been received from either a provincial or national level; both Kamo and Bege have travelled to Daru and Moresby under their own auspices several times to collect promised funds and have returned empty-handed.

The new longhouse will be built in a similar fashion to the original Cultural Centre, although it will be divided into five areas: an office space, a ‘bulk artefacts’ shop, a ‘modern arts carving shop’, and a living and dining area for visitors and employees of the Centre. Kamo proposes that the staff at the Centre consist primarily of elderly instructors who would be paid to visit the nineteen community schools of Balimo District. Each school would have two of these instructors, female and male, to teach the children about ‘Gogodala culture’: the boys would learn about clan and marriage relationships, the preparations associated with racing canoes and ceremonies, canoe designs and ‘totems’, methods of hunting and gardening and ‘respect for elders’. Women instructors, according to the Centre’s agenda, would teach girls about the types of marriage and clan relations expected of them when they become adults; as well as methods of producing, preparing and cooking food, child raising, and
‘feasts and celebrations’. The stated aim of the Cultural Centre is to foster ‘Gogodala culture’ for the integral development of the community in order to maintain stability and order - the “Gogodala Cultural Centre is therefore determined to take [the] initiative of reviving our culture for the betterment of integral human development”.

Although plans for building a Cultural Centre at Balimo have of necessity been postponed, Kamo has been active in Balimo community schools. The School Inspector for Balimo District is interested in teaching cultural activities within the new school curriculum, established in 1995 as the basis for all community school programs in Papua New Guinea. The general aims of this interaction between the Cultural Centre and the Balimo District Community Schools have been couched in terms of ‘the development of Gogodala adults’, inculcated with a dual sense of national and local customs:

1. To encourage students to become members of their community and good citizens of Papua New Guinea.
2. To develop in students a pride for our traditions, culture and nation.
3. To help students understand better how customs influence the way they and other people behave.
4. To help students identify those aspects of traditional life which are suitable and unsuitable for life today.

The community schools’ interest in collaboration between itself and the germinal Cultural Centre is based on a new National program or syllabus aimed at promoting ‘Cultural Activities’ in educational institutions in Papua New Guinea. Called ‘Community Life’, this syllabus brings together social studies, agriculture and natural sciences under the auspices of encompassing both local ways of living and wider notions and practices. The new syllabus includes learning;

[for instance the songs or the magic words [that] are sung to the spirits when planting the crops, supposed [to] result in a very good harvest.]

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8 When the first longhouse and Cultural Centre was established, education and interaction with the local community schools was also a primary aim (Crawford 1976:12).

9 As Christine Jourdan (1995:127-8) has suggested, education is one of the ‘stepping-stones to national consciousness’. She argues that, for the Solomon Islands, schools derive their power from two sources: firstly, that they transmit “social values that are generally upheld by the majority of the adult population and serve the interests of the state” and, secondly, they play on parents’ desire to improve the social conditions of their children (Jourdan 1995:135).
Canoe pulling songs and dances, feast to involve work. Paddle designs. Clan generations, how first people travelled and settled, etc.

The proposal suggests that each grade, from one to six, is governed by a theme according to which 'cultural activities' are taught. In grade one, for example, the 'Community Life' program would concentrate on 'The Local Community'; in grade two, the children would look at 'The Wider Community' and so on until in grade six, the program would concentrate on 'Our Country and the World'. There are many activities that are characterised as 'cultural' and specifically Gogodala; from ancestral narratives, the making and racing of canoes and sago-making, to the construction of bilums (TP), and learning about calenders.

The School Inspector and Kamo are speculating on the possibility of producing a book containing all of the gawa tao, and another small monograph outlining the ancestor stories. The 1981 book produced by Tony Crawford is still seen as an important representation of Gogodala 'culture' and 'tradition' and Kamo is negotiating with the National Cultural Council to send the remaining copies of the book to him so that he can display these at the Cultural Centre. The smaller books would be utilised primarily in the context of the community schools and other local purposes.

The new District Manager is also working in collaboration with Kamo and Bege and is promising to get funds that, following Provincial reforms, will not be diverted through Daru but will come straight to Balimo. Kamo is currently using his tradestore next to the proposed site of the Cultural Centre to sell some of the carvings from Saweta and Kini. He has also arranged to sell carvings to the NCC who will put it in their stock at the wharf in Moresby. Joe Chan, a distributor of Papua New Guinea artefacts, buys from the Gogodala, through Bege Mula and Kamo, as does Turama Arts in Moresby.

My own presence in the area only helped Kamo and Bege crystallise their conceptions about the interest that many white people, in particular, have for the Gogodala area. It was once suggested to me that although other Papua New Guineas did not want to come to the area to work as doctors, nurses or teachers, because they knew that it was 'swampy'; white people kept coming
back because they ‘loved’ the place! Kamo and others initially wanted me to write a book about ‘Gogodala history’, encompassing the travels and actions of the original ancestors. He noted that it was important that I did this as young people did not ‘know their own ways’ and they, therefore, had to be taught. He kept copies of the stories that we heard and taped from Sanada, his uncle, for use in the Centre and asked us to copy the gawa tao that Sanada had drawn for us. Kamo saw our own interest in Gogodala life and people as an indication that his and Bege’s plans could be achieved despite setbacks and tepid commitment from provincial and national officials.

Kamo is planning to take tourists on canoe trips, which would encompass ancestral sites and visits to different villages along the Aramia River. The journey that Charles, Kamo and I did, following Miwasa (Chapter 2) partly became, for Kamo, a trial for later ‘tourist’ trips. He pointed out several places where not only Miwasa had stopped and fought or created, but others as well. At a particular creek mouth, he explained that Bani had, after killing Kaliya, chopped off his head and thrown the body away. In its death throes, the body of Kaliya had created an etawa, a large lagoon. On the other side of the river, opposite Kaliya’s lagoon, the creek that Sawiya created in her haste to turn her canoe around was visible.

Another proposal is to raise Suliki canoe from its resting place at Masanawa canoe place. This will cause much concern and Kamo has acknowledged that it might be too problematic a venture. As Suliki still ‘lives’ at Masanawa, although totally submerged since the time of the ancestors, it has ugu and is a source of trepidation for local people. When a part of Pedaeya Creek was dug up by villagers from Duwaba several years ago, in order to connect it to a creek running through swamps and thereby facilitate travel between Kini (and Balimo) and Duwaba, the children of these people were born with defects and strange diseases. Many believe that these people had disturbed the path of the original ancestors and raised dangerous ugu. As a result, many of their new-born children were effected. Raising Suliki would create a similar situation.
A strong culture

Clark (1997:65) has recently posed the question:

[w]hat sorts of conditions need to be in existence for the emergence of a Papua New Guinean nationalism, and does this suggest that the state must engage in acts of 'organised remembering' such as Independence Day celebrations?

The 1995 Balimo Show was one such act of 'organised remembering', instigated by local people but funded by provincial and national bodies; a collage of 'cultural' activities, football and racing canoes. Although celebrations like these are based on state directives, and even run by provincial administrators, it would be incorrect to assume that local people do not initiate and transform these occasions to suit their own purposes.

Although rural peoples’ experiences of the nation in Papua New Guinea are limited, as Clark (1997:66) argues, their connections with state institutions and officials are not: indeed these experiences are often the only way the nation is imagined. The Gogodala live in a place that is deemed remote: it is difficult to get there and, once there, it is even more challenging to move around. There has been little in the form of development, and state funding has been ineffectual at best. Contact with the state is primarily experienced through the education system, as there is a community school in almost every village. Every morning at Buila Community School in Balimo, the Papua New Guinea flag is raised and the students sing the national anthem. Otto (1997:34) writes:

[d]uring countless small rituals the flag has been raised, and the anthem has been sung at the start of the day in community schools around the country. Education is one of the strongest instruments a state has; moreover ... the teachers themselves, who in Papua New Guinea are often from a different ethnic group, come to represent (and perhaps identify with) the larger, national community.

Most Gogodala village children attend a community school, more often than not located in their own or a neighbouring village, and start grade one
between the ages of seven and ten. Although many of these children will not go beyond grade six - and the majority of those who continue on to high school finish at the end of grade ten - the education process has become a significant influence on the ways in which these children elucidate their relations with their parents, their lifestyle, other parts of Papua New Guinea as well as other countries which they glimpse both through radio and at school. The new program explicitly sets out an agenda whereby school children are encouraged to become ‘good citizens’ of their country as well as their own community, and to develop a sense of ‘pride’ both in the nation and local ‘culture’. This is not particularly surprising as the PNG Department of Education has often been involved in overtly nationalising projects, focusing on the intersection of the local and national spheres of experience and interest. What perhaps is more interesting for the sake of this discussion is that this is being actively combined with an explicit program for the re-establishment of a Cultural Centre and the public articulation of Gogodala ‘customary ways’. Since April this year, students of the community schools in the Balimo District have been receiving weekly lessons on the clans, clan canoes and designs, and ancestral knowledge and practices, as envisaged by the staff of the Centre. The new syllabus has been complimented by a recent return to the use of tokples (TP) (local languages) in community schools as the basis of literacy. Previously in the Balimo District, English was the language taught to first grade students through which they were learnt literacy skills. A return to local languages as the basis community school education has only served to emphasise the importance of learning local cultural practices and ‘traditional’ ways of living.

The idea of the local community as the basis of people’s experiences and knowledge has been an important facet of Papua New Guinean politicians’ rhetoric about national imagining in the twenty years since Independence. The new syllabus is based on such a notion; it begins with lessons about experiences of the local for young children, and develops, as the children do, into teaching

10 Foster (1991:240-44) has argued that education, and books are largely the creation of the state - and their influence in the imagining of the nation cannot be underestimated.
about wider issues and relations of which the student, as a member of a nation-
state, is a part. In grade one, children are taught about the local community,
progressing through the various grades until in grade six, the lessons culminate
with the contextualisation of Papua New Guinea in the world.

Local people are very aware that they are considered insignificant on the
political map of Papua New Guinea, especially in comparison to other, more
populated provinces. They, in turn, perceive provincial and national politicians
to be uninterested in the issues that concern them. At one of the community
school opening in 1995, to which a national politician came and made a speech,
several people voiced their bitterness towards politicians, in particular, and the
government more generally. One woman said to him: “you think we are just
bush kanakas (TP) but we know what you are doing”. They, like many other
people in Papua New Guinea, feel that ‘wantokism’ (TP) underlies the structure
of government, both at the national and provincial levels. As they have no
people in positions of power in either regional or national governments,
Gogodala people feel that they have little access to funding or development.

A Provincial representative attended the celebrations on Independence
day, September 16, to officially open the Show and to draw attention to the
national significance of the twentieth anniversary of Independence. No-one in
the crowd knew who he was or even who he represented in his capacity as
Provincial authority. Neither did they attend much to his words apart from
politely clapping when he finished his speech. Nevertheless, the Show’s
organising committee was financed by Western Province Government and the
last day of the Show was devoted to the Fly River Provincial Government
Proclamation Day. On this day, a canoe race was scheduled but was not held as
the canoes did not want to race again and there was no prize money. The rest of
the day consisted of flag-raising and speeches, followed by the feast that
brought the festivities to a close.

Local participation and enjoyment in the celebrations and activities
surrounding the Balimo Show was not marred by their perception of the nation
and its representatives: indeed little was said about the flag raising and speeches
on Independence day. People were more interested in the match between the Suliki Squad and the Kiunga Catfish. Participation in the events and organisation of the Show was, like interest in the cultural revival, divided along village boundaries - although Local Council representatives from each village were on the committee. Some groups from Kini, Kimama, Saweta and Balimo were involved in the dancing while other groups from villages like Dogono and Aketa were dominant in the football. Despite expressing initial disinterest in the proceedings, Sakuliyato and her family attended several days of the Show as did large numbers of Dogono, Tai, Oseke and Aketa. They watched the football and the other games but also stayed to cheer on the dancers and the schoolchildren. A large group also gathered early in the morning at Balimo canoe place to catch the returning racing canoes. Only villages from the furthest reaches of the Gogodala speakers did not come. Some of these were angry with the organisers for not providing petrol money (for motor canoes) so that they could afford the journey to Balimo. Racing canoes from Awaba on the Aramia River refused to compete in the Independence day race as the committee had failed to divide the prize money into two, one for Balimo and one for Awaba. As a result, there was only one A grade racing canoe present - Kanaba.

There were few white people or outsiders present, apart from ourselves and some of the expatriate missionaries who came and watched some of the events. There were no expatriates involved in the organisation or the Show's activities and there were no tourists; despite rumours prior to the Show that they would come. The carvers at Kini, Kimama and Saweta spent many weeks making and painting carvings to both display and sell. The chance to do so, however, did not eventuate as their slot in the program was cancelled due to time constraints and, in the confusion, never rescheduled. The missionaries were not opposed to the Show and many of them came to photograph the beautiful costumes of the dancers and the racing canoes. Neither were the local Pastors or Church members were in opposition - indeed most of the organisers of the Show were mainly Church people. Kamo is the Church President.
For Kamo, the success of the Balimo Show only reinforced to him that his plans for the new Cultural Centre are germane to the interests of local people: to bring people together to celebrate their ‘Gogodalaness’ through traditional dancing, carvings and canoe races. In the events and activities which constituted the celebrations, several elements and aspects of peoples’ experiences became entangled: Church groups won prizes for the best traditional dances, regional rivalries were played out on the football field, and schoolchildren acted out the arrival of the first ancestors which was paralleled with the migration of people from southeast Asia to Papua New Guinea. Projects like the proposed Cultural Centre and the Show may seem to endorse or further the cause of nation-making in Papua New Guinea: these local-level projects, however, are not easily conflated with national interests. Local sentiment often undermines the legitimacy of the nation-making project as people feel that they are left out of issues that concern them.

In 1996, although we had left the area by that time, the Balimo Show was held in July and was organised as a distinctly different celebration from festivities associated with Independence day. Kamo wrote that it was bigger and better than the previous year and even more people had participated. For Kamo, and many others in the area, these types of celebrations serve to accentuate the possibilities inherent in being recognised as a ‘cultural’ area in Papua New Guinea. On my initial arrival to Western Province, I was informed by the Deputy Secretary of the province that the Gogodala people had maintained a ‘strong culture’, despite mission pressure to the contrary; this, he assured me, was a good thing. Kamo is hoping that this kind of sentiment will translate into funding for ‘cultural’ projects and outside interest in the area, like during the ‘selling days’ of the 1970s.

In 1995, a young man from Aketa village held up an MAF (Missionary Aviation Fellowship) plane on one its regular flights from Tari to Kawito; diverting it to Tapila on the southern bank of the Fly River which was his mother’s place. This was a great shame for his family in Aketa village as his crime was reported on the front page of the Post Courier. Other Gogodala
people were appalled by his behaviour because it gave them a bad name in the national press and some angry people blamed Aketa people for not knowing the ‘proper thing to do’ - the Gogodala way of life. This image of Gogodala people was not an attractive one for Christian Country and local people talked about it for some time.
Chapter 9
On the ground

The drum and the bird of paradise
In a ‘short story’ about a bird of paradise, the events of ancestral times are conflated with a particular contemporary image of Papua New Guinea. The story relates both the original nature of the relationship between the bird of paradise and the cassowary and their affiliation to a specific clan, and the link between this and wider concerns. The bird of paradise and the cassowary travelled together, much like the first ancestors, to the Gogodala area. At this time, the cassowary had the ‘skin’ of the bird of paradise and vice versa; a situation which the bird of paradise wanted to change by taking back its own skin. While washing one day, the bird of paradise tricked the cassowary into leaving his skin on the bank while he washed. Immediately the bird of paradise put on the beautiful skin and flew off into the trees, out of reach of the cassowary. After an exchange of some recriminations, the bird of paradise returned to Wabila, the first place. At Wabila, the ‘father’ who had sent the ancestors, spoke to the bird of paradise saying:

when years and years [have] gone past, your feathers will change; the old ones will come down [and become] new ones. And then you will be the bird of paradise, [the] bird of paradise in this picture with this earth [looking at an image in a magazine]. You will return [to] this earth. That’s where the bird of Paradise will be; in Papua New Guinea. So everything belongs to Papua New Guinea, this plane [Air Nuigini] is this bird of paradise. This bird of paradise belongs to the people from Gasinapa clan (Nakeyo Kakana, Balimo 1995).

