THE NAME OF THE GIFT

ETHICS OF EXCHANGE ON DOBU ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an ethnography of Dobu, a Massim society (Papua New Guinea) renowned in social anthropology since Fortune's *Sorcerers of Dobu* (1932). Focussing on exchange and its underlying ethics, the thesis explores the Dobu concept of the person as it is expressed in exchange interactions.

To avoid undue pre-categorisation of exchange forms, objects and events, the thesis is structured according to vernacular terms and concepts. "Names of gifts" serve as keys to the analysis of contemporary exchanges. In this context, persons are conceptualised as both individual and 'dividual', as enmeshed within a network of relationships, the contours and density of which depend on individual qualities. These qualities are tied to the system of morals and become visible in exchanges. The thesis examines major aspects of exchange such as labour, mutual support, apologetic gifts, revenge and punishment, *kula* exchange and mortuary gifts. It discusses small gifts (such as betelnuts), Big Gifts (*kula* valuables, pigs and large yams), and money as they appear in exchange contexts.

The ethnography begins with an analysis of the construct of the Dobu person and sets out to examine everyday practices and values. The belief system (incorporating witches, sorcerers and a Christian God) is shown to have a powerful influence on individual conduct due to its panoptic character. The institutions that link Dobu with the outside world are examined in monetary terms: the Church receives offerings for God; the difficulties faced by tradestore owners evince conflicting notions concerning monetary wealth.

The last two chapters delve into lived experience in two major domains of Dobu exchange. My account of *kula* is presented in the narrative of a journey to Duau and explores not only the knowledge that matters for *kula* traders but also the experiential aspects that reinforce the motivation for engaging in *kula*. The final chapter, based on the narrative of a *sagali* feast, examines the ideology of fatherhood with a focus on the notions of love and duty. The caricature that was Fortune's 'Dobuan' is finally laid to rest.
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In many ways writing a thesis is like having a baby. As I did both within the same period, my feeling of gratitude extends to all people who helped me manage both tasks.

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Chapter One

WHAT IS A 'DOBUAN'?

What it is (a task at which no one ever does more than not utterly fail) is to inscribe a present - to convey in words "what it is like" to be somewhere specific in the lifeline of the world: Here, as Pascal famously said, rather than There; Now rather than Then. Whatever else ethnography may be - Malinowskian experience seeking, Lévi-Straussian rage for order, Benedictine cultural irony, or Evans-Pritchardish cultural reassurance - it is above all a rendering of the actual, a vitality phrased. (Geertz 1988:143)

EXPLORING THE DOBU PERSON

Dobu is a name widely known in anthropology as a place of 'sorcerers'. This thesis is about a different Dobu, not only in time and space, but from a different perspective. As the name 'Dobu' has been used – and abused – in the literature, this thesis is also an overdue realignment of anthropological perspective. 'Dobu' is a trope which has been turned in many ways.¹ I will turn it in yet another, attempting to create a less ethnocentric image. My ethnography is based on essential elements of Dobu worldview as they present themselves in language, myth and everyday practice. By focussing on my experience of similarity and mutual understanding, I explore aspects of personhood and agency, issues of recent concern in the Melanesian context.

Based on intensive field work, the methodology of this study reflects my subjective perspective. 'Plunging into their life' (Malinowski 1922:21-22, see also Geertz 1984:72) made me a competent speaker of the vernacular, and being immersed in their lives I created (often by chance) an intensely personal network of relations. My thesis is based on the presumption that one can 'understand' what "they" do, feel, and even think, only when the relationship is shifted away from a racially informed 'White/Black' level (which both parties normally assume automatically) to

¹ In the Massim area, 'Dobu' also is an indigenous trope for highly prestigious kula" (see Munn 1986:159); see also Campbell (1978) and Beran (1996:50) for distinct carving styles.
a more intimate level of personal friendships and animosities, where skin colour is less significant. Becoming involved in their conflicts, public and private affairs, sharing the food, heat, and sicknesses of everyday life created an open space for my encounters. It is these encounters that form the bulk of my ethnographic material, and I am confident that in the end I did 'understand' Dobu people. The thesis attempts to mediate this understanding by building on Dobu perspectives, as they offer themselves in linguistic and ideological concepts of sociality.

As it turned out, this approach to field work work, combined with the scope of contemporary anthropological paradigms, opened to view dimensions of Dobu life and society that have been neglected in previous accounts. Reo Fortune's classic *Sorcerers of Dobu* (1932, 1963) was not only based on a different, colonial approach to field work, but his theoretical stance exemplified a functionalism which limited the depth of his analysis.² His 'Dobuan' is known to almost every social anthropologist but I cannot agree with the general tone of his description. It will become clear that my comments on his study are based on a different discourse of interpretation.

Ruth Benedict's bestseller, *Patterns of Culture* (1934), introduced the 'Dobuan' to a wider public as the archetypical 'Dionysian'. Aggressive and paranoid, the 'Dobuan' stood opposed to the archetypical 'Appollonian', characterised by restraint and moderation like the Zuñi (1934:238). Although the 'Dobuan' helped support Benedict's thesis of cultural relativism, her account is based on selective, limited and skewed data that do not, and probably never did, correspond with Dobu reality.³

Since Benedict, anthropological approaches to 'culture' have developed increased subtlety and flexibility. The notion of 'gift exchange' has been in continual deployment since Malinowski's account of the *kula* (1922), Mauss' analysis of the meaning of gifts (1990, first published in 1925) and Lévi-Strauss' structural analysis of kinship and marriage (1949). Transactional approaches to gift exchange

² Fortune stayed for only one month on Dobu Island itself (1932:xii).
³ Just two examples of factual errors: Dobu soil is extremely fertile (contra Benedict 1934:130); Dobu certainly has a concept of legality, called *loina* (contra Benedict 1934:131).

My own interest extends from the symbolic dimensions of exchange into the sphere of ethics and personal conduct, and I wish to explore in particular the nexus between ethical rules, emotions and exchange. Although this approach may suggest cultural determinism (White and Kirkpatrik 1985, Lutz 1988, Rosaldo 1980), I would claim that from a Dobu point of view, individual agency is built on innate predispositions (see Epstein 1992).

Bourdieu has criticised the tendency to focus attention solely on ideological or material presumptions underlying exchange behaviour (1977). Yet real life offers more options than, for example, the concept of 'reciprocity' (Sahlins 1972) can possibly account for:

All experience of practice ... affirms that cycles of reciprocity are not the irresistible gearing of obligatory practices found only in ancient tragedy: a gift may remain unrequited, if it meets with ingratitude; it may be spurned as an insult. Once the possibility is admitted that the "mechanical law" of the "cycle of reciprocity" may not apply, the whole logic of practice is transformed (1977:9).

Exchange has been defined by Annette Weiner as a code with a reproductive structure developed through the symbolising of resources. To Weiner, the motivation for "keeping-while-giving" is grounded in the need to secure some permanence in a world that is always subject to loss and decay. People need to recreate the past, build up a historical consciousness that disguises change through symbols that stand for the past (1992:7). Similarly, B. Schieffelin states that the giving of food not only displays relationships between persons but the act of eating that food becomes memory, "an enduring, created social fact" (1990:245).