Although this narrative is insignificant in terms of the iniwa olagi, or ancestor stories, it conflates the image of the Gasinapa clan’s bird of paradise with the bird of paradise displayed on the tail of every Air Nuigini aeroplane. These latter images adorn glossy airline magazines (like Paradise magazine) that make their way into some village houses. At Wabila the first person articulates a link
between the creation of the earth and its animals, and the nation of Papua New Guinea. At the end it is made clear, however, that although the bird of paradise belongs in Papua New Guinea and everyone there can claim it, it ultimately sits in the Gasinapa clan of the Gogodala.

In another story, a diwaka drum called Miyale is responsible for ties with Kerema people to the east in Gulf Province. Miyale had ugu and could travel by himself. On the instigation of an ancestor called Daiyale, Miyale turned himself into a log and hid by the water. When children came down to wash, Miyale swallowed them and moved along the Aramia River and out into the gulf.

Then he went up these Kerema people’s [creek] mouth. From that mouth he went under the ground, right to the bush and made a swamp in the bush, then came out again [and] saw the place called Olokolo (Kerema people’s place). And then, on that place, he just opened his mouth - [the] kids came out and then made a big village called Olokolo. And they made some other villages from there. So those people who are living at Kerema, they went from Dogono. So they are part of Gogodala people (Mala Sogowa, Tai village March 1996).

In Chapter 1, I suggested that nations, and narratives or images of them, were not unitary: instead they are partial and often contradictory. As LiPuma (1995:36) has noted, being a “citizen of a nation-state, as opposed and in addition to being a member of a region, culture, and kinship group, engenders new ways of thinking and experiencing”. The incorporation of these places and people into a nation-state, like Papua New Guinea, which is defined by “colonialism, capitalism and against other nation-states”, reconfigures all sorts of relations as well as defines what it is to be a ‘social person’ (LiPuma 1995:37).

Gogodala people experience and construct images of Papua New Guinea in specific contexts and particular ways, but primarily through the embodied process of sitting in canoes. The nation figures in Gogodala narratives through images and experiences of state institutions and agents - perceptions that are tied to concerns about Christianity, development, and impressions of places through canoes, food and bodies.
Gogodala express substantial connections to others through various ties, in some cases claiming affinity with other ECPNG Christians, in others maintaining the inviolability of their own Christian country. Links to Kerema people in the Gulf are based on ancestral affinity, which deny deeper ties with spatially closer neighbours like the Kamula or Suki. Young men and women relate to indigenous music bands from Kerema rather than those from Western Province (there are no Gogodala groups that are played on local radio stations). Yet in urban areas and situations, Western Province people often band together and refer to each as close relatives.

Since Independence in 1975, the state has struggled to encompass the numerous communities and lifestyles in Papua New Guinea. This type of process has been part of a Pacific-wide attempt to define and delineate certain forms of government, civil society and citizen in the wake of national independence. Much has been written in recent years on the role and contexts of notions of culture, *kastom* or *kastam*, and tradition in this process (see for example Keesing & Tonkinson 1982; Jolly & Thomas 1992; Linnekin & Poyer 1990; Linnekin 1990; Handler & Linnekin 1984; Hanson 1989; Jolly 1992; Lawson 1993, 1997).

The cultural revival instigated by Tony Crawford and local people, as discussed in the latter chapters of this thesis, became a part of this discourse. As I noted in Chapter 6, Babadzan (1988:204) published a paper in which he argued that the politicisation of discourses about tradition in the Pacific, despite explicit claims to continuation with the past, implicitly instituted practices that played out modernist development projects. He intimated that these discourses are inevitably intertwined with nationalistic and state ideology (Babadzan 1988:204).

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1 Bernard Narakobi (1983:107) wrote in a series of articles formulating the Melanesian Way that "[e]thnic, linguistic and even cultural diversity of our people is not an embarrassing bar to nation building, but a positive strength". Otto (1997:46) notes that Narakobi embraced contradiction by suggesting that the Melanesian Way was based on diversity.

2 Much of the literature concerned with the notion of tradition has sought to redefine the kinds of concepts, and accompanying assumptions, characterising such accounts of the practice of nation-making in the Pacific. The distinction between 'authentic' and 'invented' tradition is a fundamental one underlying earlier discussions of the dynamic nature of human societies and derives largely from Eric Hobsbawm's
Although national interest, substantiated by funds and political appearances, was an integral part of the cultural revival, I have argued that it was not simply the result of such institutions and people. It marked a significant dispute in the local community, revolving around the types of lifestyles and practices deemed appropriate for Gogodala Christians and initiated discussions about the past, present and future. Continued interest in the re-establishment of a cultural centre in the 1990s, based almost entirely on local motivations, has profited little from provincial or state interest or finance; yet it remains central for a specific group of people.

Regional and national influences, however, guide certain aspects of these processes and plans. Alan Howard (1990:270) argues that ethnic awareness, and a preoccupation with the issue of identity, has received great impetus from the processes of decolonisation and nation-building in the Pacific. In 1974, Papua New Guinea went through what Jacob Simet and Wari Iamo (1992:11), in a National Research Institute publication, refer to as ‘soul-searching’, in which national identity was much discussed and contemplated; particularly in terms of ‘culture’. Aided by some African, South American, South and South East Asian (and some western) academics, government and policy makers were advised against defining a national identity too early and too distinctly, instead of letting it develop from cultural diversity (Simet & Iamo 1992:11).  

3 In 1974, also the Australian government promised $3 million for the establishment of the National Cultural Council and the Cultural Service (Simet & Iamo 1992:15). In an earlier paper published by the National Cultural Council, Michael Somare is reported as saying in his speech that: “[w]e will shortly achieve nationhood. However, will we be a nation without our own culture?” (1973-4:2).
Lamont Lindstrom (1994:1) has remarked on the saliency and increasingly widespread use of the term culture, *kastom or kastam*, tradition and so on in the Pacific; and particularly the ways in which culture has become government policy and therefore more regulated in its usage. Culture, he argues, is a ‘slippery’ word whose meanings become increasingly complex and ambiguous (Lindstrom 1994:3). As national policy, and seen as the basis of national communities in the Pacific, “[t]he Pacific Way, the Melanesian Way, Melanesian Socialism, Melanesian *Kastom* are all attempts to imagine national communities in culturalist terms” (Lindstrom 1994:7). Stephanie Lawson (1997: 16) has similarly noted that regional articulations such as the ‘Melanesian Way’ or the ‘Pacific way’ resemble other supra-national attempts to counter prevailing and colonial constructions and derogatory images of groups of people.4

Bernard Narakobi wrote many articles for the *Post Courier* between 1976 and 1978 in a column called ‘The Melanesian Voice’ (Olela 1980:ix). The notion of ‘The Melanesian Way’ became part of his formulation of a ‘philosophy’ or ‘ideology’ for Melanesian countries to free themselves from the denigration of their colonial experiences and relationships (Narakobi 1980:v-vii). In one of the articles, Narakobi (1980:41) wrote:

PNG is the home of our combined heritages. Let those who come to PNG be captivated not by the wealth we possess but by the common care and concern we have for humanity, its creative potential and its ultimate ability to transform our society.

Although refusing to define the Melanesian Way in any more concrete terms than a “total, cosmic vision of life” (1980:8), Narakobi’s words and the concepts he developed had some impact on local people - primarily those living in urban areas and able to access newspapers and radio. In a recent article on Narakobi and national images in Papua New Guinea, Otto (1997) has noted that early attempts at disseminating ideas about tradition and national culture were communicated through radio, newspapers and books. He points out that

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4 In many parts of the Pacific, reified concepts of tradition have been utilised as political legitimators for some time (Lawson 1993:1).
although the literary material was often largely confined to intellectual elites, through schools and administrative centres and particularly radio programs, some of these ideas were circulated more widely (Otto 1997:35). Otto (1997:35) acknowledges that at this stage, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Bernard Narakobi was very influential in formulating many of these ideas; as a Cabinet Minister he has continued to play a significant political role in Papua New Guinea.

Articulations about the Melanesian Way, and the types of discussions enlarged upon in the letters to the Editor of the Post Courier and The National newspapers, have come from Papua New Guineans from all areas of the country, including Balimo. The term culture and custom is not confined to national policy and not necessarily consistent with formulations of this type. Those Gogodala people who have lived in urban areas like Port Moresby or Daru, like Kamo and Genasi, have a more immediate sense of the nation in which they live. Radio, television and newspapers have a lot to do with their awareness of the debates and issues which revolve around national narratives, the situation in Bougainville, local raskol (TP) gangs, the Melanesian Way and so on.

For Kamo, for example, the 'Melanesian way' espoused by Narakobi in the 1980s, itself now part of a wider dialogue about the nature of tradition and national culture in the Pacific, posits some significant ways in which Papua New Guineans are distinct from white people. Utilising some of the language of the Melanesian Way, Kamo suggested that before the missionaries had reached the Gogodala area, these villages lived in longhouses in communities constituted out of 'love' and intimacy. With the advent of white people, however, community feeling was destroyed as effectively as the longhouses. On another occasion, he expressed his belief that women do not have a place in the organisation of formal structures of power in Gogodala 'customary ways'.

5 Within the debates which revolve around tradition and customary ways, the significance of male and female perceptions, aspirations and experiences has been the source of much conflict (Ralston 1992:172). Otto (1997:44) notes that underlying Narakobi's philosophical stand on the Melanesian Way, is the different and somehow 'natural' roles of Melanesian women and men. Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1993) has suggested that in Papua New Guinea, contemporary conservative sexual politics has become an integral aspect of nationalist political rhetoric. Underlying this is an image of the past in
and most of the other men I talked to, intimated that if a woman stood up and spoke out in such a formal context, like that of the land mediation dispute over the test oil drill in 1995, she would be told to leave. Kamo explained that such a position was consistent with 'our Melanesian way'.

In a 1980 paper entitled "There's no need for women's lib here, because ... 'Melanesian women are already equal'", Narakobi (1980:70-3) expressed the place and role of women in the Melanesian Way:

Women ... are associated with creation, peace, and civilisation - in fact with most good things in life. Women are not inferior to men but different from ... Within the family, the woman's authority is as important as the man's and in some instances she is more influential. However, at the clan and village level, the woman cannot be the head ... In marriage (sic), the man is not at complete liberty to beat his wife. Husband and wife fighting is not uncommon but it is discouraged ... Melanesian women are thought to be the beasts of burden in a land that did not domesticate the cow, the horse or the llama to carry the heavy loads. It is a point at which many Melanesian women of today wish to leave the oppressive past. However, the truth is that both men and women share the heavy loads.

Such articulations of the nature and role of Melanesian women in the objectification of tradition have not remained unchallenged by women. As Caroline Ralston (1992:168) points out, many Melanesian women are aware that their men have incorporated some western attitudes and behaviour towards women in their interpretations of the past.\(^6\) Zimmer-Tamakoshi notes, however, that the majority of women in Papua New Guinea do not align themselves with western feminism and notions of women's liberation; believing that these ideologies are western constructs and, as such, have little relevance for indigenous women.\(^7\)

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6 Grace Mera Molisa (1987:9-13), one of Vanuatu's most vocal and well known feminists has published several poems in which women of Ni-Vanuatu are describes as 'colonised people': colonised by their own men.

7 Jolly (1991a:52) has argued that a feminist 'politics of difference' must include the incorporation of difference in terms of ethnicity and class into feminism itself rather than perceiving it to be an
Despite this, Kamo’s mother, a noted elderly woman who was revered by her village community for her knowledge of the ancestor stories and the details of clans and their canoes, was one of the primary storytellers we visited. Also, as I suggested in Chapter 2, women are as involved as men at Land Mediation disputes albeit from a different space - under and outside the meeting hall. Their objections and opinions are announced as vociferously as any man’s in that context. However, when making more formal statements about their own roles in this process, many local women, like Sakuliyato, played down their own significance and acknowledged that men generally have more access to knowledge about clans, canoes and ancestors. As these aspects of Gogodala life are often those most associated with tradition and ‘customary ways’, women have tended to be left out of formulations of custom in Gogodala as in many other parts of Papua New Guinea.

In other arenas, however, such as those associated with sago-making, caring for children, cooking and preparing feasts, making mats and bags, women proclaimed their own veracity and ability. Men’s work, they argued, was no more difficult than their own and they were proud of their coordinated and able bodies.

For local women, there is little identification with other Papua New Guinean women - particularly, for example, those primarily urban women involved in the National Women’s Movement. In October 1995, when Lady Stella Chan, then the Prime Minister’s wife, visited Western Province she did not stay at Balimo but instead went straight to Makapa on the Aramia River as a women’s group there had set up a welcome for her. A newspaper account of this visit noted that she had flown from Moresby to Balimo and then had travelled another four hours by canoe to Makapa on a “campaign to save PNG’s mothers and children”. Lady Chan spoke to five hundred women from the villages of Makapa and Wasapeya (both primarily Tlumsa and Kamula respectively) about the need to vaccinate mothers and children. She is reported to have said: “[w]e must always protect

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embarrassing afterthought. This involves looking at Melanesian women’s often explicit articulations of opposition or difference from white women as products of the problematic association between them in a shared colonial history (Jolly 1991a:52).
our mothers and children. We women are strong, but we still need the support of our husbands who should assist to create a peaceful and healthy environment for our families and our communities” (The National 1995).

There was a general lack of interest of women in the Balimo area to Lady Chan’s visit: they brushed the incident off as another insult by politicians. In effect, there is little that draws local women together, apart from family gatherings, that is not connected to the ECPNG Church. Women’s conferences constitute the largest gatherings of women in the area, attracting ECPNG women from as far as Port Moresby, Tari and Hagen for a weekend. More than two thousand Gogodala women attended the ECPNG Regional conference in August 1995, many of them from Moresby, Daru and Kiunga. Most village and urban Gogodala women are active members of the Church, whether in the area or elsewhere, as deaconesses, pastors and laywomen.

Many Gogodala people perceive Christian country to be the reason for a strong and enduring relationship with white people. I noted in Chapter 1 that, as Young (1997:91-2) has suggested, in Papua New Guinea the nation-state ‘rides on the back’ of the Christianity of its members; “the state not only relies upon the Churches to provide many basic services it cannot itself afford, but it also co-opts Christianity’s ideological purchase on hearts and minds”. As Otto (1997:53) argues, and many others have mentioned (Young 1997; Clark 1997; Macintyre 1989, 1990; Barker 1990, 1992), Christianity has a definitive presence in Papua New Guinea; as such, it is a fertile source of fashionings of collectivities and national imagining. This is particularly the case in rural Papua New Guinea, where missionaries (expatriate, South Sea Islanders or other Papua

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8 Clark (1997:74) also argues that in the Highlands, people feel remarkable distrust and bitterness towards gavman (government) citing wantokism as the reason for what they perceive to be the sorry state of affairs.