According to Munn, exchange is a kind of transformative action that enables a society to live out basic values and norms: "Exchange rituals each form a particular mode in intersubjective spacetime" (1986:122). These approaches regard exchange as a crucial aspect of social life, necessary to understand basic principles of
interaction – a point that is certainly true for the Massim.

Classic distinctions of economic anthropology have recently been deconstructed by anthropologists. Fajans, for instance, defines the concept of production in broadest terms as a "total process of constructing the social person and society itself rather than merely the production of material substances although it entails the latter" (1993a:3, 1993b:59). Myers' (1993:35ff) distinction between hierarchical (intergenerational care) and equivalent forms of production (sharing, helping each other) shows that labour is just as often a 'gift' as it is a subsistence activity. Labour is also linked to social transformation and replacement (Fajans 1993a:1). My own argument is based on the assumption that labour is an indicator of personal qualities and a 'gift' that is crucial in creating the social person. As food production, labour is based on gender-specific roles and physical experiences that contribute to the symbolic meaning of the produce. For example, yams are not simply 'resources'; for most Massim people they are 'persons' that have to be treated with respect. In culturally specific ways, food carries notions of symbolic experience which explain taboos and rules of consumption and exchange (Schieffelin 1976:65).

According to Bourdieu, it is useful to focus on the wider category of "symbolic capital", the yield of "symbolic exchange", which he regards as the "fake circulation of fake coin" that operates through socially approved self-deception (1977:6). This perspective permits a direct link to be made between gift and commodity systems:

[S]ymbolic capital, which in the form of the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name is readily convertible back into economic capital, is perhaps the most valuable form of accumulation .... (1977:179, his italics).

If the scope of the economic is widened enough, he claims, all objects and experiences of value, including non-material expressions such as a shrug or a handshake, can be analysed as 'practice':

The only way to escape from the ethnocentric naiveties of economism, without falling into populist exaltation of the generous naivety of earlier forms of society, is to carry out in full what economism does only partially, and to extend economic calculation to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation - which may be "fair words" or smiles, handshakes or shrugs, compliments or attention, challenges or
Exchange is a vantage point from which to discover cultural ethics. The value of the gift is implicitly founded on the emotional value of the object given, for the "sheer pleasure of possessing" (Mauss 1990:23, 31; see also Weiner 1992:144).

Exchange has long been recognised as being related to ethical concepts and to the display of emotions, such as "pride" (Mauss 1990:23) or even "happiness" (Gell 1992:149) and the "love for exchange" for its own sake (Fortune 1932:193). These terms need further clarification and definition in cultural terms, however. In Dobu, individual desires are contested by communal demands and individuals have to assume roles as 'givers' and 'takers' in order to be socially accepted. The principal ethics of everyday life are used in discourse to explain individual behaviour, negotiate personal conflicts and to legitimise strategies of bonding or separation. These ethics restrain expression of certain thoughts and emotions and encourage individuals to present themselves in a manner that is judged to be 'good'.

Exchange has also been identified as implicated in conflict. Since Young's monograph *Fighting with Food* (1971), the coercive use of exchange in Melanesia has become a widely recognized phenomenon. Not only are tensions evident in gift-giving, but conflicts between groups are often created and solved in this context. Munn considers witchcraft and sorcery as forms of negative exchange (1986:267). Sanctions against morally wrong behaviour are most visible and explicit if expressed in terms of incorrect exchange behaviour, for individual motives are usually hidden. Uncovering the roots of personal conflicts is often impossible as even an extended research period does not enable one to plumb the necessary depths of privacy; besides, in many cases the situation is too complex even for those involved to reach clear resolutions (see Brison 1992).

Analysis of the ethics of exchange can be a useful point of departure into dimensions of interpersonal relationships that are otherwise inaccessible. It also helps to clarify the culturally constructed concept of the person. Such an approach provides a versatile research tool because exchanges are mostly constructed as a means for the expression of inner feelings. Moreover, the concreteness of material
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exchange helps to diminish the risk of misinterpretation caused by the researcher's own cultural preconceptions (Brookfield 1973:15, see also Rosaldo 1980:23-4).

Schieffelin points to the different set of values regarding exchange as between Kaluli and Western ethics:

Where human relationships are stated so strongly in terms of material reciprocity, material gain and personal affection are not so morally dissociated as they are in the West. Consequently, material concerns are also sentimental ones, and to state one's desires in terms of sentiment is not the hypocrisy it would be for us (1976:150).

To exchange or not to exchange is a question that often goes far beyond the requirements of subsistence, resource management, and maintenance of social relations through forms of reciprocity. Exchange can serve as a metaphor of personal relationships and, ultimately, of life: "Kaluli equate breakdowns in reciprocity, assistance, sharing, hospitality, and cameraderie with vulnerability, loss, abandonment, isolation, loneliness, and ultimately, death" (Schieffelin 1990:114). The personal and the social as they are manifested in exchanges bring together two aspects that have often been studied separately. Myers rightly claims that "issues of personhood and exchange are twins" (1993:33).

The concept of the person in 'Melanesia' has been vigorously refurbished by Marilyn Strathern in an attempt to deconstruct gender dichotomies (1988). The Gender of the Gift argues that 'Melanesians' are distinct from 'Westerners' in the way they relate to one another: "Western culture imagines people as persons existing in a permanently subjective state; this is their natural and normal condition.... In Melanesian culture, people are imagined in contrasting modes – male and female, same-sex and cross-sex, a person always one of a pair of interrelated forms" (1988:338). This basic distinction has been criticised by Macintyre as "ahistorical" and "in some ways utopian" (1995:34). My perspective on exchange is based on the presumption of individual agency, incorporated in the Dobu notion of 'work'. 'My' Dobu person, then, is not as different from the 'Westerner' as Strathern would suggest. With the concept of 'symbolic capital' in mind, my argument focusses on those aspects of the person that are relational yet individually shaped. Gifts are, it follows, expressions of personal strategies to
modify relationships within the parameters of social time and social space.

Bourdieu has pointed out the importance of such strategies for an understanding of practice:

Then there are all the strategies intended simply to neutralize the action of time and ensure the continuity of interpersonal relations, drawing the continuous out of the discontinuous, as mathematicians do, through infinite multiplication of the infinitely small, in the form, for example, of the "little presents" said to keep friendship going" ("O present – thunticht – you won't make me rich but you are the bond of friendship") (1977:7).

Here Bourdieu uses an example based on a 'named gift' (thunticht). The ploy of giving small gifts is to accumulate social credit rather than economic benefit. The proliferation of terms for forms and items of exchange, it seems, is a way of avoiding undue categorisation. Mauss was surely wrong when he called such broad semantic fields "childish":

The somewhat childish legal language of the Trobriand Islanders has given rise to a proliferation of distinctive names for all kinds of total counter-services, according to the name of the service that is being compensated, the thing given, the occasion, etc. (Mauss 1990:30)

On Dobu, a similarly rich vocabulary of exchange indicates the subtle discriminations being made when giving and taking, sharing and hiding, demanding and refusing. It underlines the importance of exchange expressing 'total social facts'. This is reflected in the abundance of special terms for types of gifts and types of exchanges. These names for gifts can serve as keys for the study of Dobu exchange and interaction.

Postmodernism has created an increased awareness of the ethnocentricity that lurks within anthropological concepts. The deconstruction of key notions, such as the dichotomies of culture-nature, male-female, domestic-public (M. Strathern 1988), gift-commodity (Macintyre and Young 1982), emotion-rationality (Lutz 1988) gives way to a search for more appropriate categories of analysis. To avoid the trap of undue pre-structuring of data resulting in inappropriate interpretation, I ground my study in the Dobu vernacular (the 'name of the gift') as a point of departure into the complexity of exchanges. Indeed, focusing on the 'name of the gift' as a
linguistic and social category enables valuable insight into locally significant units of action and reflection. It provides a perspective on both the mechanisms and ethics of exchange, and relates them directly to the concept of the person and notions of individual agency in Dobu society. This study reveals a complex and dynamic structure of society. The 'actors' are identified as persons with emotions, striving for personal goals by a variety of means.

State, church and conversion: the 'Dobuan' of the Methodists

The colonial history of Dobu is unusually well documented and has been studied by both historians and anthropologists. Dobu Island, nested between two of the three main islands of the D'Entrecasteaux Group, was named "Goulvain" by the French explorer Bruny-D'Entrecasteaux in 1793, although he did not approach it closely. Contact with traders and 'blackbirders' as well as exploring naturalists and the first government officers occurred from the middle of the next century. These contacts were not always peaceful, but by the turn of the century, Dobu 'gosiagos' (from gosiagu, my friend) like other D'Entrecasteaux islanders, were eagerly signed on as the 'best workmen in Papua' (Young 1983c). Dobu was nevertheless conceived as "the savage heart of the D'Entrecasteaux" (see Young 1983b:5, 1997:100) an image frequently reiterated in the literature: "Dobu ... a strong seafaring community of exceptional ferocity, who, as raiders and cannibals said to have drunk the blood of their victims, were the scourge of the coasts of a large area" (Brass 1960:21).

Dobu played its part in the establishment of the colonial state in British New

4See also Barker (1990); Douglas (1997, 1998); Eves (1996); Langmore (1989); Syme (1985); Wetherell (1977); Young (1977b, 1980, 1989, 1991a, 1997) for work on Dobu missionisation. Bromilow published some articles (1909, 1910, 1912, 1914) and an autobiographical memoir (1929). Historical sources include missionaries' letters and diaries (Arnold 1923-26; Bromilow 1891-92, 1904a; Brown 1890-91; Fellows 1893-1900; Lloyd 1898-1901; Tinney 1892-1902; Walker 1892-93). Diaries of 'missionary sisters' (Benjamin 1907, Billing 1930) and George Brown's autobiograph (1908) have been published.

5 According to Dobu informants, cannibal raids certainly did occur in the past, though it is doubtful whether Dobu was very much worse in this respect than its neighbours, except during serious droughts when the island was without water and must have raided more frequently (as I was told) to get yam seeds, pigs and human victims for food.
Guinea. The island region was difficult to pacify and the Administrator Sir William MacGregor needed a location from which to exercise colonial power and supervise the *Pax Britannica*. Syme's historical analysis suggests that it was MacGregor who coined the image of the Dobuans as the most notorious raiders in the territory in order to encourage a mission to settle among them (1985:9-20). In 1890, MacGregor invited the Wesleyan Missionary Society to open their first station in what became the Papuan Islands Region on Dobu Island (see also MacGregor 1893:22-23; Brown 1908:465-512, B. Thomson 1889; J. Thomson 1889; Watson 1941). The Wesleyan Secretary-General, George Brown, also favoured Dobu as the best site for the first mission station for his own strategic reasons. Apart from its central location, the 'savagery' of Dobu could be exploited to raise funds. John Wesley had advised his followers to "go to those who need you most", among whom the the 'worst' sinners were to be found. Moreover, Dobu "commanded local respect" for its centrality in the *kula* ring and for its fierce fighters (Young 1997:100). If Dobu was secured, mission stations on other islands would follow quickly. The first missionary party arrived in July 1891 with overwhelming strength:

at least four ships containing, in addition to the 73 members of the missionary party, several resident magistrates, local village constables and interpreters, as well as the Administrator himself, Sir William MacGregor, together with his armed entourage. The Dobuans, one can well imagine, were suitably awed (Young 1997:101).

During the first month, three catechists died of fever, which in the eyes of many Dobu Islanders was due to their sorcery (Bromilow 1914:550). Initial attempts of Dobu men to murder the members of the missionary party failed. According to present-day stories the would-be assassins were frightened off by technical gadgets of the missionaries. These stories are widely disseminated. They are integrated in the curriculum of the Bunama Bible School (on Normanby Island) and often told during church services. They have become 'stories from the past', believed to be true representations of the beginning of the mission. A text from the (United

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6 In 1892 a mission was opened on Panaeati, followed by Tubetube and Kiriwina in 1893 and Bwaidoga in 1899. See Rundle (1941:8).
So the Dobu people thought they should be friendly to them and also the leaders did not want violence and they said: 'We will simply wait and see what is going to happen through these people.' But one night they got up and sneaked to the mission in order to kill them but as they saw the bright light of the lamp they thought that the spirits of the white people were there to protect them (my translation).^8

Another version recalls that the sound of Bromilow's radio scared the Dobu men away (Thune 1981:3-4). Yet another claims that the land on which the mission station was built was formerly avoided as it was haunted by spirits; the ability of the missionaries to live there without harassment by these spirits was an indication of their superior spiritual power. MacGregor's report from Dobu in 1895-96 noted: "All was found to be well there, and the Rev. W. Bromilow had heard of no recent unusual occurrence in the district" (1897:3). The writings of MacGregor and the missionaries of the time represented Dobu people as pacified cannibal raiders who were improving through conversion to Christianity.^10

Today, Dobu people have wholly adopted the missionaries' version of their past and represent themselves as 'saved savage cannibals' (see also Young 1997:98). In 1961, Fortune published English translations of four letters from 'Dobuans abroad' that were originally written for a Methodist journal in Dobu language. In these letters (dating from 1939 to 1957), Dobu missionaries expressed their pity for the 'savage' lives of Australian Aborigines and New Guinea Highlanders of Mendi. A visit to Sydney, on the other hand, inclined them to identify with Australians: "all these [buildings] by our whites made us applaud" (Baloiloi as quoted by Fortune 1961).