9 Jolly (1997:159) notes that Christianity has been a primary force in creating women’s groups in Vanuatu - from fellowships to mother’s clubs. She argues that often these move far beyond being women’s ‘auxiliaries’.

10 Narakobi (1980:6) mentions Christianity throughout his articles, arguing that even before the Europeans came to Melanesia, the people there were aware of a higher ‘presence’: “That was our divine power, the Melanesian Way”. Later on he reiterates that what Melanesian countries require is a “rich blending of the Melanesian sense of community, with Christian principles of the fear of God and love of mankind” (Narakobi 1980:25-6).
New Guineans) have had much more influence and reach than state-driven policies and services. But, I would argue, that concepts like Christian country tend to undermine rather than confirm or establish wider relations constituted through practices and beliefs associated with Christianity - for Christian country is Gogodala not Kamula, Suki, Moresby or elsewhere.

Common languages, like Papua New Guinea’s *Tok Pisin* and *Motu*, and certain practices, like chewing betel nut, attempt to create a sense of national unity. Most people in the Gogodala area speak neither of these languages with any fluency, and refused to use either, referring to *Tok Pisin* as ‘Highland’s talk’. They would speak only Gogodala and English to us. Particular practices have been deemed emblematic of people’s behaviour in Papua New Guinea. For example, Eric Hirsch (1990) has noted that betelnut has become an increasingly important item of consumption throughout Papua New Guinea (see also Foster 1992a:40). Before colonial contact and during the early colonial experience, betelnut chewing was prevalent only in coastal and lowland areas. He writes: “I perceive in the consumption changes associated with betelnut the broad outlines of a formative PNG national culture” (Hirsch 1990:19). He suggests that amongst the Fuyuge people of Central Province, as well as in more metropolitan centres like Moresby, betelnut consumption has emerged as central because of its association with certain notions of power, politics and the appropriate and ‘civilised’ person; enabling people to make better oral presentations and to work more effectively and for longer periods (Hirsch 1990:21,25). So that the ‘betel-chewing, speech-making, articulate individual’ imagined by such practices is held to be the primary example of the political figure - “which is emerging in the ideal conceptions of the nascent PNG national culture” (Hirsch 1990:29). Gogodala Christian country defines itself precisely through the rejection of these practices and substances - chewing betel-nut, drinking alcohol, and smoking cigarettes.
Walking between God’s word and were you are living

Kamo once said that contemporary Gogodala people are living with “two cultures at the moment”. In another context, his brother Nakeyo pointed to the perceived ambiguities of the present lifestyle; “walking between God’s word and where you [Gogodala people] are living”. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that Gogodala people are engaging a national and regional dialogue about the nature of culture and ‘customary ways’ to which the notion of Christian Country is integral. Such a framing of a Gogodala ‘way of life’ has been led by community leaders such as Sanada Giliwa and Mala Sogowa; people with experience of other places and lifestyles like Kamo Bagali; as well as primarily village-based people like Sakuliyato and Kukuwa. It is not surprising perhaps that these first two groups of people have more access to public expressions about such a lifestyle than the latter: however, as Gogodala people remain (at this stage) reliant on their subsistence activities, the voices of villagers are central to articulations about local ways of living particularly as this dialogue remains largely an internal, retrospective account.

Ruminations about the Gogodala lifestyle, as well as public expressions about it, are fairly common and their frequency was fuelled by my own interest in these issues and their details. After only a month in the area, I was approached while standing inside the main tradestore in Balimo town and told to write a book about ‘how Gogodala people are living now’. Throughout my stay, people were concerned with how I was going to represent their lifestyle and themselves to other white people: most that I had spoken to were aware of Crawford’s monograph.

Although there is no term or phrase in Gogodala that encompasses the western notion of ‘culture: iniwa ela gi literally means ‘the way of life deriving from the ancestors’ and it was used sometimes as a substitute. Most emphasised the experience of being Gogodala, through knowledge of places and the capacities of their own bodies, rather than something more abstract. Comments about these experiences were often made in response to specific images that local people had about my lifestyle and the capabilities of my body. Kamo used
the English word 'culture' several times but most did not - 'our customary ways' in English was more often cited.

Notions of 'customary ways' are not, however, unitary. Local people engage with each other on the basis of their village and which canoe they sit in. As I have noted throughout the thesis, conflict over names, land, trees and other foodstuffs is common, as is disagreement between villages over the significance of Christianity, ancestral stories, carvings and dancing. Travelling between villages unrelated through marriage and land ties is still uncommon. Sakuliyato was not interested in travelling past Aketa or Awaba on the Aramia River, as both villages were well known to her and contain many family members. Kamo and Nakeyo were also nervous about journeying past certain groups of villages related to them through past and current marriage ties.

Yet many expressed a sense of a common affiliation with other Gogodala people; primarily in terms of identification with the original ancestors, the clans and clan canoes, names, blood and skin, places, Christianity and sago - all aspects of a local lifestyle. Nakeyo suggested somewhat angrily on one occasion that young men from Balimo village who imitate raskols (TP) from Daru and Moresby, do not know what 'being Gogodala is': they just beg or steal, listening to songs (local and international pop songs) on the radio instead of making their own gardens. Contemplating this type of lifestyle, he asked: "What sort of life will this lead them to; will it be a good life?" He paused, then. "Well, it won't be a Gogodala life".

In this thesis, I have focused on some of the ways in which these people engage with their landscape; from general observations about it, daily embodied experience of it, through to public expressions about the corporeal and material effects of this relationship. This takes many forms; encompassing the sago which constitutes the basis of their subsistence lifestyle, to the ugu monsters which still populate the waterways from the time and spaces of the original ancestors.

In the early chapters, I explored the means by which the first ancestors named and created the Gogodala landscape through their movements and
actions. The ancestral narratives that detail these journeys and subsequent events, are becoming increasingly unitary. This not to suggest that they are not highly consistent with stories collected in the early years of the colonial administration by ethnographers and administrators alike - indeed, many of the main ancestors, canoes and events can be traced in these accounts. Rather it seems likely that a more intimate and accessible relationship between previously distant villagers has facilitated discussions about these primary origin travels, as have public performances of them; whether in the context of the Balimo Show or land mediation disputes.

For contemporary villagers, canoes still mediate between people and their places. By sitting in canoes, they promote their own capacities as human beings connected to the living landscape which surrounds them. Through clan canoes, people are tied to land, trees, stretches of lagoon and sago swamps through names. Bodies and people are moulded by their daily traversal of places, as, simultaneously, the environment is constituted and transformed by their motions and practices. Village life is embodied in the spaces around and through which villages and their adjacent gardens, swamps and lagoons are arranged and inhabited.

Lifestyles or ways of life are always emplaced. Although Kamo, and sometimes Nakeyo, spoke about the local lifestyle in a more abstract sense than others - who proffered comments about themselves, their bodies, places and foods - references to this lifestyle were predicated on knowledge and experience of local places. Places are the site of a lifestyle that is reliant on its presence and continuing abundance; they render the past actions of the original ancestors and more recent antecedents, legible and incontrovertible; and they allow for the negotiation of relationships between people.

It is perhaps not surprising that, given such an intimate and complex relationship between Gogodala people and their canoes, the 'cultural revival' which occurred in the area in the early 1970s sought to re-establish the significance of canoe designs and thereby initiate development. The techniques and knowledge associated with carvings are seen as efficacious in relations
between both local and white people, and Gogodala communities and the state. 

*Gawa tao* remain central to ways in which people mobilise their relations to land, trees and lagoons, to naming processes, and to the constitution and continued well being of their bodies. Painted on carvings, plaques and headdresses, they have come to embody these processes and demarcate certain relationships in a postcolonial Papua New Guinea. *Gawa tao* are an empowering image for the saliency of local communities and have been used in some contexts as emblematic of Gogodala ‘ways’.

Sitting in canoes denotes certain relationships and lived experiences: it is not, however, all encompassing or absolute. Gogodala understandings of sitting in canoes are based on local Christian beliefs and practices; experiences with colonial and other agents; education and radio; as well as sago, ancestors and *gawa tao*. Sitting in canoes positions people - locating them in time and space, in experiences and interactions with others.

Sitting in canoes also creates certain types of people as members of a national community. Foster (1991, 1992a) has made the point that nation-making entails the constitution of national subjects or citizens as well as a national culture. He suggests that the national construction of the subject in Papua New Guinea, based on western notions of individualism, may very well ‘compete’ and ‘clash’ with the types of people produced in Melanesia (Foster 1995:19). M. Strathern (1988:13) has persuasively argued that Melanesian sociality creates relational persons, ‘dividuals’ rather than individuals. Although I do not comply with her artifice of Western versus Melanesia, nevertheless the types of people made in different parts of Papua New Guinea has implications for nation-making processes.

What sorts of national subjects are created by sitting in canoes? Gogodala are enmeshed in local affairs and concerns; they are constituted through movement, food, names, and Christianity. Yet, despite their immersion in the local landscape, they are very aware of other places and people and continually engage in speculation about them. People who sit in canoes are not national subjects in the western sense; for their primary concern and affiliation is with those who also sit in canoes and the landscape which makes it possible.
If we want to present an ‘ethnography of the nation’ as LiPuma (1995:39) has suggested, then, we need to take into account these local and entangled instances, issues and experiences for they are the basis of national narratives and imaginings.
Appendix A

Bani’s song

Sanada Giliwa (Wagumisi clan)
Kimama village
March 5 1996
Translated by Kamo Bagali, Balimo

This Bani, he started from Wabila [the first place] [and] came to Salonae [canoe place]. As he came this sky was very low and all these ancestors were all crawling around. So he came to this Dudi, he came and stood there and he lifted this sky up and as he lifted it up he [was] singing this song:

*I Bani tawa menebega, i Bani tawa menebega*  
Bani creek is heavy, Bani creek is heavy

*I Bani Dudi* menebega, *i Bani Dudi* menabega  
Bani Dudi place is heavy, Bani Dudi place is heavy

*I Bani Dedamo menebega, i Bani Dedamo menebega*  
Bani pig is heavy, Bani pig is heavy

*Maile pakaminanowa*  
Lifting it up

*I Bani Umili* menebega, *i Bani Umili* menebega  
Bani Umili place is heavy, Bani Umili is heavy

*I Bani tawa menebega, i Bani tawa menebega*  
Bani creek is heavy, Bani creek is heavy

*Maile pakaminanowa*  
Lifting it up

*I Bani Sagamu* menebega, *i Bani Sagamu* menebega  
Bani Sagamu place is heavy, Bani Sagamu place is heavy
Maile pakaminanowa
Lifting it up

*I Bani Walawi* menebega, *i Bani Walawi* menebega
Bani Walawi place is heavy, Bani Walawi place is heavy

Maile pakaminanowa
Lifting it up

*I Bani Dudi* menebega, *i Bani Dudi* menebega
Bani Dudi place is heavy, Bani Dudi place is heavy

Maile pakaminanowa
Lifting it up

*I Bani Salonae* menebega, *i Bani Salonae* menebega
Bani Salaone place is heavy, Bani Salonae place is heavy

Maile pakaminanowa.
Lifting it up

As he was singing the name of the song, he was lifting the place he
called, tying the sky up with *duni tao*. While he was lifting up the sky.

Translation:

This creek is heavy, this creek is heavy
Dudi is heavy, Dudi is heavy
Dedamo pig is heavy, Dedamo pig is heavy
[But I am] lifting it up.

Umili is heavy, Umili is heavy
This creek is heavy, this creek is heavy
[But I am] lifting it up.

Sagamu is heavy, Sagamu is heavy
[But I am] lifting it up.

Walawi is heavy, Walawi is heavy
[But I am] lifting it up.

Dudi is heavy, Dudi is heavy
[But I am] lifting it up.

Salonae is heavy, Salonae is heavy
[But I am] lifting it up
[and so on]

*All places that Bani and the other ancestors stayed at whilst travelling to the area, all of which were alive at that time.
Appendix B

Suliki’s Story

The following stories narrate the original migration of the Gogodala ancestors to the area from somewhere south of the Torres Strait. There are four versions of this story, told by three narrators. Each of these stories was told first in Gogodala and then translated later into English by a Gogodala person. The name of the story-teller and the translator accompany each story.

Sanada Giliwa (Wagumisi clan)

Kimama village
March 5 1996
Translated by Kamo Bagali, Balimo

These ancestors, they started [the] journey from Wabila and they came to Walawi, Makapiya, then Dudi, [and] then Salonae [canoe place]. [At] Dudi, this man Bani lifted the sky up and he tied the sky with this string called Duni. When they were at this canoe place Salonae they pulled [lit. pulled down from the canoe place to the water] a canoe called Giliwa but it didn’t come out. Then they pulled the canoe called Suliki and it came, so they went in that. Canoes were alive at that time. Then they came through T.I. [Thursday Island]. They got a canoe named Suliki, came through this Torres Strait Islands, Saibai, Boigu, [then] came to this Akali, [but to] Giama [on the Fly river] first.

And this Wabadala ancestor Kelaki, he came first by his canoe, Madulabali. This ancestor Kelaki, he was sent as a scout to check this Dogono [place and then] he went back [to the first place]. [Then] he told that big man Wabila and he said [to the other ancestors] “Okay you can all go”. Then he [Kelaki] came back himself [again].
From Giama they [the ancestors] came to Akali [village], past [a] village called Pedaeya. Both Madulabali and Suliki [canoes] came together: Kelaki was [in] front [of Suliki canoe] while they were at Akali (where Kelaki [had] hid[den] the fire [he created] the first time he came [to the area]. Suliki had compartments; eight compartments with two [ancestors] in each, male and female, Wagumisi [clan] brother and sister, Siboko [clan] brother and sister [and so on]. Then this man Maimiya (Awala) was selected as a hunter. While they were coming in Suliki, he was hunting, kill[ing] some pig[s], and [then] com[ing] back to Suliki [and the other ancestors]. When they stopped Suliki, he went to hunt. While Maimiya was coming back with the meat, they [the other ancestors] were calling ‘Maimiya’ in [Gogodala] language. By that time Dimagi [had appeared].

Dimagi was [originally] left at Wabila [the first place]. But [the big] father said “No, people have not reached their destination [yet]” and [then] gave him [Dimagi] a smaller canoe called Ame Miyale [Wagumisi clan]. [Then] he [Dimagi] came to Giama; he walked to this [river] mouth of Awi, [then to] Abono to [the] mouth of Pedaeya [creek]. He came by himself. At this mouth of Akali [river opening], while they [the other ancestors] were waiting for this hunter in that canoe, the Suliki [canoe], [they had] some sort of radio that they [used to] contact their father at Wabila - [to] send back reports to their father. And Dimagi came in [to the canoe] and the radio was in the canoe. At the same time Maimiya [the hunter] arrived with his pigs. Dimagi tricked him. While Maimiya was coming and the people were calling him, Dimagi came and asked the people, “Who are you calling?” They said “We are calling for Maimiya”. Then Dimagi got in the canoe and cut those wires and threw the radio into the water. And that radio turned out to be some sort of monster, called Melesa, [situated] at mouth of Pedaeya [creek]. It’s still there. After throwing the radio in the water, he [Dimagi] started
controlling the people. When Maimiya arrived, he pushed the canoe away from bank and he told Maimiya that the water was shallow; “You can walk” [he told Maimiya]. When Maimiya came close to the canoe, Dimagi got his fighting club, *gabi lapila* [and when] Maimiya put his foot in the canoe, Dimagi hit him on the head. And he was dead [and] fell into the water. They [the other ancestors] pulled the canoe closer to the bank and pulled him out of the water and they left him where he was, dead. Koleleyawa was the place that Maimiya was killed.

While they were standing there, not knowing what to do, Waliwali, another ancestor], arrived. He came by himself, in another canoe, Bainale, [he was a] Lalamana [clan] ancestor. And he came and asked them ‘What’s going on here?’ [They answered] “Our hunter has been killed by Dimagi, that’s why we are standing here”. Then he [Waliwali] pulled a [another] canoe [into the water] and he got that bamboo, *babo*; he split open that bamboo, [the] edges are sharp, and [he] started cutting up Maimiya’s body, [starting from] down the middle. He cut open the body of Maimiya. Then he pulled that intestine out, liver, heart, lungs and put them in his canoe. He left the tongue [in the body]. Then he covered those things with flowers, *salago, Gaega salago* [Lalamana clan plant]. Then he [Waliwali] took off; he went back to Wabila.

[At Wabila] he [Waliwali] took all [of] the intestines, and got this bamboo, *gaube*, and then he pushed it [the bamboo] through the intestines and then he put it in the water and then told that intestine; “if you become a canoe you can follow Suliki”. That canoe was named Kulumusu [Awala - Lalamana clans]. Kulumusu [canoe then] came by itself, straight past the ancestors and to Masanawa [canoe place near Dogono]. It stopped there [and] hid itself at Masanawa. The canoe Kulumusu is at Masanawa now. And Waliwali goes back [to Wabila] in Bainale. And then he followed the ancestors [who were in Suliki]. He knew that they were there. Waliwali went around that way, [a] different
way, [going in the] mouth of [the] Bamu [river] and [then in] along the Aramia River [to find Dogono].

And then they [the other ancestors] split [up] Maimiya’s body; they cut him into pieces and everybody, all [of] those clans, they [were given] a piece [of Maimiya’s body] each. From there, they all got into the [Suliki] canoe and went to Masanawa [canoe place]. They arrived at Masanawa, got out and had a bath. Kulumusu [canoe] arrived while they were having a bath, by itself. While they were having [a] bath, ladies [were also] having [a] bath and Dimagi saw the ladies; they were naked. Gaewagaewa was [the name of] that place. Dimagi wanted to have sex [with the women] or something. And the [other] men said “No, not here. We were told to go to Dogono [before having sex]”. [Dimagi replied] “No, it’s too far”. So Dimagi was hitting this waiko tree because he was angry, upset. That waiko [tree] is still here. Where he got upset, he hit on the side [and] on the side; it’s bent. [The tree is] not a big one, [it is] just a small one.

Then they [the ancestors] came to Muda [a place] from Gaewagaewa wa pokola [hill] and they [were] just staying around. They couldn’t come up to Dogono; it was very steep [and] high like a mountain. While these ancestors were at Muda and looking for the ways [and means] to reach Dogono, Waliwali came around [the] Aramia River [from] Yau magata [river mouth] to Lapawa Kaula [canoe place just outside of Dogono]. He put Bainale [the canoe] there [and then] he went up to Dogono: [then] he put the light off [at Dogono], then he pressed down the high land of Dogono with his thumb, [pushed it] right down like the rest of the land [surrounding it]. When he did that, that big man/father [at Wabila- the first place] saw it and said ‘Ah - Waliwali has pulled Dogono down’. He was not happy about that and he got all [of] the valuable things, those things that were alive, [and] he stopped them [stopped them being alive]. From there, [while] these ancestors [were] at Muda, when he stopped all those things, this ground was like a machine,
rolling itself up. The people [ancestors] got scared [and] ran to [a place in Balimo] and some went to Komekome [the first village settled after Dogono] Then some broke from Dogono [and went] to Waya and Saiwasi and Gawi [these are Tabo people’s places]. Then some [people] went to Ali [the most western Gogodala village].

The ancestors of the Waya people went first and stayed at Kimama [village]. One day they made a plan to come back to Balimo and burn the grass [to hunt for wallabies] - they also invited people from Komekome village. This old man got into a pig skin and sat in the water near the point [of land]. Then they started burning the grass and [the] men were waiting [at the other end] with spears. And the fire was chasing the pigs and wallabies and the men were spearing the pigs and wallabies. They went down to the end of the point, Eno point. [The] fire went out and this old man came out of the water. He put his spear and bows under his skin and these men were trying to kill him and they couldn’t, they missed him [but they kept] following him all the way. He came, came right up here and took that skin off and took out his spears and arrows. Some small boys were waiting in a waiko tree. The old man started shooting these kids. The fathers were there and joined in killing the children; ‘You shot mine and I’ll shoot yours’. And they took all the wallabies and put them near the waiko trees with the children. They were all dead. Then they cut all the bodies, pigs, wallabies and boys and divided up the meat. The mothers were waiting at Kimama and Komekome. So they shared the parts and took them home in the night. They took their own child’s intestines. When they came to their door, the fathers put those intestines on the door/ roof of [the] longhouse. When they went in[side] the mothers were still wondering where the kids [were].

The people from Komekome didn’t know what was happening with these two people [Waya people and Ali people]. And this lady by the name [of] Silila from the Komekome (Asipali) heard about it and
then she got ready and came. When the boys were cut up, there was a noise and Silila at Komekome heard this noise. So she got changed and came. And she got this man called Titalela Dalamakeya and took his armband and nose stick called *dumutu*. She came to Ketapatele island, she had a bath and changed her skin. She wore a man’s decorative dress. She was changed into a man. She killed her sister Miyala Kekepa whose body became a canoe, *ewano gawa*, a ‘human canoe’. Then she washed, got changed into a man, chewed betelnut and she came. Komekome at this time was alive, some trees and other things. As she was coming, she was touching these things and stopping these things. All the men from Komekome were coming back from Balimo and two men were wondering “Hey, it’s quiet, there is no noise”. This lady Silila, she came: as she was coming all of these things were alive. She went to Masanawa and then she went back to Salonae using her sister’s body. And all of these weeds came over Pedaeya Creek and she killed everything as she was coming. These men had already reached Komekome and it was quiet. And then Silila was at Salonae and this is the story of how things died and stopped - like they are today. Pedaeya Creek from Masanawa is not travelled anymore past Duwaba because Silila killed everything and the grass grew over Pedaeya Creek.

**Busali (Wabadala clan)**

**Dogono village**

**April 22 1995**

**Translated by Sakuliyato Kakana, Tai village**

We don’t know the name of the place from where the ancestors came: just big father - some God maybe - sent them. The canoe’s name was Madulabali (Wabadala clan) [and] all [of] the red clan people [Segela moiety] were in that canoe. They came and stopped at Daru. These red people [came] first and the white [people] came by Suliki canoe - Paiya people’s canoe. This red side fellow’s name is Dimagi. He was in front
of that Suliki canoe. From there the canoe got lost [he couldn’t find Suliki] and he was looking for the canoe, [trying to find out] where the people went. His father (Dimagi’s father is Ibali) - their [the ancestors’] first father. Dimagi asked Ibali, “Wawa [father], where are the people?” Wawa said “Where were you, [the] people are gone”. And then he asked father Ibali “Where are the people?” And he said “Where were you?” And Dimagi said “You sent me to go down and just look around”. And then he [Ibali] said “Oh, they are at the canoe place”. And this Madulabali [canoe] went first and this Suliki [canoe] was right on the river - just floating around. These white [moiety] people were trying to put the canoe on the bank and get into the canoe. And they were talking while they were moving the canoe close to the bank and Dimagi saw them. And then they were pushing the canoe, looking for the red canoe [Madulabali] and he [Dimagi] jumped in Suliki canoe, in front of the canoe and pulled the salago [clan plant] at [out of] the back of his kati [grass belt] and then pulled this white people’s salago out [of the canoe prow] and put his own mum’s clan salago salela [Asipali clan plant] in the front of the canoe. From there they came to Daru and from there they took the canoe and they were coming to Iasa - Madulabali canoe. This Madulabali left Daru first, and while they were coming Suliki left Daru and [came to] to Iasa.

The first man, Bani, has got no canoe and Suliki was coming and they stopped at Daru and that Bani, he’s got no canoe and he was staying at that school’s name (he called that school’s name place - he was living there) Elbis School [a school at Daru]. He was living there [at] this Elbis. From there he made a big well water and then he put this sago with thorns on there, he plant[ed] the sago at Daru - Bani did that. From there he came back to Iasa - he was not going around with a canoe but he had long legs and he could step from here to Aketa. He came to Iasa. They used to call that type of man solosolo dalagi - long legs [man]. So they used to call Bani solosolo. From there he went back to Kalakulu
[where] he made another well water [and] he plant this sago with the thorns again, that’s another one - that’s a second one. That place, the place they made a school, that place they made a church called Uniting Church. From there he just took off, from Daru. He came back to Iasa, from there he came back to Segero. From there he came around to this Gogodala area, from this Balimo - you can see his footstep - that’s the mark - he put his footstep mark and then he went back to the Dibili [Aramia River]. From there, while he was going, he saw our mum - ‘big mum’ - Sawiya and made her his wife. So Bani’s wife is Sawiya.

And then this Kelaki got married to his real sister Oleke and then Daligi got married to his sister Genasi. [At] that time they were trying to make the population big so they were getting married to their own sisters. Kelaki made his own canoe Madulabali [Busali’s canoe - i.e. Wabadala clan]. Bani was standing away from him and watching Kelaki making his canoe. While Bani was standing watching Kelaki, Kelaki cut himself with what we call wagi [adze to hollow out canoes]. From there he was stopping the blood with the rubbish [canoe shavings] from which he made the canoe. He was bending down and Bani came at the back of him. Kelaki saw him standing at the back of him and he said “Hey friend, why are you standing away from me. I cut myself’. From there he [Bani] said “I’m not just standing and watching you, I am coming to help you”. From there he got the canoe rubbish and he got the blood out of it and Bani got his [Kelaki’s] blood from them [the canoe shavings]. And put them into his spear sobatapa - he was carrying around that spear and he put them into that spear thing. From there, inside that sobatapa, it made a canoe Malebe Gaesidi.

When Kelaki finished that canoe he brought all his children into that canoe and he was coming all the way [to Dogono]. And then [they] came from Iasa, and then from Iasa to Giama and then [they] came to Pedaeya - a village name - they call it Pedaeya Community School. From Pedaeya, he [Kelaki and Madulabali canoe] was coming to one of the
points [of land] named Duwabawa and then these birds of paradise, when they saw this Kelaki coming they were just flying around. While he was coming to this Duwabawa, birds were flying around, [Sakuliyato] clan’s people - Gasinapa Wabadala. This man’s name was Esanadæ [he] jumped [out of the canoe] and [number] two was Kosale - [the] two of them jumped out [of Madulabali canoe]. One of the fellow’s names, Tokelæ, they were following these paradise daelila birds - these three men. From there those three men were following these birds, going all the way to Kenaewa. From there, they went to Sisi, from Kenaewa to Sisi.

From there, this Kelaki came by Madulabali canoe to Sisi and then he followed his children - those three men [who jumped out of the canoe] are his children. And then Kelaki went to this Obaya Dudi, [a] sago swamp - he went up to that place. From there he went to Alibi Dudi, [a] sago swamp again. From there, this Kelaki’s wife and two daughters were making sago in these two dudi, sago swamps. And then they were there, and this Bogela he was going there, following them. He was after Kelaki’s two daughters, Genama and Bayada - that’s Kelaki’s two daughters. From there, this Bogela, he was a widower, and he was calling his name crying. Those two girls were making sago in the swamp - in the bush he was making a noise - crying song. He was crying like this:

Susaːgi maː gwidowaba
paː naː kopa wamoneyamana
dalagida wamoneyamana

This song means that one of the girls will hear him and feel sorry for him and get married to him. When they heard that song, those two girls, Genama and Bayada, they call[ed] him out and said “Wawa come over here, we are in the middle of the sago swamp in the middle of the dudi”. From there, when he heard them calling him, he used to go down
to them and stay with them until they finished the sago in the afternoon and then go back to the village together.

This Kelaki came by Madulabali again [he kept coming]. He came to Duku - it’s a place name. This Kelaki went to this fireplace and Dayale came after him. Almia got married to Giabo and Dayale got married to Dobaeaba Obuwato (Almia’s sister and Dayale’s sister was Giabo - they engaged) [brothers exchanging sisters directly]. From there, they came to Duku. There were many people engaging [getting engaged/married], red and white, everybody (but he [Busali] is only telling us his [Wabadala] part).

These people they lived at Pedaeya and another place called Ikaba. From there, these Wabadala-side people they came around from Duku to this Pedaeya and they used to get Aida from there. From there, this Wabadala, they used to come to Duku and this Paiya - white people - they came to Ikaba. These Wabadala they took off from Duku, they got this fire called Ilagula. From there, this white-side fellow, Dayale, got the fire from the Wabadala people - he was the first man Dayale [to have fire]. This Paiya people they don’t [didn’t] have fire [instead] they used to put their fish and meat in the sun; as well as sago and [the] sun cooked their food. But these red people, Wabadala, they were using this real fire and Dayale went and got [the] fire from them [and gave it to the white people].

These Wabadala people were taking off and these white people they got onto the canoe called Suliki and Dimagi was not missing this Suliki canoe [again] - with these white people. He’s a red fellow but still [travelling] with the white clan [in Suliki]. From there, they left Pedaeya [and] they were coming to Masanawa -gawa saba [canoe place]. Father told them on the way not to stay [to have sex] with their wives but Dimagi really wanted to stay with his wife at that gawa saba. From there, some people said “No, we have to go and see Dogono first”. But Dimagi didn’t want it [to wait], he really wanted to see the ladies’ faces
or something like that. And he went and he was very cross. He went and hung onto one of the tree[s] named waiko - he was swinging himself and [the] waiko branch twisted down [under his weight]. It’s still the same, it’s standing just like that at the canoe place - some people used to see it.

The people, these red people, they followed this Dogono way and they were throwing these stones in the bush called keaga. Daybreak was still breaking and these Segela [red moiety] people were using Kelaki’s canoe, Madulabali. From there, they came and they were living at Sisi. They followed Bogela and came [to a place called] Litamadae or Litamawama. This place belongs to the Wagumisi people. From there, they said “This is the place called Dogono - we’ll stay with the wife here”. So they did that [had sex]. From there, the place was first alive and when [they] stayed with the wife [had sex], it died or something like that - they broke the law. And then one of the big men called Waliwali, he said, “What is happening, the place is getting quiet”. Litamawama name means that they stayed with their wives at this place.

When they did that, this Waliwali he just took off. And these people were looking for him. They came and they saw his house but he was not there. But the house Waliwali was living [in] he [had] put pig-skin on top of the roof. They [the people] came and they saw that and they said, “He’s not here, he’s gone: only the house, [there is] nobody inside”. While he [Waliwali] was going he took that pig-skin with him, he left only gabi lapila [special thing or wallaby spear] in the house. It is something special. And they came and they saw only that thing, that gabi lapila was in the house. Those people they were calling out “Waliwali are you there? Wait for us”. And they call out. And he heard them at the place called Lugigiwa and then they call [out] “Kiwa is there”. That’s another fellow’s name. He [Waliwali] turned back and he told them, he told Kiwa “Just go inside and get this gabi lapila”. From there this Kiwa ran inside the house. He went to grab onto that gabi lapila [but] all these
Lalamana people went and fight him on the back. This Lalamana is a clan name [and is Waliwali’s clan].