^7 The trope of "light" versus "darkness" has been discussed by Young (1980:89f).
^8 "Gete enega me Dobu nuanuadi si da e'isa gosediyao ediyaa ta wate me Dobu idi inapwana i etobodei ga i gwae: "ta miabi be ta ita to'ase idi apwesa boda nidi ediega." Aina boibo ediya si to'o be si siganidi sabi unudi ta esi mayale idi maedana enega aene bwaal wakewakekedi idi yaluwaluwa i lomaiat'i'sidi boibo nidi ediya." (David Duigu: "United Church History Papua Islands Region" Copy of material of the Bible School in Bwaruada, Normanby Island, MS. as copied from Ms Jennivier Sailon, Dobu Island, a former student at Bwaruada).

^9 On my last visit to Dobu in 1997, I was told that this sandy peninsula had formerly been a place for cleaning ancestors' skulls.
^10 See also Loria (1896) for a similar description by the first anthropologist to visit Dobu.
1961:315). Many Dobu Christians believe that they are God's chosen people because He made them so bad that His missionaries had to come to them first. Savage sinners have long since turned into devout Christians, however. They were 'lifted up' into the 'clean village', as in the following verse of a hymn:

**Hymn no. 393, verse two**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bubuna to'umalina</th>
<th>My bad behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I gi'eumeumegu.</td>
<td>Made me blind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Asa 'esa'esasena '</td>
<td>The clean village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enayaa 'uetoorogu.</td>
<td>You will lift me up into it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Syme, the establishment of exchange relations between the missionaries and the locals enabled its success.

Apart from the additional wealth which made its way from the missionaries to the 'Edugaula people through various means, the missionaries also enhanced the 'beauty' and 'desirability' of the people by frequently administering ointments to help clear up the disfiguring sarcoma (ringworm).... (1985:89-90).

It has long been a matter of conformity to be a Christian, at least in the Edugaula area of Dobu Island, where the mission station was originally established. The Edugaula dialect became the standard "Dobu language", 'Ena Dobu, the Christian lingua franca of the Milne Bay region, when hymn books and the Bible were translated into it. The first missionary couple, William and Lilly Bromilow, left such a strong impression on Dobu people that they might well be called "missionary

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11 *Buki Tapwaroro* (1963:210), translation by Simioni Busia (Tune: "Higher ground").

12 The name Edugaula has been spelled inconsistently in the literature. I follow the Lithgows.


14 Bromilow's nickname Saragigi (*sara* – teeth, *gigi* – to take out) refers to his false teeth. Today, he is still sometimes referred to by this nickname but more often as "Doctor Bromilow" (Dokta Blomlo, as Young put it phonetically 1997:101). According to Roheim, Bromilow used his denture for preaching: "He put an end to the cannibal raids by pulling his denture out and telling his awe-struck audience, 'this is what will happen to your teeth if you don't stop eating people'" (1954:495).
heroes" (Young 1997:93,100-5). Ninety-two year old Robert Galiaune, who had served as a cook for the Bromilows, recalls the 1920s:

He was a good man. He would not get angry, he liked to see everybody. He also wanted the old men. Every afternoon they would see him in his house. His ways were good. Mrs Bromilow, too. All the women, the old ones as well, went to her house and they sang songs, for example 'Three blind mice' (my translation).

Bromilow's patience with the people was also recalled by his colleague and successor Gilmour: "I never knew him or heard of him losing patience with a native" (1941:4). His " bigoted, sanctimonious and crudely paternalistic" views (Young 1977b:145) are, however, evident from his own writings.

The mission headquarters were moved from Dobu to the healthier site of Ubuia in 1906 (Bromilow 1914:553,557). By then there were many converts, who helped to build the stone church. This was finally completed in 1929, a monument to the success of the Methodist Mission. The building is frequently used as Church activities play an important part in many people's lives. Members of the Women's and Youth Fellowships meet at least once a week, and their groups have regular outings, crusades and retreats. They are proud of the long tradition of Dobu Christianity and fully believe in the missionary trope of 'saved savages'.

Science and conscience: The anthropologists' 'Dobuan'

Malinowki's impression of 'Dobuans', based on encounters and short visits to the area, was marked by overall sympathy:

In personal appearance, the Dobuans have a very distinct physique... very dark-skinned, small of stature... they give a strange, almost gnome-like impression on a first encounter. In their manner, and their tribal character, there is something definitely pleasant, honest and open – an impression which long acquaintance with them confirms and strengthens. They are the general favourites of the whites.... (1922:40-1).

A decade later, this benign image was dramatically redrawn by Fortune's malign

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David Lithgow observed that Dobu is a "language of higher prestige" for Fergusson and Normanby Islanders (1992:36).
description of 'Dobuans' as paranoid, treacherous and jealous. If the missionaries used 'Dobuans' to raise funds for their work of conversion, anthropologists came to know Dobu as part of the kula ring and the home of sorcerers. In America, Fortune's monograph was recommended by Benedict for undergraduate teaching (see Mead 1966:321). In Britain, it was immediately accepted thanks to Malinowski's enthusiastic introduction (Mead 1972:160). Two years after Sorcerers was published, Dobu was introduced to an even wider audience by Patterns of Culture. Ruth Benedict used the 'Dobuan' as an example of one modality of the savage within all of us and further narrowed the focus of Sorcerers to press her argument about cultural relativism. Examples from 'Dobu' are still abundant in the anthropological literature. 'Dobuans' have been discussed in recent works on exchange theory (e.g. Sahlins 1972; Gudeman 1986; Foster 1993:16), with regard to kula exchange (e.g. Uberoi 1962, Leach and Leach 1983), and mortuary feasting (e.g. Bloch and Parry 1982; Damon and Wagner 1989). 'Dobu' has entered other realms of anthropological theory, too, in particular as an example of alternating avunculocal residence (e.g. Murdock 1949:335; Richards 1950:209,248n.1) and, of course, as the home of the most notorious sorcerers (e.g. Patterson 1974).

In 1928-29, Reo Fortune spent five months among the "forty odd souls" (xi) who inhabited Tewara Island (off northeast Fergusson). He also stayed for one month with the people of Basima on the adjacent coast of Fergusson and later concluded his field work in the area with a one month stay on Dobu Island itself, an "avowedly missionised area" (1932:xii) to take photographs (see Mead 1972:177-8). During his Tewara research, Fortune quickly acquired a good knowledge of the language "by contagion" (1932:xi).

Sorcerers of Dobu is a forcefully written account of the social organisation of...

16 See, for example, Beledami (1974); Billy (1974); Coombs (1948); Edoni (1989); Fink (1964); Franklyn (1936).
17 See also Kelly (1968); Geertz (1973: 49); Young (1991b); Ravanou (1997).
18 Due to his short stay on Dobu, Fortune's data on totemic identification of hamlets are correct for the Edugaula area but incomplete for the rest of the island (1932:32-34).
Tewara Islanders in the late 1920s. It covers many topics, with a strong focus on economics (gardening, mortuary exchanges, kula exchange), kinship and marriage. The highlight of his ethnography, however, is what Fortune called 'the black art'. He collected an extraordinary amount of data on sorcery spells and techniques, despite the secrecy of this knowledge. Perhaps partly due to his preoccupation with this unsavory topic his impression of the 'Dobuan' was very negative. Mead recalled that he found them "dour and dangerous" and "passionately" disliked them (1972:169,184,199, 206-7). His experience was of an "individualistic and quarrelsome society" (1932:279).

Fortune not only contributed significantly to Massim ethnography but according to Malinowski his monograph also demonstrated the value of participant observation: 
"The present book may be regarded by the Functional Method as one of its triumphs in the field" (1932:xviii). It appears from Fortune's own account, however, that he was not welcome and had trouble in establishing a field site. The day of his arrival on Tewara happened to coincide with a communal fishing trip:

The first night after my landing in Tewara Island at about midday, the men came back from the palolo fishing on the reef fifteen miles away at about 2 in the morning. They were threatening to my face. They went away, climbed the hill, took out their spears, and debated coming to spear me. Finally they put their spears away. From the usual custom in regard to unguarded women, and from their jealousy in watching over their women, they suspected me and their women whom they had left on the island of the worst.... Hostility was still active while the last remnants of bush clearing and the latest gardens were being planted - now it was believed that I was a spy and a forerunner of white intrusion and interference with native custom, such as Mission and Government accomplish where they settle (1932:104).

After this bad start he lived alone in a deserted place by the shore for "six weeks or so" (1932:104). At first, nobody wanted to befriend him and it was not until after the gardens had been planted and 'famine time' began that he was invited by an old man named Alo, his research "mentor", to stay at Kubwagai hamlet

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20 The palolo worms appears only once a year at full moon on coral cliffs and beaches and are collected in masses. The worms are called damasi in Dobu language.
Alo and the two house boys, Kinosi (Alo's sister's son) (see 1932:24,143) and 'Inosi (Alo's FZS) were apparently his main informants.22 Alo might well have been a "social deviant" (Syme 1985:57) since he had married a woman of his own hamlet in spite of the strong disapproval of his brothers (1932:85). Fortune complained about his limited options of working with informants other than Alo: "This condition of affairs in the state of a small sized village which obtains [sic] restricts the field worker's circle of informants seriously, and he can do nothing to change it" (1932:76-8, see also 1932:153). From my own Dobu experience I suspect he was jealously guarded by Alo and his immediate 'helpers' as a welcome resource of tinned food and tobacco during the hungry season. As Alo and his brothers were not on good terms, Alo would not have enjoyed the sight of Fortune's tobacco in his brothers' baskets. Not only did Alo restrict Fortune's communication with his hamlet neighbours, it appears that Fortune was unable to work with any of the women.23

One night and one night only, the women in a body induced the men to get out, and my hut was filled with women all anxious to give information and acquire tobacco. Three or four times Kadi, Alo's daughter, seized a chance when no men were about, to slip into my hut and tell me gossip (1932:235).

Concerning the notion of witchcraft Fortune confessed his inability to penetrate female secrets: "But only a woman working with women could tell what the facts are - whether they are really innocent or whether they are putting up a convention counter to the men's. Personally, I suspect the latter" (1932:152). Fortune's impression of Dobuan women was apparently formed by listening to 'Old Trader' and 'Dobuan man' in discourses that sound like 'men's talk':

21 It is unclear to whom Fortune referred when mentioning "Maropa, my sorcerer lad" in a letter to Benedict (Mead 1966:312-3).

22 In 1989 Digim'Rina and Young attempted to trace Fortune's research site on Tewara Island and were led to an abandoned hamlet on the hill, called Abigigita or Tanobwela, by their local guides (Digim'Rina 1995:81).

23 Elsewhere, too, he appears to have had low expectations of women as informants. According to Margaret Mead, his first wife, Fortune left what were for him the "least interesting" topics of study to her when they worked in Mundugumor. "Reo decided that this time he would do the culture and that I could do the language, the children and the technology.... Reo collected endless accounts of battles about women" (1972:204).
Let now our anthropologist see his native through the Trader's eyes. The old, experienced, native-speaking, with-native-women-living, Trader knows his man better. He knows just what native is living with and having sex intercourse with his own mother, nothing being done about it by the village concerned.... The Trader is usually entirely correct, and gets to know more than the anthropologist can about such doings. He also discovers from a woman or women of his own how a Dobuan woman may teach her daughter that the way to keep a man faithful is to keep him as exhausted as may be possible (1932:243-4).

Every Dobuan man will say that a woman met alone apart is naturally an object to be picked up and carried into cover. They do not in the great majority of cases cry or tell their husbands afterwards. They rarely have to be raped (1932:77).24

Fortune collected his data with the imperial attitude of his time. He "requested" to be informed about incidents (1932:104), and he frankly admits that he set some of his work ethics aside when time was short:

I ascertained this in Basima. Fergusson Islanders from other parts recognized the practice immediately I mentioned it, but would not betray their own custom, and invariably assumed great surprise towards any Basima men near by at their not having prevented me from finding out. They had done their best, however. I had a long and wearisome wait amongst openly glaring and hostile mourners in a long match of patience against patience before the secret emerged. It took the better part of a day and the early evening. I may add that this is not my preferred method, but I had only a month to spend in Basima, a time insufficient to create confidence in myself from everyone (1932:282).

I got the family of the sick man alone, used cajolery, and I mingled with the cajolery some vague threats of Government and Mission getting them for sorcery if they would disclose nothing. My time was short in their place and I had to resort to rough and ready methods (1932:160).

At the end of the month apart there is still supposed to be no intercourse before weaning. From this tabu comes the motive for such action as a man holding his infant over the fire to die from shock, also a motive for the use of abortifacients. I had the greatest difficulty discovering that this tabu was observed. Those I questioned were so utterly prudish that they declined to discuss the matter. At least I got two or three ashamed admissions that the case was so (1932:246).

[Killing by sorcery] is not referred to by men, except in great confidence that usually betrays itself first in a panic and is pressed home from the panic by the field worker (1932:151).

This kind of research, paying informants with tobacco and 'pressing' as much as

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24 In contrast, Macintyre reports from Tubetube that people were sceptical about rape as a form of assault on women (1987:212-13).
necessary to get the desired information, seemed to be successful.\textsuperscript{25} The secret knowledge that Fortune was given is very similar to the (limited) information that I obtained in this matter.\textsuperscript{26} Apart from spelling differences (like \textit{lolas} instead of \textit{loulasa} [1932:144]) and other minor flaws\textsuperscript{27} (e.g. \textit{lo-bagula} should read \textit{lomasula} [1932:139]), Fortune’s data were confirmed by some old men on Dobu, who told me that although they did not know these particular methods of sorcery they could well imagine that they were authentic. Some men also raised the question whether Fortune had been given complete spells or whether some important details were left out, or altered, in order to preserve the secret in spite of the pressure he put on his informants. Yet, as they remarked, the secret nature of this kind of knowledge was protected by the way Fortune published the data, a device they approved of. Fortune, however, was not too concerned about this matter: “Free use of their names such as I make here would be felt by the Dobuan magicians as worse than the greatest blasphemy would be to Christian believers…. Our own term ‘blasphemy’ does not comprehend the magnitude of the offence” (1932:100).