From there, Waliwali went to Dibili [Aramia River] and then he stopped where the place that [is] called Saiya and then he saw the smoke, our iniwali’s [ancestors] smoke and his smoke was joining together [with the ancestors’ smoke], Waliwali’s smoke. From there he came back again to Sakunite Gaila [a place]. He sat there. From there, he saw the smoke again, went back to Kabuka, Ali’s [far west Gogodala village] peoples’ place, Kabuka. From there he took off again, following the Dibili river [Aramia] and then he met Sawiya at Sowali mouth [creek mouth]. She made a lapila [sticks that hold up a fishtrap called saiya] and told Waliwali “Men don’t go in the middle, just go around”. And then he said “No, Waliwali is [an] Aida man”. He went through her lapila. He went in the middle of that lapila. While he was breaking that [lapila], underneath that lapila [there] was a very big snake called Kalu. It came, broke [the] canoe in the middle [and] went through his bottom [until] the tail part [came] through the [Waliwali’s] mouth. From there, he just sank into the water and the canoe’s name is Bainale and Sawiya got pieces of the canoe and just poked them on the lapila for the saiya for the fish trap.

Waliwali’s children, they went back to Botewa which is the Wabadala people’s place [a point of land at Balimo]. There are two canoes named Amala and Meloka; they were using these two canoes. They were staying at Botewa, - these white people followed the red people [but] they can’t come to Dogono village because Aida was living in Dogono. While they were living at Botewa this man called Ana came out from Kolewa. And then he went to Kolewa and then he came back to Siko again. From there, they were sharing their wives, Ana and Dayale and then he [Ana] gave his spear to Dayale - that spear he used to kill plenty [of] pigs. From there, Dayale’s wife Obuwato Dodaeba, that’s Ela’s wife but Dayale’s real wife is Tulama. From there, Dayale got
married to this real wife, Tulama and gave his wife Obuwato Dodaeba to that Ana. This Ana, when he got married to Obuwato Dodaeba he went back to Siko. When he went back to Siko, he saw other ladies [had sex with other women]. The first son he made was Galoba and all those people they saw that son. From there, some people went and told [others] that he was having all the boys.

One of the men called Odaga [had] no son - he went to get a son from Ana. Then he went straight to Yau [village]. He made a canoe called Saekalade [and] made it into [an] Awala [clan] canoe. From there, he was coming all the way to Adiba [village] and he made a [water] well name Kawani. From there he was making that canoe in that place and the tail part of the canoe was making the well water by itself. And that well’s name was Kawani. When he had finished the canoe he went back to Ana and Ana was asking “Hey friend, what’s wrong with you?” And Odaga said “Some people have been telling me you have got plenty [of] boys [sons]”. From there, this Ana said “Oh, yeah”. So he [Odaga] slept there. [The] next morning he put his sons in [a] line and told him [Odaga] “Which one do you want to have?” So Ana’s son, Galoba, he was grabbing his father on his leg. So Odaga said “I want that little boy who is grabbing on your leg”. And Odaga called him Sowati. While he was bringing that boy, Ana gave Odaga [a] nice spear to shot [shoot] pig and feed him with that. From there, he was bringing that boy, Galoba, home. While he coming on the way he was using that spear - killing pigs [and] feeding that small boy. While he was coming out from Yau [village] mouth, that spear dropped into that water. When he put his hands into the water to hold that spear he hold something that was Sibi’s gabi lapila [special thing]. That gabi lapila is still at Kini [village] - someone is holding [keeping] that gabi lapila, Yusaka. Why he got that gabi lapila, the place called Olawa and that mouth called Yau magata. Pasiya is sitting there. And that place, Sibi, Sibi kabo is sitting there. That gabi lapila called Sibi lapila that Odaga took it, put it inside his
canoe and went. He went all the way to [could not make it out] and came back again. And this place between Dogono and Tai, the place called Naskawa belongs to Galoba. Odaga put this Galoba on the place called Naskawa and that is the end of the story.[Busali says that his daughter Kabiyato got married into this Galoba's family].

Kaemisi (Lalamana clan) and Kimama (Gasinapa-Wabadala clan)

Aketa village
December 31 1995
Translated by Sakuliyato Kakana, Tai village

This is the first man Kelaki, he came by himself from Uwa [the first man]. Came and saw all those places and went back. And then all these ancestors came after Uwa.

This our old people [ancestors], they got the canoe from Masanawa gawa saba, it's a place they used to put canoes. So that's the start, they break into two groups at Masanawa. The canoe name [is] Suliki - it was just floating on the water by itself and these people came. And then the man's name, Kiwa, he used this hook called wakeba kebo [swearing word] and then hook it [Suliki] and bring it back to the bank of the river or lagoon. From there the ancestors, all of them, went into that canoe called Suliki. That canoe got, what they call it, small spaces to sit inside [compartments]. So those ancestors came, brother and sister in one.

They came from this Masanawa and came and sat from this village [called] Mula, it's a village name. They were living there. That Mula is their first village. While they were there, they saw Dogono - Dogono village was right on top of some other villages. [They] said "Oh that's Dogono; we'd better start moving". From there they start coming to Dogono. While they were coming to Dogono they saw another village called Bamu. They didn't sat [sit] at Bamu, they just passed Bamu
village and came to Siwaeya and said “We’ll make a village here”. And they made a village and they were staying there.

From there they saw Dogono village again, from Siwaeya, and they said “We can’t stay here. We must go and see [the] real Dogono village”. Then they left Siwaeya village, they came to place called Deke. From Deke they killed one, the man called Dimagi. They killed him and they cut his body into pieces and they left him there, [then] came to this place called Makapiya. And this man Dimagi, his blood made a body again [and the] body of Dimagi followed after them. While they were right at Makapiya village, this man Dimagi went [and] jump in front of Suliki canoe. And they said “Oh this man is back again, we killed this man. He’s a dead man how did he come? We cut his meat into pieces”.

And then they said “It’s alright, we’ll make a village at Makapiya”.

From Makapiya they saw Dogono village again and they said “Oh, we are going closer to Dogono. Dogono is very close to us”. They came to Mula Golo, another Mula. From Mula Golo they saw Daru and they came to Daru. From Daru they saw Iasa. From there they left Iasa [Kiwai Island and] followed this Padaeya mouth, came to this Masanawa [canoe place]. When they put their canoe at Masanawa they didn’t come straight to Dogono, they stayed at the place called Komekome. They sat [stayed] there. The place they sat, Komekome, they made two houses [longhouses] there. And those two houses broke down. From there they came and sat at Sisigae and left Sisigae and came to Sibitana [near Kini village].

So they left Sibitana. They said “We [will] go to Dogono straight” but they couldn’t because Dogono village was alive, moving around. And they came and stopped at Dalota. And they left Dalota and they came to [Balipane and Imata were villages, places that they were staying but he didn’t mention them]. They came and they made a village from Binibi, Kini, to Taluyana and Alosaba and Tutuwa, it’s another village. And they came to village called Aiyana. From Aiyana they broke
and went to Kewa, some went to Kewa and some went to Kotale village and some went to Uladu.

They came from Aiyana village, came to Katamose. From there they start cleaning this Mabudi [place] to build [a] house and then they moved to Mabudi. From there they moved to Adiba [village]. From there they came to Mabitali, they made two villages and this Dogono was still alive that time. They really want to see Dogono but Dogono was really moving around, running away from them.

From there they came and sat at Balimo and then moved to Kakamadase [the place the oil company was staying said Sakuliyato]. While they were at Kakamadase this Dogono village was getting quiet. From there this Dogono village went and sat right on the ground and made a very big noise. And the people heard that noise and Dogono is now dead. And all the people went separate [ways and] made other villages like Dogono, Adiba, Pisi, Isago.

Dimagi was the troublemaker. Dogono village was [an] alive village but this Dimagi made a wrong thing - he start trouble at Masanawa gawa saba [canoe place] and told the people - men to stay with their wives or something like that [to have sex with each other]. When they did that, they stopped listening to their father Ibali and stopped getting calls or something like that - stopped listening to the music or something like that. And Dogono village went down and died from there. So it's Dimagi's fault.

And these people they went around, they were looking for the way how they get into Dogono. And then [this man] went around to this Dogono people's canoe place called Sama. And then [they] went to Dogono and stepped on the tail of Dogono village and it went down; and the man's name is Waliwali. From there this Waliwali heard those frogs singing or making noises and some other insects. While he heard these things making noise he started singing songs. Those songs are Aida songs [sang to Dogono]. While he start singing songs to Dogono these
insects stopped singing or making noise; birds too they were singing, they stopped.

When they were coming from the beginning, passing all of the villages, Dogono was right in the air - it was moving. So while they were coming, they really want to come to this Dogono village quickly, but Dogono village was moving away from them. When they came closer to Dogono village, this man Waliwali was the first man to step [on] Dogono ground. While they were doing that, this man Dimagi was the first man [who] told them to do bad things. So they did every bad things there, at Masanawa canoe place. And this Dogono was moving away from them - they did a bad things. If they don’t do any bad things on the way they will get Dogono quickly but they did [bad] things. When they came to Masanawa, when they made a trouble, after that they called back to their father Ibali. Father Ibali didn’t answer them and they knew that “We have made a trouble”. Father was just watching them [he] can’t say anything.

Sawiyato Kakana (Asipali clan)

Kini village
March 15 1995
Translated by Nakeyo Kakana, Balimo

So the big story that you know the way our ancestors came - you know my mother [Sawiyato] knows it. All these village people from around this Balimo area, up that way, Tai village side, know these stories of how our ancestors came. They reached this place the time this was all covered by flood. These ancestors were coming all the way from. They were using these walkietalkies like marine radio, some of them are like this, something like the walkietalkie. They came from a place where they started from and then they came from the place where this our humans started, they were two brothers and sisters [a brother and sister] in the olden days. And they came in a canoe - that canoe has got seats, two and
the other two. Two of them a female one and a male one [sitting next to each other] and they came in that canoe. That canoe is called Suliki these people were Tabama [white people] clans.

They came from the place where this long place [which is a] long way. Have you heard some stories about these people from Akua Islands, from Daru and the other place, Akua Islands, that’s the place where our ancestors came and they came to Iasa, the village called Iasa. That’s the place where these people from Kiwai Island are staying. If you stay here then you will go to Daru and seen some of the islands. These islands are close to these people, these Kiwai people, Samare, Sagoa and Sagasi [Kiwai places] and these are the villages around/ on Kiwai Islands.

And this other village called Iasa, these people, these ancestors came and they stood. They brought the other canoe [described it something like ‘sailship’ but they left it at Iasa] from the other place where they started. They came and went to Iasa and then cut down another tree, Kesa. That tree name belongs to our clan, Wagumisi clan. They cut down the tree and they made a canoe. Not a real canoe, not this modern type, but this olden one, [they] made [a] canoe but they make the pieces like you sit in the car [like compartments with seats] brother and sister, he [sitting in the] other one, the other [sitting in another] one and that’s it.

The place where they came, the person who send them, he was on the walkietalkie listening at what they were coming [to as they travelled]. [The ancestors would say] “Our father, we are on this place”, something like that; “Father we are on this place, we are [coming] towards this place [and so on]”. They were naming all these places where they came to, [they would come to] another place and they would call: “Father we are on this place”. And this one man called Dimagi, his name belongs to my wife’s clan [Nakeyo’s comment], this Asipali clan. He was at the [first] place, they left him there because he’s a - maybe our
ancestors they saw him [as] a *humbuk* (TP) fellow and they can’t bring him at the same time. Well they left him over there, they gave him [something] like a bamboo [tube] and the underneath part was broken and the father gave him that one and he asked him “You go and fetch the water”. When he went to the water well and went to fetch it, while he was coming towards [the people], the water was leaking out. When the water [was] finished, he goes back [to the well] again. While he was doing that, [the] people left the place.

They [the ancestors] came in twos, they came in twos. Those people came in twos because they were representing [each of the eight] clan, two in one clan, the other two in one [another] clan, the other two in one [another] clan [and so on]. Because us, we come from a clan: there are eight clans. And they came to Iasa and then from Iasa they started and they were having these walkietalkies while they were sending a message back to the place where they came from, where the father [is] who sent them. “Our father, we are on this place, we are just about to leave this place” - they were coming like that. They were coming in twos, coming like that and they came for years and they got another canoe from Iasa. They chopped down Kesa and they changed it to a canoe, that’s the Kesa tree - that’s our clan tree but they put a [canoe] design and called it Suliki.

And then they came towards this highway, the highway going to Wasua from this [Balimo] airport. They came in by twos and then while they were coming towards this highway, there is a big lagoon [Masanawa canoe place], that canoe is out in that place, in the lagoon. That canoe is [the one] our ancestors brought. It has got a spirit, that canoe. Where that canoe is sticking [out or staying], that lagoon is called Masanawa.

Then this man I was talking about, Dimagi, he was left at the place where they came from, and then he came. While he was coming, he came upon this Kawiya [place] you haven’t been to this Kawiya.
They [the ancestors] were coming and then Dimagi came after them. He came and then [came] to this mouth of Padaeya, mouth of Padaeya. They [the other ancestors] were trying to put that big walkietalkie, trying to put it inside the water and then they came. While they were coming they sent the other man to go [out of the canoe], jump onto the bush. And then he [the man who jumped out] was coming towards the Wasua way, that way that those people were coming by canoe. They used to call to him “Where are you?” [And he would reply] “I’m here, I’m coming towards you”. They were calling to each other, calling to each other like this as they were coming towards this Dogono. That place, the starting point place where they came from, they came from the place straight to Dogono. When they came and reach Dogono they will do whatever they want to do. That’s what their Father told them to do.

Our ancestors came, and when they were coming but instead of waiting to Dogono, in the middle of the ways, this Dimagi came and he came up to them and reached them and he said “Oh, okay we’ll go together”. So he was holding the stick, he was trying to kill that man, the hunter who was coming towards the people who were coming by canoe and that ancestor’s name is Maimiya. When they came and they reached this place, they were trying to put the anchor inside the canoe, but this man who came after them, Dimagi, was trying to kill that hunter [Maimiya].

And they came and stopped at that point called Ipoma and they were waiting for [the] hunter to come and jump in the canoe. So he [Dimagi] got the stick and he was just pushing it in the water, and the water well is very deep. “This one is shallow, you come towards the canoe” he was thinking like that. When he [the hunter] came towards the canoe, that Dimagi, he got the stick and he killed him - on the spot. And then, he [the hunter] was sinking inside the water and they pushed and they grabbed him and they dropped him in the canoe. Dimagi killed him and they put in the canoe and they cut his body into pieces and then they
got their magic things in our clans [from the pieces of Maimiya’s body].
Some things we used to [have] in our clans. What we are doing in our
modern days. They got the other parts, some people got the fingers to
scratch you with like this. And then one day, this Wabadala-Gasinapa
clan man named Waewa, he got the fingers, the fingers of the hunter
who [was] killed. On the way, he [Waewa] used to pinch people like this
and then you get [a] big sore [from that pinch]. When they [were]
coming, this same Dimagi that man who killed the hunter [said to
Waewa] “Why are you doing that to the people and these people are
always getting sores?” And on the way he killed that fellow, that
Waewa. And the place that Dimagi killed Waewa is the mouth of Iliga.
And then they killed Waewa and then Waewa’s son, Segela, came with
those people who were coming two by twos.