Fortune gives normative accounts of affinal exchanges (marriage and mortuary exchanges) and of the \textit{kula} exchange of shell valuables. His overall explanation is that “the love for exchange is one of the great characters of Melanesian culture”, a love which often lends itself to utilitarian ends, but in the case of \textit{kula} exchange is, “over-developed” (1932:207). This love sometimes takes ridiculous forms, as he shows in an example from the Admiralty Islands: "Intoxicated with great love for exchange, they exchange even the water of their respective dwelling places and carry it home for the boiling of their food" (1932:206). To Fortune, not only love, but also distrust, suspicion and anger against anyone who rises above the average

\textsuperscript{25} See also Mead for accounts of Fortune’s field ethics and methodology while researching with her (1972:171,205).

\textsuperscript{26} I did not see any evidence of divination, which, according to Fortune “is practiced by everyone” (1932:155).

\textsuperscript{27} Other incorrect statements are, to give a few examples, that "rain makers are female" (1932:138,213), and that "every disease is held to be caused by a \textit{tabu}" (1932:138). Diseases can also be caused by other forms of sorcery.
(1932:176) are motivations for exchange.

Fortune’s data on *bwabwale* exchanges do not always match mine, which could be due to difference in location ("it might be Bwaiowa or Tewara custom", as Dobu people said of some of Fortune’s statements).\(^{28}\) He was largely denied experience of mortuary feasting and other events that are preferably celebrated in the "time of plenty" between July and September. He admittedly did not gain access to participation and observation in gardening (1932:104) and he must have overlooked the difference between the "stony ground" on Tewara (1963:282) and the rich volcanic soil on Dobu Island when he wrote that "certainly the Dobuan area is poor in gardens" (1932:193). Fortune was perhaps too preoccupied with male sorcery to construct a comprehensive and rounded picture of the Dobu person. The limited time that he spent in the field did not allow for varied experiences and he was unable to communicate freely with women. It seems that he participated in "men’s talk" to a degree but did not have the opportunity to test their statements in real life. The men’s competitiveness over women, objects of wealth and secret knowledge gave him the impression of intense jealousy.\(^{29}\)

In this society it is not possible to say that the attitudes of the social organization are created by the attitudes of the magical outlook, or that the attitudes of the magical outlook are created by the attitudes of the social organization. It is, however, possible to show a unity of feeling throughout. Jealousy is the keynote to the culture (1932:135).\(^{30}\)

Fortune’s description of Dobu morality is vastly oversimplified: "good and bad in the moral sense do not exist on Dobu" (1932:177). This does not begin to approach the understanding of Dobu people that I knew. For this reason, I shall have occasion to refer to Fortune in relation to ethnographic detail throughout the thesis.

While Fortune’s 'Dobuan' has a markedly dark character, Ruth Benedict's is even darker. It is unfortunate, then, that her 'Dobuan' still has some currency. Benedict

\(^{28}\) For example, sago is not used on Dobu Island as there are very few sago palms.

\(^{29}\) I prefer to use the word 'envy' because of its broader meaning. When Dobu people speak English they use the word 'jealousy', but this is due to their limited vocabulary: the word envy is not known or used.

\(^{30}\) Mead's daughter characterised Fortune as "puritanically jealous" (Bateson 1984:129).
seized upon Dobu as an extreme example of human moral possibilities; her 'Dobuan' is presented as a showcase for inverted ethics. In contrast to Western society, where honesty and helpfulness were virtues, she gives the impression that treachery, selfishness, and laziness are moral virtues in Dobu.

The treacherous conflict which is the ethical ideal in Dobu is not palliated by social conventions of what constitutes legality (Benedict 1934:169-170).

Life in Dobu fosters extreme forms of animosity and malignancy which most societies have minimized by their institutions. Dobuan institutions, on the other hand, exalt them to the highest degree.... Suspicion and cruelty are his trusted weapons in the strife and he gives no mercy, as he asks none (1934:172).

It is because of such negative images that I refrain from using the usual term 'the Dobuan' in favour of 'Dobu Islander'. 'The Dobuan' might live anywhere in the Dobu language area, but it seems more precise to refer only to those people among whom I lived as Dobu Islanders – that is, the people claiming to belong to the island itself.

**BEING THERE: DIMDIM ON DOBU**

My role as a researcher, like Fortune's, derived from the Malinowskian ideal of participant observation. Almost seventy years after Fortune, I entered the area with a different set of ethics, more time, the advantage of being female, and a basic grasp of the language.31 My preparation had begun by studying Dobu language 'for fun' at university in Germany, when Professor Erhard Schlesier offered a language course based on published material in the Edugaula dialect. His documentation of the neighbouring Me'udana people on Normanby Island excited my interest more than the details of grammar, but after four semesters of studies I could read Dobu fluently and understood its principles of syntax. Suffixes were stored as lists in my brain (as in Table 1 in Chapter Two) and the vocabulary I learned was limited and highly specific. I carried an image of Me'udana rather than 'Dobuans' through Coincidently, the name Tewara had been familiar to me since early childhood, when Rudyard Kipling's *The first letter* was my favourite bedtime story. In this story, a little girl tries to overcome the difficulty of communication with a stranger from a faraway place called Tewara (1902:131-140).

31 Coincidentally, the name Tewara had been familiar to me since early childhood, when Rudyard Kipling's *The first letter* was my favourite bedtime story. In this story, a little girl tries to overcome the difficulty of communication with a stranger from a faraway place called Tewara (1902:131-140).
Schlesier's seminars, of living 'informants and friends' of 'Ehada' (as Erhard was called in Me'udana) rather than of paranoid sorcerers.\(^{32}\) I knew most of the recent literature of the area and was well prepared in technological terms, with solar-energy to power my laptop computer and practical tips from Colin Filer's hands-on article (1983).\(^{33}\)

The problem that Fortune and I both faced was that in the eyes of our hosts we were defined in terms of a Black-White dichotomy: we were white skinned and had money and therefore classified as 'Westerners' – *dimdim* – a category that is in some ways opposed to 'people' – *tomota* (see Chapter Two). While Fortune took advantage of this position (which in those days was inevitably linked to colonial power), I tried to undermine my hosts' conception of what a *dimdim* has to be. The kind of transformation in the attitudes of the people that I (but probably not Fortune) experienced has been described by Lepowsky:

> As they became more accustomed to my presence they dropped the silent, reserved demeanor I later learned to recognize as the characteristic response to the few times Europeans or the Papua New Guinean government officer-in-charge appeared in the settlements. Quite to the contrary, the women were assertive and self-confident, their voices ringing out across the ridgetop along with loud, frequent bursts of laughter (1994:17).