Dogono is this place, this light place, Dogono. When you go
towards Dogono, Dogono will finish by itself [will disappear]. And then,
when you go back [away again], it comes up again like a monster [like
an ugu]. It [ugu] is in the water [then] comes up, sees the person [and] it
goes down [again]. That [Dogono] place was [a] different place. When
they were coming towards Dogono, instead of reaching Dogono, they
came and reached the place called Isewe. [At] the place called Isewe,
that Dimagi, he jumped from that place and he was trying to walk to
Dogono. These other people were [still] coming by canoe. He jumped
[out of the canoe] to that place, Isewe, and some of the ancestors who
were coming with [him] they jumped [out of the canoe] too.

And then some people said: “Our father, our real father sent us
not to jump [out of the canoe] on the way - we are going right [straight]
to Dogono. These ancestors, who came two by twos, some jumped with
Dimagi, some went in the canoe. [Those who stayed in the canoe were
saying] “Our father sent us that we are going to reach Dogono, then from
Dogono we will do our sexual”. That’s what some of the people, our
ancestors, were talking about but some of them [had] already jumped out
with Dimagi. And then they were arguing there and then they want to make a sexual [to have sex], they want to make their sexual with [their] ladies and then Dimagi started getting cross with [the] female ones. So they got a stick and then they were fighting on that tree. He was not fighting with people he was pushing the big stick, all of them holding the sticks and they were cutting the branch off this tree. That tree is still there, it's a bent one, it's already bent. Olden days, ancestors came, that [tree] was there - it can't grow big, it can't grow tall.

Instead of reaching Masanawa [canoe place], this place on the highway [they only reached] Isewe. And then they were arguing and then they [all] jumped in the canoe again from there. Then from Isewe, they said “our father said that we will all go to Dogono to have our sexual” and then they all jumped into the canoe. The canoe was left [at Masanawa canoe place]. And they came [on foot] from that highway [between Masanawa and Dogono]. That Masanawa, they left the canoe up there, and that canoe front part went down like this and back part was up and they pushed the canoe in the water like this. And they jump [out] on Masanawa, and they are walking towards Dogono. And then they came up, that place is a bit higher, that hill is very high. From there they saw Dogono, down on the other side. This Dogono. When they came and they stood at this hill called Muda, this [is] another place, this Muda is a place [which belongs to] clan people [from] Tabama and Awala. This land belongs to them. And they stood up there and then they saw Dogono. Dogono was by itself - like what you call it this pig named called Gibita. That Gibita name is called belongs to these Lalamana people. That Dogono name belongs to this Lalamana clan. The same place [Dogono] was a light place and only the pig, the big pig is there, [with] tusks. In these olden days that pig is not a real pig, [the back part] it's a land and the front, the face part, is like a pig. Back part is like this land.
They came towards that place and then they had a sexual [at Masanawa]. [As a result] they’ve got [became different] difference, [some] people have got some light skins and we’ve already got black skins. So they came and they stood at Muda. It’s a land called Dogono but it look like a pig. And then the tusks were making [a] noise and the ancestors came and they stood at Muda and they were getting frightened because the trees and everything were going [moving] by themselves. And while they were standing on that Muda, they saw Dogono and they saw the trees slipping down the sides [making sounds like] this sound [Nakeyo made a sound like a loud whistle]. And then while they stood there they saw Dogono, they were getting frightened to touch Dogono because it looks like a pig and it’s tusks [are] making noise and some trees, trees were going like this [swaying] side to side, like that.

They came, they saw that man, this Lalamana people’s ancestor, this big man Waliwali. Our clan lady Sawiya - she came towards this way the ancestors came [the same way], and she thinks that it’s not right for her so she went back again. And then that’s the person, that’s the lady who came towards this Aramia River. [She went] back and past Kiwai Islands, and then on the other side she came this way. That’s why this Aramia River was made by herself. So she came towards this Aramia River. While she was coming, this old big man from Lalamana, Waliwali, he came with her [followed her]. He came first and to Dogono, he saw Dogono and then he went again. Because Dogono belongs to the Lalamana clan. So Sawiya came towards this one [Dogono] and then [back along] the Aramia River [travelling] up that way, Ali way [far west], past Awaba [and] right to Ali. And that’s the river coming up towards the Strickland [River]. From there Waliwali [who had been following Sawiya] came back again.

These ancestors came and they were standing at Muda. From Muda, they [finally] came to Dogono and they made a small village and they were saying there. While they were staying there this, something
like a pig, it was still making noise, all day and night. Those things were at Dogono, they were all alive. And then this Waliwali came. From there Waliwali came. He was looking for Sawiya but Sawiya was at this place where this Ali [village is]. Waliwali was looking for Sawiya and she came [back], and he came to Dogono. While he was coming towards Dogono, he heard the pig tusk making noise. And he wants to settle down, he wants to settle in. Because the people, this ancestors were still staying on that land. Then they made villages and they were staying there, that Dogono land. And this Waliwali, he came towards Dogono. So he wanted to settle that pig’s tusk down for people to stay on the land. So he came and put the canoe on the other side of Dogono, [on some] land called Lapawa. Then Waliwali went up towards this [noise], he stepped onto Dogono land and he was whistling, making a whispering noise and then he was settling the pig tusk noise - he was whispering [and he was settling the pig] because that pig belongs to that clan, so he is the big man. And they had a big dancing.

And next morning, this Sawiya, our clan lady, she took off from Dogono. She was going towards Awaba. When she went to Awaba, her brother Waliwali he was going towards her. Then, while she was going, she left these sago grubs - wrapped sago grubs with the sago. She left all those bunch of sago tied with a container like that and then she put it on top of the fireplace. While she was going, she left that sago grubs container. She told her brother, this Waliwali, “When you come tomorrow morning after me, you must grab these things. I’m going towards Awaba first”. So that Sawiya went to Awaba first and then her brother Waliwali went towards [her]. While he was going he forgot to take his, something like a shell, a big shell. People used to make holes and hold them to blow it like that it will make a noise. When you blow it will make something like that [a loud noise]. In some of our olden days, when you [or] some of your friends are in accident and struck by your axe or knife or bitten by a snake, the people who are good at [and] heal
the people who got snake bite - this a way you call them, in that shell. He forgot to take that one, Waliwali.
Appendix C

Miwasa's Story

Busali (Wabadala clan)

Dogono village
April 22 1995
Translated by Sakuliyato Kakana, Tai village

Those white clan people got married there [Masanawa canoe place]. That place he’s staying [Busali] and his daughters were getting food from there, that’s Litamadaewa (this name place is rude - the first people came and did bad things there - so it’s a bad name). From there, they did the bad things [had sex with each other] and this Dogono village went and died.

They were staying at Botewa [and] they thought that it was Dogono and the first lady who start dying [was] call[ed] Dalogo. She came to the place call Yagabo [a Wagumisi place near Dogono]. She put [a] fish trap called saiya there. Everyday this Dalogo used to come and get that fish from that fish trap called saiya while the people were living at Botewa. That village called Dogono [did] not [have] plenty [of] trees, just a few trees, only kunai (TP) grass were growing on that place called Dogono. And this Dalogo she used [to go] past that Dogono [and] go straight to Yagabo. From there, [on the] next day, she put this balago [a bark container], she put it where this fish trap thing [was and] went home again. Had overnight [and] next morning went back [again]. That container was there. In the night [a] snake called sanadae [a death adder] went into the container. Dalogo pulled the fish trap [and] she got plenty of fish and then she got that container. [The] snake came out from the
container [and] bite her on the hand. She didn’t thought [know] that was a snake [that bit her].

She went home [and] she was having her breakfast [and] she feel something, that [her] eyes were going around. And she asked “What am I doing?” And then they asked her “You tell us, what did you do when you go out?” And then she said “I was bitten by the snake”. From there she passed away. From there they were crying and calling her name “Dalogo, get up, tell us what have you done?” From there she got up again and told them “I’m going to die - everybody is going to follow me”. It was the first lady who opened [the way] to die. From there, she said “When I die, go and put me on my mum’s hand”. And then some people said “Who is her mum?” And some said “Ground is her mum”. So they put her in the ground.

From there, these old people who came with her, they followed what Dalogo have told them. They were staying right away from this, the place that [they] put her, call Batae. They were living at Botewa - it’s a far away from Batae. They took her body to Batae [and] they dug the hole. They didn’t put her [lying] down, lie her down, but they sat her up. That was her clan ground, Batae [Lalamana]. They sat her on the ground in the grave and they put a stick at the back of her [to] lean on the stick. They covered her with the ground.

From there they went home, they buried her and went home and in the night, in the midnight or somewhere around there, the ground was changing. He said [Busali] he doesn’t know the day [or] what the time [was that] the ground was changing. Busali’s father just told him that in the night the ground was changing. And then the ground was changing [and] at the same time people got up, they were very scared and they went, coming back to Ugu, Kebani, Kenewa, Waiya, Saewasi [Aramia villages]. Those people went from Botewa. And some people went to the Fly-side and they are living there now. When Dalogo died, that night when they buried her, this ground was changing [and] these people were
a bit scared and they break into pieces and some went to Fly side, some went up the river, Aramia River. All these people were living in one place, Dogono so our old people, these real Dogono old people, some went to the Fly side, some went up the river, down the river. From there they thought of the things from Dogono, came back again, came back to Dogono. Now they are living in Dogono, so we are their grandchildren.

And this Wawi side [riverside people] went across the Pada, this Kotale, Kewa, Uladu [villages on the Aramia]. Those are the three villages went by Pada and some [of] us break from Dogono and Adiba. So this Gogodala, the first woman who start to die, Dalogo, she start it.

Sanada Giliwa (Wagumisi clan)

Kimama village
March 5 1996
Translated by Kamo Bagali, Balimo

Miwasa, he came to Dogono. From Dogono he got married to Dalogo [and] their first daughter [was] called Ukila. While Ukila was growing up, around adult age, one day Dalogo went fishing and she put earthworms in [her] balago [bark] container and she came back to Dogono, put [it] in the canoe and went to sleep. One night the death adder came and went into container. Next morning she [Dalogo] came down, got the paddle out and she went to check these earthworms and this death adder came out and bit her. And she went back to the house [and] told Miwasa what had happened. Those people at that time had no medicine to cure it. So they took her to the other side, Lawapa Kawula, dug a grave and put her sitting up and put her back against her digging stick, piliwa batala. And the balago and earthworms they put next to her feet. Then they covered [her].

Then she went to Wabila, her spirit - limo. Then it [her spirit] came back and told Miwasa “You have to come back and get me from Wabila - Walawi, I’ll be out there, that’s where I’m going”. So next
morning, he got up and packed his things. And he was looking for [the] way to go [by] canoe. But he was not lucky. So [he] went to see his in-law Kiwa and asked him for a canoe and Kiwa gave him a canoe called Ginadae [Lalamana].

He went straight out the mouth of Yau, along the Aramia River, straight to Wabila. Before he went out the mouth of Dibirí [the Aramia], at Pada there was a man just sitting beside the bank [called] Waya. While Miwasa was coming, Waya put his leg across the way [to] stop Miwasa from going across his way. Miwasa said “Hey, what’s going on?” And he got tired and cut his [Wayas’s] leg and put it in his canoe. Then he went to Aesisegelaebiyawa [a] camping place. At Aesisegelaebiyawa he got this clay and he made two humans, Nali and Sidolo [Siboko clan people] and gave them life. He told these two people, “I did something wrong on the way, coming here so on the way back, you give me a fighting clubs”.

Then he went to Ugu, there’s a mouth of a creek called Mumu from up there he went up that creek up to Bolame. And he met these kids, they call them placenta, dinipala [Umbilical cord which is the where the] spirit from buried placenta go to Bolame. Then they told him to climb the coconut [tree] and get the coconut for them and “Then we will show you the way”. So he said “Hey, I’m a big man, why am I getting coconuts for you”. But they said they would show him the way. So okay, he climbed up but as he was reaching forward, but coconut tree was getting taller. Every time this Miwasa leaned forward, this coconut tree leaned forward [and] got higher. He came straight up to an old man Dabema [Siboko] up in the sky sitting down in the house making this handband called mudi. And this coconut leaves came up underneath the house and poked him in the bottom. And he stood up and said “Hey what’s going on?” He looked through the floor and saw Miwasa [who had] another name, Babe. “Hey what’s this stupid Babe doing?” He got that needle [for sewing cane and] poked it on the wall and then he got
that club, *gabi lapila*, with *gawa tao* on it and he started hitting him, Babe. And as Miwasa was going down, this coconut [tree] was going down with him. Then he came back to these children, and small boys were holding coconuts and hiding. Miwasa had blisters on his body where he came down the tree.

He came down and he was looking for these small kids. And these kids were holding this coconut to their chests and singing:

*Bau bau Miwasa naewanamo*  
[Coconut, coconut Miwasa praise me]

And they were coming close to him, and then himself too he was starting to dance, scratching his blisters with the blood.

After they had danced, he said “Hey hurry up, which way do I go”. So they said “See that way there, that’s the, there’s a bridge (Sydney Harbour Bridge) - don’t go over it, only under it. It’s a boundary between dead and live people”. As he went underneath that bridge there, the boundary, this Saida was sitting there [and] he wore this old man’s skin. He was scratching all his scabies. As he was scratching, Miwasa came through. Miwasa said “Hey who is this old man sitting in the way”, and he pushed him. And Saida said “Hey, easy”. Miwasa is in the house now, where these men were sitting down. And these men came closer to him and they were looking at his eyes, they were strange. They said “Hey this man is not a spirit, he might be a real fellow”. And they were poking him with sharp needles. And he was saying “Hey”.

Then Miwasa said “Where is my friend Saida?” And they said “He is outside by the side”. And he said “No, that’s an old man”. While they were talking, Saida sent this *gauba ikaka* [wallaby skin mat] with Kanaba design on it into the house and it landed near Miwasa. “Ah, that’s your friend’s mat, for you to sit on”. Miwasa was scared to sit on it because the eye on the Kanaba *gawa tao* was blinking. They said “You sit down” [but] he was restless [and] he couldn’t sit down. He was scared. Miwasa sat on the mat, he couldn’t believe he was sitting on something [that] was alive. Saida was coming, he was a giant [and] as he
stepped the floors were going down. Before he came, this betelnut [and a] container for lime, they came and stopped there [near Miwasa]. And they [the men] said “Oh your friend has sent you betelnut, you can have it”. That thing looked like a snake so he was scared to get it. Then he chewed betelnut. As he was chewing betelnut Saida came. While he was coming he sent this penis, big penis, underneath the floor [and] it came through the wallaby skin and into Miwasa’s bottom.

From there, after this penis came, Miwasa jumped up scared. They said “Sit down”. He [Saida] told him, “After chewing betelnut, we’ll go to the garden and get homemade beer i sika [kava]”. Both of them went and they were looking for digging sticks to take it out; this batala [a digging stick] came by itself [to them]. That batala name [is] Wapi and it’s eyes were blinking; [the] end part had [a] human face. And Miwasa got scared and Saida [said] “Take that batala and dig the i sika up”. From there, before digging the i sika, he was holding that batala [and] Saida send [a] pigeon bird and [the] bird came down to Miwasa. Miwasa was hitting the bird and he spoilt the leaves of the i sika while he was trying to kill the bird. And that Wapi batala got broken. After that they got another piece of batala and they dug the i sika. And then they came down to the water well to wash them. But the guards of the water well, wigala [leeches], one on each side. Saida didn’t let him know that there were guards [like the leeches], so [that he would] be careful for that. And then those two leeches [held] holding him on either side [and began] pushing [him] in the water, down and up [and there were] scratches and things on his body.