I arrived on Dobu in July 1992 and stayed there - with two intermittent trips to Alotau and a month's break when I went to Bali to recover my health - until January 1994, a total of 16 months in the D'Entrecasteaux. As my research was poorly funded I was neither able to pay for research assistance nor travel as much as I would have liked.\(^ {34}\) I lived in Losina hamlet, in Edugaula, and occasionally spent some days in Kwakwamoiya hamlet, Mwanomwanona. Twice I travelled to Duau (Normanby) on *kula* excursions with a group of Dobu people, and four times


\(^{33}\) For bibliographies of the Dobu and Duau region, see Freeman (1969); Thune (1975); Glass (1991). Linguistic works of the Summer Institute of Linguistics have been compiled by Patrick (1981).

\(^{34}\) I received some financial support from the Draeger Stifung in Germany but the bulk of my funds came from my extended family, added to my own savings.
crossed the Strait to Bwaiowa (Fergusson Island) for the same purpose, each time accompanying a single *kula* trader. As a guest during large mortuary feasts, I stayed in Gomwa (Fergusson Island) and Miadeba (Normanby Island) for a couple of days. I had to spend two months in Esa’ala to recover from malaria and to settle personal difficulties on Dobu by absenting myself. Of the year that I spent on Dobu Island itself, for the first four months I was a part of a household of three families of the same matrilineage. For the rest of the time, I lived by myself in my own small house.

**Under the wings of a Dobu 'mother'**

It has been observed by anthropologists that it is often marginal individuals in a society who feel drawn to strangers, while those who are living more normal lives prefer not to bother themselves with outsiders. I did not reflect sufficiently on this potential risk before I established my field site. But fear of the unknown made me embrace the invitation of the very first family I met. They had been our hosts in Losina when I visited Dobu on a brief survey trip with my father in July 1990, having been recommended by the friendly lady who ran the Esa’ala guest house (she was to become my friend and guardian angel, saving my life when I was stricken with *falciparum malaria*). Her eldest sister on Dobu was to become my principal 'mother'. Another seven sisters also assumed the role of 'mothers' to me, while their children became my 'siblings'. At first, however, only three 'mothers' (whom I called 'auntie' or *sinagu* [my mother]) and their brother (a university graduate and diplomat) appeared on my horizon, though it was only my principal 'mother' who tried to control me in the same assertive way she ruled her household and all matters of hamlet life.

My house was not quite finished when I arrived to begin my field work. The project had grown out of all proportion: it was now to become a semi-permanent building, with timber boards and an iron roof, on massive posts, under construction by a professional carpenter and his two adolescent helpers. As the site of the new house
was on disputed land, progress was delayed by formal mediation. I had requested a humble hut made from bush material, but did not dare complain about the mansion being built for me, though the cost escalated as time went by. After three months of expensive trips across the straits to Esa'ala to get drinking water I was financially drained and began to resist. Meanwhile I lived in a tiny hut that was intended as a trade store, spent huge amounts for the construction of the new house, everyday (dimdim style) cooking, and petrol for the family's dinghy. In the end, I never slept even one night under my own roof. The house into which I had poured so much money, work and anxiety, was possessed by my 'mother'.

I realised that I was scarcely meeting people other than those belonging to my adoptive family as I was usually discouraged from leaving their section of the hamlet. It appeared that my 'mother' had denounced me to a provincial research officer (who, I feared, had some say whether I could stay on Dobu or not). I had attempted to make my need for independence clear to her, explaining that I had to see other people, too, in order to conduct my research. I had perhaps unwisely told her that the provincial research officers would not tolerate 'colonial' attitudes or 'immoral' conduct in foreign researchers. So my 'mother' concocted a series of complaints around these themes: I was lazy, arrogant, did not give her money, slept around, was generally disliked, and so on.

The first of a series of verbal fights with her was triggered by my anger after talking to the research officer and learning of her attempt to get rid of me. After some failed attempts of reconciliation from my side she formally told me to leave her house. I packed some things and took refuge in Esa'ala, where fortunately there was a German volunteer who lent me a room in his house. I returned to Losina after Christmas for our large sagali feast (described in Chapter Eight), but I did not live with my 'mother' anymore. She had declared that she had to work for the Lord
(engaging in local fellowship and ekelesia work) and would not have any time to 'work' for me. I was not aware then of the concept of 'work' as a trope for 'care' (see Chapter Two), and replied that she had never done much work for me at all. This was literally true, as I fetched my own water, did my laundry, helped a bit in the household, and financed all the expensive, dimdim groceries as a bonus. We exchanged a barrage of angry accusations and I tried to avoid her for the rest of my stay.

These conflicts were sometimes quite traumatic and I kept thinking that it must be I who enraged her. While everybody else confirmed that my behaviour was not intolerable and that they wanted me to stay in Losina, it took me some time to realise that I was perceived as a gomagwaine, the term for adolescent girls. As such, my life had to be controlled by an older woman and I had to work hard without a word of praise, as obediently as possible. How can anyone do independent research under such conditions? In Gначенchi-Ruscione's words, "unmarried and childless, I straddled uncomfortably the boundary between girlhood and womanhood" (1991:13); in my own case, perhaps I was closer to girlhood than to womanhood because my skills of reading and writing did not impress them. My 'father' had been a teacher and had just retired to end his life in his wife's hamlet and all family members were quite fluent readers and writers.

After having lived independently in Germany for more than ten years, I was shocked when I was ordered around. "You stay and have tea first" (when the mail in Esa'alala was due). "You stay and look after the house" (when they went to the gardens). "You stay and look after Andrew (4 years)" (when they went for a walk). For the first three months I obeyed such instructions, as my observation of family life indicated that any challenge to my 'mother's' dominance spelled trouble. My indignant protest after she lied to the research officer could have ended my whole project and it took a long time to establish at least overtly friendly (but cautious) relations with her.

It is difficult to reflect on personal aspects of the field work experience without either glorifying it or whining about its hardships. In retrospect, I feel like doing both at the same time, yet my diaries show that usually I was in a pragmatic, relaxed mood that was reasonably compatible with the ethically correct restraint on Dohn. Yet my capacity to handle problems with a stoic suppression of emotion was
sometimes wanting, and my attempts to formally apologise (ta'ona) never really won over my 'mother'. As I shifted my accommodation within Losina four times (see sketch map below), I was able to observe other households with the intimacy of a family member. To some extent the fraught situation had positive effects, because as our struggle (hers for domination, mine for independence) continued, some men and women who had knowledge pertaining to my areas of interest took pity on me and helped me to finish my work. They worried that I would fail to achieve an understanding of the 'real Dobu' - as they put it - by observing only my family's way of life.

Diagram 1: Sketch map of Losina hamlet, January 1993

Doing field work alone I had to rely completely on Dobu people for company and comfort, but I never felt sad for too long because my friends would try to cheer me up. In some ways the persistent conflict with my 'mother' also created an emotional environment similar to theirs; they saw my reactions and could interpret them according to their own experiences in similar situations. Equally, by presenting myself as a person with troublesome relationships within the household, I
occasionally sought advice from impartial elders, semi-involved 'sisters' and complete outsiders (preferably church ministers, as they would not gossip). The 'proper way of behavior', it was explained to me, makes it possible to live in harmony, and many people made an effort to teach me how to do things 'properly'. I know they did it out of sympathy for my being alone and far from home, and tried to integrate me by enculturating me.