After that he came up and Saida told him to climb up [a] coconut tree and get the wakota [betel nut] seeds just hanging down. And on top of [the] wakota seeds there’s a security guard snake called Kida [Lalamana]. While he was climbing up, that Kida came down to his nose. When he saw it he got a shock and came right down [to the bottom of the tree] and spoilt all the wakota leaves. Then Saida came to him and
said "I'm sorry my friend, I forgot to tell you about the guard in the *wakota* tree".

Both of them went back to the house, in the afternoon. Then in the house, [the] two of them they sat down and they cut the *i sika*. Saida told Miwasa "Hey my friend, it's very hot, why don't we go outside, and when we are outside we can see Dalogo with the rest of the women - they went to collect the fish at Salonae and Makapiya". While they were sitting outside, this lady's spirit came first [and] her body was still with the rest of the women. Miwasa saw her coming with plenty of fish tied to her back. And he stood up and said "Hey Dalogo is coming. I'm happy to see her". And Saida said "No my friend, that is not [the] real Dalogo, it is her spirit". Miwasa told Saida "That's her, she's coming". Two of them were talking and the spirit disappeared.

And then shortly [after], the women came and then Miwasa went and grab Dalogo. Saida came and said "My friend came already. You go to the house and cook some food [and] we'll have a small feast". And Dalogo told Miwasa "Oh it's okay - we'll go tomorrow back to Dogono". And Saida told Dalogo "You told him to pick you from here and go back again?" Dalogo answered "It's okay, I'll cook the fish [the] big ones and small ones and take the fish tomorrow".

In the afternoon he went in [to] the house. Miwasa was still there and Saida went to talk to Dalogo. And Dalogo hid the big fish and put the small ones [out] to eat. From there, Saida went in the night and had a sex with her and have a turn. And then he put something on Dalogo and he went and told Miwasa: "Hey my friend, you go have a turn". In language we call it *kabuwa* - so Miwasa couldn't have sex with Dalogo. And Miwasa went to have a chance and didn't do anything. Then he went underneath [the house] and he went and made a big fire and called "*bila, bila*" from corner to corner [of the house], jumping in the night. Miwasa's brothers and sisters felt sorry for Miwasa, they knew what *bila* meant [that he couldn't have sex with his wife]. While he was doing
that, his canoe got lost. And while he was looking for the way to come back, [his] Siboko friends, they send the message to him [because] they want[ed] to burn the grass [to] kill wallabies, smoke them and bring back to Dogono. The grassland’s name [is] Siyale (Siboko). Some of his friends they greet him “Hey Babe, what time [did] you come?” “Oh I came long time to get Dalogo but she didn’t come so I’ll get the wallabies, smoke them and bring them”.

While he was doing this, his friend Saida split up his canoe, Ginadae, and put it up at the sky, where the sun is coming and the sun is going down [clouds with tints of colour as the sun rises and sets]. After burning those grassland, they [Miwasa and his friends] killed some of these wallabies, lastly this big wallaby called Kauli (Siboko). This was high in the sky. Then they found Kauli right at the point and they said “Miwasa you stay there, a big wallaby is coming from this point to this point”. They tricked him. From there, one of the men missed it and that Kauli was still going to[wards] Miwasa. Miwasa raised his spear and hit it but didn’t kill it [just] hit it on the side, on the side but didn’t kill it. That wallaby disappeared. And then, after chasing the big wallaby, he [Miwasa] brought some wallabies he had killed, had a bath with some of his friends, smoked the wallabies [and] had a dance. It was the last night for Miwasa so they gave him a waliuwa [kundu (TP) drum] called Kanaba. It’s the last night for him up in the sky. And then he was beating the kundu (TP) drum.

Then Miwasa came down from the sky and he was looking for a canoe. He brought all the smoked wallabies. Now he’s at the canoe place looking for a canoe. And they gave [him] a canoe. They cut the tree called Olabele, they chop it down, make a canoe [and] call it Olabele Kanaba (Gasinapa-Wabadala). And they burnt the inside and outside with fire, made the tao, Kanaba. They told him “[The] canoe’s ready now”. So they got all his belongings and put them in the canoe. He
[Miwasa] took Dalogo now, she was in front of the canoe and he was in the back. They said farewell to the men and they took off.

Some metres away, Saida pulled a string attached to Dalogo’s umbilical cord. He pulled the string back and Dalogo fell in the water and she came back. Miwasa said “Hey, what’s happening?” And he followed her back to the canoe place [and he] put her back in the canoe, did it again. [The] same thing happened. Second time. Third time [and] same again - Saida pulled his string. Miwasa came and said “Ah, I’ve had enough, she no longer belongs to me, she’s Saida’s wife. Our future generations will come here, so this is the place for them, Wabila”. So he stood there and he told Dalogo, “I know there’s nothing I can do. You’ve set the way for everybody. Future generations will come here”. And he took off alone.

He came [and] he met Waya [again], the person who he cut his leg off. They fought there. After fighting he got those two clay human beings that he made, called Nali and Sidolo [one boy and one girl]. He put them in a canoe after fighting with Waya [and] came to Dogono with this skin that Saida gave him. Saida told him to share this skin with everyone at Dogono, everyone would eat this skin and they would be able to eat this skin and change their skins when old, like a snake. When he came back, to see Waya, the two clays turned into human beings, they’re waiting for him.

From Pada he came and stopped over at Bela and met some girls. And this Daiyale’s daughter, Sawaledae, who were fishing. And he asked them “Who caught the most fish?” And Sawaledae got plenty so he told her to get in the canoe. Sawaledae got on and Miwasa told her “Your father Daiyale will come and get you at Dogono”. He put her at the back of the canoe; these [people] Nali and Sidolo were at the front. And then he set off. And they came [and] almost [at] Ginidaewa [near mouth of Dibili]. Nali was upset because Miwasa was talking to the girl. So he [Nali] threw the paddle at Ginidaewa and it made a creek at
Ginidaewa and then the paddle came back. When Miwasa saw that; he said “Hey, what have I done, I’m just telling her we are going to Dogono”.

Then they came to Dogono. And Miwasa got married to Sawaledae and he had two children, Gagole and Gaesubana [two boys: Siboko]. While they were fighting [at] Pada, Miwasa and Waya, that skin of a human being, that Saida’s skin, [the] wind blew it out of the canoe [and it] fell into the water. And snakes, birds, grasshoppers, and small water insects, butterflies [everything that changes skin] came and ate that skin.

Miwasa told his friends at Dogono “He [Saida] gave a life but it fell out at Pada and we have only one way, we’ll follow Dalogo”. After arriving, Miwasa told the people what happened: “I went to get Dalogo and life but I came back without [either]. All of us will follow the same way [it’s] only way”. So Miwasa broke all those regulations. “There is a shortcut to Yaebi Saba but we can’t get there yet”. It’s the only way, we’ve all got to go the other way, Dalogo’s way. Die from here and go back from Yaebi Saba.

Sawiyato Kakana (Asipali clan)

Kini village
March 15 1995
Translated by Nakeyo Kakana, Balimo

And then Kiwa stayed there and while he was staying there, there’s another ancestor called Miwasa. This Miwasa also belongs to this Siboko clan. And this Kiwa’s sister is Dalogo. And then Miwasa’s sister is Bidamato. And then both of them they got married, they exchanged [sisters]. Kiwa got married to Miwasa’s sister Bidamato and then Miwasa got married to Kiwa’s sister, Dalogo. They got married. And then Kiwa and Miwasa changed their sisters and then they got settled and then Miwasa’s wife [is] Kiwa’s sister, Dalogo [and] she’s the first
person who died. When our ancestors came there were no sign of death and no nothings. She’s the old, she’s the first one. She was a bitten by a death adder. While she was looking for these hookworms, these round worms, these are bait she was bitten by a death adder. That Miwasa’s daughter, Ukila, that Dalogo gave birth to that daughter Ukila.

Then when she died, that day, Miwasa went to the place where they were burning grass, that’s the place where they burnt this grass, this kunai (TP) grass [and] they killed some wallabies - that place name is Lubi. Miwasa went up there [and] his wife died while she was looking for bait, worms, hookworms, things like that. She was looking for these ones and the death adder [bit her] and then she died. And then they, some people, got a message and they went to and they told Miwasa, “Your wife has died already - bitten by a snake”. While he was coming [back to the house], he was coming towards Dogono to see his wife [and] he sang a song while he was crying. He was feeling sorry for her, his wife, and he was singing some songs like this one, while he was crying. That song is related to these people from Siboko clan. They have [a] big [racing] canoe, this Aeimala. When they are paddling towards the racing place they are using that song, because that song is related and in the right canoe. This belongs to Siboko clan.

And they buried her, that Miwasa’s wife onto the other side [of] Dogono and this Lapala. They buried her on the other side. Its not too far, it’s close [to Dogono]. Then she died and then the stick she used to dig some wells [when] they bury her they plant the stick [that] stick she used for digging wells. They plant it towards her graveyard and that tree has already been grown up, it’s very big tree [called] Biliwa.
## Appendix D

Gogodala names and their clans and meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>WORD - MEANING</th>
<th>UDAGA OR CLAN</th>
<th>CONDITIONS OF NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gunipe</td>
<td>gunipe - mosquito</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwapo</td>
<td>gwapo - fly</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baya/ Bayato</td>
<td>baya - sago</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>Man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiyato</td>
<td>wai - pig</td>
<td>Gasinapa</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniwa</td>
<td>seniwa-green edible leaves</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aniya</td>
<td>aniya - young fruit of seniwa tree</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukusa/Mukusato</td>
<td>mukusa - ripe fruit of above tree</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babada:</td>
<td>babada: - black palm</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biseli/Biseliyato</td>
<td>biseli - black palm, very hard</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bau Mudila</td>
<td>bau mudila - green coconut</td>
<td>Tabama</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waisa/ Waisato</td>
<td>waisa - yam</td>
<td>Tabama and Wagumisi</td>
<td>Wagumisi cannot call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waisato, Tabama can call both names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totoba:</td>
<td>totoba: - yam</td>
<td>Wabadala</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubali</td>
<td>dubali - banana</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiama</td>
<td>sweet potato</td>
<td>no clan</td>
<td>Not a name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibala/Sibalato</td>
<td>sibala - crocodile</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malebe/ Malebeyato</td>
<td>malebe - snake</td>
<td>Asipali</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalu</td>
<td>kalu - big snake</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sili/ Siliyato</td>
<td>sili - big green snake</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amula/Amulato</td>
<td><em>amula</em> - Papuan Black snake</td>
<td>Asipali</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaba/Gaubato</td>
<td><em>guaba</em> - wallaby</td>
<td>Siboko</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabiya/Kabiyato</td>
<td><em>kabiya</em> - wild pussy</td>
<td>Wabadala</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awali/Awaliyato</td>
<td><em>awali</em> - cuscus</td>
<td>Asipali</td>
<td>woman's name only, but can use Awali or Awaliyato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daibi</td>
<td><em>daibi</em> - diver bird</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:ilila</td>
<td><em>a:ilia</em> - long necked white heron</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tukutukuga:</td>
<td><em>tukutukuga</em>: small white bird</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keketola:</td>
<td><em>kekotela</em>: small bird</td>
<td>Gasninapa</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batata</td>
<td><em>batata</em>: frog</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniwa Batata</td>
<td><em>seniwa batata</em>: green frog</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owame/Owameyato</td>
<td><em>owame</em> - greasy fish</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>Man's name only; but Owameyato is an in-law name for a woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliba/Alibato</td>
<td><em>aliba</em> - barramundi</td>
<td>Gasinapa</td>
<td>G-W cannot call Alibato, and Wabadala can only call Alibato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaloba</td>
<td><em>kaloba</em> - fish</td>
<td>Gasinapa</td>
<td>Wabadala cannot call it to a person, it is a canoe name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didiga/Didigato</td>
<td><em>didiga</em> - catfish</td>
<td>Awala and Tabama</td>
<td>Both Awala and Tabama can use both names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wawaya/</td>
<td><em>wawaya</em> - fish</td>
<td>Gasinapa</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wawayato</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wabadala</td>
<td>cannot call to a person &quot;just a fish name&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutututulupa</td>
<td><em>tutututulupa</em>: fish</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>Man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumiya</td>
<td><em>gumiya</em> - fish</td>
<td>Lalamana</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasagawa</td>
<td><em>sasagawa</em> - prawn</td>
<td>Wabadala</td>
<td>Gas-Wab can call only Pamowa, but Wabadala can call both names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamowa/Pamowato</td>
<td><em>pamowa</em> - turtle</td>
<td>Gasinapa</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dipalo</td>
<td><em>dipalo</em> - big turtle</td>
<td>Wabadala</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suliki</td>
<td>suiki - eel</td>
<td>Tabama</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magilo/Magilowato</td>
<td>magilo - big fish with hair and ladies' face</td>
<td>Awala</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gologo/Gologowato</td>
<td>gologo - grass</td>
<td>Wagumisi and Gasinapa</td>
<td>Wagumisi can only call Gologo, but Gas-Wab can call both names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibisibala/Sibisibalato</td>
<td>sibisibala - grass</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magamaga/Magamagato</td>
<td>magamaga - grass</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owada:</td>
<td>owada: - grass</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilimini</td>
<td>bilimini- floating grass</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadepa</td>
<td>kadepa - sun, day</td>
<td>Siboko</td>
<td>Man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoso</td>
<td>samo - sun, sun</td>
<td>Taboko</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibina</td>
<td>ibina - - moon</td>
<td>Siboko</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suli/Suliyato</td>
<td>suli- big stars that come up first at night</td>
<td>Wabadala</td>
<td>Wabadala can call both names, Gas-Wab cannot call Suliyato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genasi</td>
<td>genasi - morning star</td>
<td>Siboko</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buliya/Buliyato</td>
<td>buliya - big tree</td>
<td>Awala</td>
<td>man and woman's names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makalima</td>
<td>makalima - tree</td>
<td>Tabama</td>
<td>man's name only</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>man and woman's name</td>
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<td>biseke - lizard</td>
<td>Wabadala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wi</td>
<td>wi - water</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman's name only</td>
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<td>Iga/Igato</td>
<td>iga - milky or dirty water</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
<td>woman and man's name</td>
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<tr>
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<td>dupa - big crocodile</td>
<td>Wagumisi</td>
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<td>walati - cane</td>
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<td>Gasinapa</td>
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Appendix E

Bebema's story

Sanada Giliwa (Wagumisi clan)

Kimama village
March 5 1996
Translated by Kamo Bagali, Balimo

Bebema and his wife Lekeleke [lived] at a place called Iwaeya. From there they went to the bush to make sago. They were making sago, this Bebema and his wife Lekeleke. A couple of days later, Bebema didn’t go to [make] sago with his wife. He was busy chewing betelnut. While at the swamp, this kabiya [wallaby] came. The name who changed into this kabiya was Giwaleya [Wabadala]. He appeared to Lekeleke [because] he couldn’t see her husband. He said “What are you doing?” “Oh, I am making sago”. “What’s that?” as he pointed to her hair. “What’s that one?” “Eyes”. “What’s that?” “Nose”. “What’s that one?” “Mouth”. “What’s that?” “Teeth”. “What’s that?” “Breasts”. “What’s that?” “Belly button”. “What’s that?” “Fingers, hands”. Then he went down to her leg, toes and then back to [her] grass skirt. She had three of those. Then he pointed [at those] “What’s that one?” “It’s awalela [grass skirts]”. “Take it off”. So [she] took it off. Next one [he pointed that] “What’s that?” “That’s [the] second awalela”. “Take it off”. [Then he pointed at the] third one. “Take it off”. Then she said “I’m scared”. And he said “Take it off”. So she took it off. Then he asked “What’s that one?” She mentioned it. Then he moved closer and they had a sexual intercourse. She didn’t want it. After, he told her; “I’ll come back tomorrow”.

Then she went back and took that first awalela, wrap it up in strings had a bath and went and threw it where Bebema was sitting
down. This is an indication that wife has been raped. Bebema saw that awalela and he said “Oh true”. That night he started making spears, until daybreak.

The next morning, they went together to the sago swamp with bows and spears. He asked his wife, “Which way did he come?” “This way”. So Bebema hid himself under [some] sago leaves. Lekeleke told him “Wait when you hear a big noise like a wind”. He [the kabiya] appeared and he went straight and did exactly what he did the previous day. “What is that?” “Hair, nose” [and so on]. And [Lekeleke] went [stripped] down to this awalela [and] she took it off. Second awalela [and she also] took it off. Got to the third awalela and as she was taking it off, Bebema shot him through the side, right through. It took off, this kabiya. After shooting him that kabiya fell down. He ran over but that kabiya got up and ran away.

Now Bebema is chasing that kabiya, leading him to that place [called] Bolame. As he approached the village this kabiya disappeared [and] Bebema was by himself. He said “Hey, how did I get here?” He looked around [but there was] no sign of the kabiya, it was a village. He walked through the village and there were verandahs at each end [of the longhouse]. And this old fellow saw him and said “Young fellow, how are you? Come around the other end, sit on the verandah and I’ll come in a few minutes”.

From the verandah, that old man came up. He met him, he talked to him and there was no ladies in the house. And he said “Sorry I have no food to give you”. Bebema was hungry. Then they waited and it was getting darker and then ladies came back from gardens [and] they were making [a] noise in the house. The old man talked to the ladies, so they cooked sago for them [Bebema and the old man]. The old man said to Bebema “You can stay tonight”. After eating, he told him “You sleep here tonight. Tomorrow you are going to rest and the day after next, we’re going to initiate you”.
After the days rest, comes the [next] day [the] time for initiation. They [were] waiting for the sun to come up [at] 8-9.00am. They took all the young men into the main room. Bebema was taken in there. Aida came in [and] shot him [with a] spear and bow. This spear went and cut him in the middle [and one] leg fell on one side, other leg fell on the other side. Both pieces were lying there until [the] sun went [down] 12.00pm, then went to 2.00pm. These two pieces were just lying there [covered in] blood and flies. Then Aida, medicine man, comes back. [He] put the medicine on one hand, [and] on the other hand, joined the two pieces [of Bebema’s body] together. And then he came back to life. And he asked him “What happened?” And then they said “We don’t know what happened to you”.

While he was there, his wife Lekeleke waited, waited, waited, till [the] sun went down. She took off [as there was] no sign of Bebema. His wife went back and told Bebema’s father Mipala what happened. His parents, when they heard the story, they mourned for him. They forgot about him.

While Bebema was there, he learnt everything about Aida, how to shoot a man [and] bring him back together, [to] chew betelnut: [he] learnt everything. Then he went back to his village at Iwaeya to get those elderly men who were about ready for initiation (with some beards coming). So he took them now, the first lot now. He taught them everything and bought them back. [The] second time, he got the young men with small beards [and] taught them everything [and then] took them back. [On the] third trip, he took [the] young ones with no beards and taught them everything. During the third trip, he was the one performing the Aida ceremony at Iwaeya and he shot those young men and then he joined them and they came back to life. Then he ran out of medicine and he couldn’t fix the last one, Tibini’s son Kuluka. From there, this Tibini [Asipali], Bebema told him, “I’ll take your son, this pieces to Bolame and get more medicine and fix him”. And Tibini said
“Oh”, and he was not happy because that was his only son. So he got upset and he went and he put the magic in the snake, at Ulila. He went and put that snake at Ulila where he knew Bebema would come.

[And] Bebema took off [and] put the body in the bag. He got to Ulila and wanted to go to the toilet. Then Bebema came to Ulila. He sat down to [go to] the toilet and [the] snake came and bit him on the bottom. He was dressed up in his headgear, Aida [things] because he was going back to Bolame. He was lying down. So the men [who] used to rub out Aida’s footprints so no-one could follow him, so they found him. “Oh what has happened to him, it is Aida”. Then they found a snake had bit him so they said to Tibini “You have killed him, speak the truth”. Tibini admitted it “I came and put this snaketrap [here]”. So a big fight came up between Wagumisi and Asipali. So those men who got all those Aida things, those were the old men who would go around each village, being Aida, shooting [and bringing to life men].

Busali (Wabadala clan)

Dogono village
April 22 1995
Translated by Sakuliyato Kakana, Tai village

From there, the place name they are living is Sisi and they were doing that [living there] until that Kelaki went and got another lady. She was expecting another man’s pregnant baby and [Kelaki] brought the lady with the pregnant and then he called that baby’s name Uwa and then [Kelaki] took him to another village called Ugu and left him there. He took only [the pregnant] woman to that Ugu village and this Kelaki knew that inside this lady’s stomach there is a boy - so he named the baby first [and] called [him] Uwa and took the lady to Bolame (Wabadala-Gasinapa). He left the lady with a pregnant there, from that Bolame place.
From there, he wants to just stay away from the people - to be a father’s son - stay away from the people. And Uwa is not Kelaki’s real son, it is another man’s son. From there Kelaki told that woman “When you give birth to a boy call him Uwa and if it is a girl call her Uwato”. He get some water for her and chopped some firewood for her and left the lady at Bolame. [Then he] went back to Ugu and he got the canoe from Ugu [and] went back to Sisi.

That boy was born and the thing that comes after the baby was different [placenta] - the clan design [gawa tao] was on it. They call the design Tota and it turned into a canoe. From there the baby was by himself in the bush at the place called Bolame: [he] went [grew] to a little boy, [then] to a young boy, [then a] big boy, and went to a big man by himself and turned into a monster, ugu lumagi.

While he was there one of the men’s name, Bebema (Wagumisi clan man), got married to [a] Gasinapa-Wabadala lady - her name was Lekeleke. They were living in Sisi and Bebema got married to Lekeleke while they were in Sisi. And she was making that sago, this Lekeleke, and the sago’s name is manima kaba. From there, this Lekeleke went to make sago just close to the river. While she was making sago, this man Uwa came down. He put one kabiya kaka [wallaby skin] on him - he turned into this kabiya. He came down to this Lekeleke while she was making sago. From there while he was coming - [the] place used to get very quiet; somebody’s coming. And then she was wondering “What is happening?” And then she said “What is going to happen to me - [this] place is getting quiet”. From there he came down and jumped into the sago - we call it baya kakasi. From there, this kabiya pussy turned into a man, a big man and went and touch Lekeleke’s body. [He] start from the bottom to top - legs, bellybutton, breasts, milk and eyes, nose, mouth, ears - that man used to touch her bodies. [He was] telling her “What is this? What is this?” From there, the man was going down again touching [her] nose, eyes, ears again. [He] touch her breastmilk, tummy,
bellybutton and told her “What are you covering?” And she called that name. He told her “Take your clothes off” and Lekeleke took her clothes off. He made her as a wife [had sex with her]. [She was] somebody’s wife [already] but he made her as a wife.

From there she went and told her husband Bebema: “[this] man put on a pussy’s skin, kabiya skin, [and] came and made me as his wife and went back again”. And then this Bebema thought “Oh, that’s the man who Kelaki took to Bolame”, and he said “He did this bad thing to my wife”. Bebema was asking his wife “How did he come?” [His] wife said “He put cat skin on him”.

From there Bebema fix the spears to shot the man Uwa with the spear. So Bebema went with his wife Lekeleke to the sago place. Bebema hid himself with the sago leaves and the wife was making sago and Uwa put this pussy skin on him and he was coming. And the place was getting quiet. [The] wife told [her] husband “There he comes”. From there he heard him coming [and] he fix his bows and arrows. While he was just coming down, Uwa didn’t come close to Lekeleke, but while he was just coming down, Bebema shot him with a spear. While he was trying to fall down Bebema was going to hold him. Uwa got up from there [and] he ran away.

He was going to his home, this Uwa, and Bebema was after him. He was chasing Uwa - they went all the way. Uwa just disappeared Bebema was looking for Uwa. He disappeared and then he went into the house. Uwa was sitting on the verandah and this Bebema went. He saw this Uwa sitting on the verandah with the scabies - he took this pussy skin out [off]. And he was living with a big, long house - we call it saida genama. On the sides of the saida genama, there a sago farms, swamps, on both sides. Sago tree with diba on them - [like men’s hats on top of the sago tree] when they are ready [to be chopped down]. The place that Uwa was living , plenty of buai (TP) [betelnut] and they hit this buai
(TP) with *wakota*, they call them *wakota* - plenty of them there - everything was set.

And this Bebema was lost too. When he got lost he went and saw the big house and then he said “Where about is this? I have never seen this house before. I was chasing a cat but that cat is lost”. And then this Uwa was sitting on the verandah, scratching his scabies, and then [he] asked Bebema “What are you doing here?” And then Uwa asked him “How did you come here?” And then Bebema said “Old man, tell me the road. I followed the cat, pussy, kabiya. I shot that cat - I’m after that cat”. Then that Uwa asked him “Are you man or a little boy?” And then Bebema said “No, I’m a man”. From there he told him “Go on to the other side of the door”.

From there this Bebema went into the house. And this Uwa changed into a very big man and he was going into the door and he was really tight to go into the door, because he was a very big man. Uwa went into the house, sat on the floor and send the mat with a Kanaba design on it - that mat went by itself - it went to Bebema. And that mat was called *gauba ikaka* [wallaby skin/ mat] with a Kanaba design on it. And [Uwa] told Bebema “Get up” and then Uwa, he was called - what they call this big man - *Aida*; he was a real *Aida* man. From there, Bebema got up and that man went and stopped where he was standing and Uwa told Bebema “Sit down on that mat - that’s your mat”. From there, Uwa sent what they call this *togobolo*, this *Aida* people’s things with a Kanaba design on it and the bag with a Kanaba design on it. Those things went to Bebema by themselves - these thing were live things. When that bag went to Bebema Uwa told him “Push your hands inside the bag and get the *ema* [betelnut] - take the skin off and eat it”. While he was taking the skin off, Uwa got up. He was walking towards Bebema [and] when he stepped on the middle of the floor, he was a very big man, [and] the end parts used to go up and middle parts used to go down. When Bebema saw this he was very scared. And then this
Bebema was wondering “This man was not like this before. Why is he like this? He was a thin man”. From there, Uwa asked this Bebema “Have you got ema?” And Bebema said “Yes”. He take the skin off the ema, break it into pieces [and] put them on his knee and Uwa told him “Eat your ema”.

From there, Bebema was eating his ema. From there, [the] to of them were sitting there talking and Uwa asked Bebema “What is your story?” So Bebema told his story that he shot kabiya “And I followed the kabiya”. And then Uwa said “I’m sorry I didn’t see the kabiya”.

His wife was waiting till it was getting dark, waiting for Bebema. [She] went home to Sisi, went [back] to the village. When she went home by herself, the people from the village were asking “What is happening there?” Then she said “I was waiting for my husband, Bebema. He shot kabiya pussy and went after that kabiya pussy and he didn’t come back again”.

From there, this Uwa kept Bebema there and gave him this Aida showing him how these people went to our Aida and turn into a big man or something like that. From there Uwa shot Bebema with a spear then he fix him again - gave him life. From there Uwa took his medicines out and fix him with that medicine. Spear through the other side to the other side. The medicine he was using was the gagaga ‘yam’ that’s his medicine. From there, Uwa told him “You got this Aida gi [Aida things/way] already”. Then he stayed there a long time with Uwa.

Then he said “I want to go to my own place” and then Uwa told him “Go to your own village and do this Aida in your own village. Kill some people and fix them again”. From there, he start going. He went to this Sisi mouth and the village became very quiet while he was going. From there some people said “What is happening?” And some big man, they know. “Maybe someone is coming”. And the big men told the ladies to go inside the house. “Let your children and wives go inside the house”. From there he [Bebema/ Aida] put his canoe on the point [of
land] and he was going and they saw him while he was going. And then said “Oh, that’s the big man coming”. From there the big men said “Oh, that’s Aida coming”. He went and he just step on the step [and] went around the house, [the] big longhouse. He came around the next step, the first step he step on. He was knocking the step and then the big men said to Bebema “Come inside”. So he went up to the house and Lekeleke know that that was her husband. From there, Lekeleke said, was thinking “That’s my husband that got lost long time”. But she didn’t tell the people, she just kept it inside herself. He really dress himself up [so] that people can’t see his face and can’t recognise him, so that’s really Aida man’s dressing.

He went into the house and sat with the men. The big men told the young boys to sit [in a] different place, not with the big men. From there he told the men “Tomorrow I’m going to shot a same-age man”. So he left the things down at the canoe place - the stuff for the medicine - he left them at the canoe place. Those things, all those things were [had canoe] design on them - with Tota design. That canoe he went was with a design on - Tota design. And then he told the men, he told us not the size of this one (Kukuwa’s age) [maybe 28-38 years old] but the size of Wawa [50 years old]- with the wives and kids - those type of man. Next day, he shot the man, then he fixed them again. And next day he left. While he was going to the canoe place, his wife Lekeleke followed him. And then she said “That’s my husband coming, Bebema. I can recognise him how he walks”. Then he went back to Uwa.

Then the next day, he came back again. He’s back to shot the men he left and they said “He’s coming back again”. And they got up and they start dancing for him and his wife, Lekeleke, was underneath the house. The men were dancing in the house, she was dancing under the house. From there, these big men they used to sleep where they used to sleep and look outside and they said “This is his wife dancing under the house”. From there he killed some men, when he finished he was
going back again. While he was going his wife, Lekeleke followed him and asked him “Are you Bebema?” She said. And he said “Yes, I am”. And then Lekeleke said “Can I come with you?” And Bebema said “No, you can’t. I’m a different now”.

Then he came back again to shot some of the men - three times [he returned]. He shot the man, he fix some men [but] he left one. The fellow he didn’t fix was Kuluka’s son, Tibini. From there he put that body of Tibini in his bag, took him and went. While he was going, Kuluka thought “This fellow is going to eat my son as his dinner”. This Kuluka followed Bebema, went to Sisi mouth and there’s a bamboo called *kemi*. He used to sit underneath that bamboo and eat. And Kuluka went [and] put snake poison for Bebema because of his son Tibini. In the night, Bebema took off - got onto this tota design canoe, stopped the canoe at the mouth of the Sisi, went up to eat his breakfast. He didn’t see the snake, he sat on the snake. The snake bit him. Then [the] snake gave him bites under his legs and the snake’s name is Sanadae - short and brown ones [death adder]. From there he was a dead.

He was dressed in all of the *Aida* things and the people were looking for him. He was dead lying on the ground with *Aida* clothes on. Those men they thought he was alive but he was dead. And the snake was near the *Aida* man , Bebema. From there, men said “you must say that route, Kuluka you killed this man because of your son”. That’s the [one] man Bebema shot, they call him Saka. He was still alive till Mr Drysdale came to Balimo[first UFM missionary]. This old man [Busali] knows this Saka, he used to show them the mark that Bebema shot. This man Saka, he was a very big man and very tall and baldheaded man . This man was taken away by white people and there is no grave here.

These are real stories because you can see the mark. Bolame cannot be seen - it is a live place so that if you go there with your wife or husband you will just disappear.
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