By and by I was taught how to speak, sit and behave 'properly'. It took me about six months to be at ease with everyday interaction in terms of language and rules of politeness. Then I began to learn how to circumvent rules, for example, how to avoid sharing my sugar with everybody. After about nine months, I learned how to make jokes with a risqué undertone, as when relating shellfish to female genitalia:

Coming back from the market with some shells for lunch I met Diwili who was standing next to her house. She called me: "E, pelesen (friend), what did you get at the market?" I replied: "Your namesake!" We both laughed loudly. I was being a bit naughty, Diwili said smiling. I tried the same reply on Julie and she found it very funny, too (field notes).36

After I had liberated myself by creating my own household, it was possible to talk to men and women of all ages. Compared to Fortune's, my range of informants was much wider, including individuals from all the hamlet clusters on Dobu but especially from Edugaula, Mwanomwanona and Enaia.37 I spent much time sitting, chewing betel-nut, and talking, just as they did, postponing my writing of field notes when visitors came in the evening and writing up in the mornings instead, after people had gone to the gardens. This socialising in the evenings formed the basis of my understanding and provided an advanced language course. By the end of my first year, I was fluent enough in Dobu to speak it in my dreams. Sitting around, chewing betel and chatting in Dobu contributed to the consolidation of friendships and gradually weakened people's inhibitions towards me as a dimdim. Much of what I learned was given to me as tokens of friendship, to help me 'write a book on

36 See Young for an analysis of obscene jokes in Kalauna (1977a).
37 According to Golde, female researchers often have better access to informants of both sexes if they can liberate themselves from patronage (1970:9).
Dobu life'.

Children gave me much emotional support when they came to visit, sometimes helping me in my domestic work. We shared a lot of cakes, popcorn and fun. Chatting with them revealed details that their parents did not think important enough to tell me – or did not want me to know. Often their parents tried to chase them away from me, but after an initial phase of intrusive curiosity about my physical body (once some kids sneaked onto the off-shore toilet to see what my feces looked like), my young companions entertained me with stories they believed would be of interest to me:

Mummy said there was a black cloud over Dobu. They have seen it in Port Moresby and shown it on television. Last week or so. It is SATAN who is looking down on Dobu to find new followers. Did you know that? (Seniani, 12 years)

Yesterday I did not go to the bush. Mummy did not want to go because of her eye. (Me: Her eye?) - Yes, Papa came back from Esa'ala in the evening and he was sipak [drunk], got cross and hit her. They had a fight.

Two people died in my hamlet while I was there. The direct confrontation with death, and the way it was dealt with, left a strong impression on me. I was close enough to the people to be expected to participate in the feasts. These events contributed greatly to my understanding of the way life is constructed and enacted in Dobu. By sharing their feelings of grief, exhaustion, stress and hunger as well as happiness, well-being, relaxation, and repletion (all of which make mortuary feasting and kula exchange such powerful experiences) I often found myself in perfect empathy.

The picturesque view across the Dobu Straits never ceased to impress me with its tropical beauty. The climate, however, frequently made me sick with malaria or swollen limbs from tropical ulcers. I had to cope with rats, biting insects, a bad water supply and enervating humid heat. Minor earthquakes and three cyclones scared me less then they did my family back home when they learned about them several weeks later.

I was impressed by the self-assured and relaxed presence of the women from Dobu. We spent a lot of time together and I came to understand much of my own cultural
background through being with them. Dobu women are strong and self-sufficient; they can live without husbands as long as there are a few male relatives to help them occasionally. Indeed, when I presented my small son on my last visit, the overall opinion was: "It is good that you have a son, so you don't need to worry about a husband so much. Not long, and he can help you [with the male tasks of everyday life]" (field notes).

Initially I was alarmed by the idea – frequently iterated – that there were dangerous ('jealous') witches roaming around my house at night. But I persuaded myself that they would not threaten me, and the idea ceased to bother me. The secret knowledge of lethal sorcery that Fortune described is restricted to only a few men today. Killing is usually done by female witches. The fear of witches is very marked and my work was restricted in several ways because of it. I could not visit certain people, befriend certain women, go out at night without being summoned by my family and formally told that I was not allowed to do so. These aspects of Dobu life were not easy to accept, and while I became unavoidably involved in village politics, I understood the importance of gossip ('onabesobeso') and of the need to 'keep smiling' (alama'ita). My departure in January 1994 was somewhat hasty. In fact I spent the last three days with one of the other matrilineages (susu) of the hamlet because the conflict with my 'mother' had reached another peak and people were worried about my health.

I returned to Dobu, gloriously, in July 1997, with my two-year old son, and stayed for about six weeks to discuss and supplement an earlier draft of this thesis. This time I lived on the mission station, Buduagula, with a school-teacher's family who also provided a part-time babysitter. Going through my chapters, Dobu people suggested I remove the letter 'r' in Dobu orthography as it 'sounded wrong' to them. They accepted my decision to separate personal pronouns from verbs, because I do not think that they are prefixes.38

38 Verbs are often reduplicated after the second syllable but a prefix disconcerts a reader on reaching the repetitive part. Compare, for example yamwalamwalatoni and ya mwalamwalatoni (literally 'I know').
I learned the details of Kaibado's death and grieved anew for my fatherly friend. My detachment from my former hamlet, Losina, was only formal, and when a man from Losina passed away, I was naturally asked to participate, to document the event (I took video and stills), and to fulfil my role as a (somewhat different) village 'owner' (toni asa). This was expressed by my 'sister' Juke when she called me from the platform of the dugumalala distribution: "MeLosina ima dimdim, e'uneyo!" ('Losina people, our (excl.) Westerner, your gift!!').

Later, when my son fell sick, my female friends ('true sisters') offered support, using their secret bush remedies in the attempt to lower the fever and explaining in their own terms what they believed to be the reason for his sickness. Unfortunately, the fever happened to be falciparum malaria and, again, I had to leave the island in haste.

In early 1998, a telephone was installed in the school on Dobu Island.
Its number: (+) 6435020 (wait for two beeps) 22

THE FLOW OF ARGUMENT

From this account of my field work experience it is evident that my approach towards the 'Dobuan' is based on a perspective of mutual encounters on common ground, of 'understanding' each other's feelings in interaction as individuals. The following chapters compile a representation of the Dobu I visited, focusing on aspects of contemporary exchange with particular regard to ethical rules and individual strategies. Each chapter is subtitled with the 'name of the gift' to lead into different dimensions of Dobu personhood as it is represented in exchanges.

Chapter Two: 'work'

From a Dobu perspective, every person has innate, individual dispositions that determine the willpower and ability to 'work hard' and follow ethical rules. In growing older, an individual's history of relations becomes visible on the physical body. Individual dispositions are seen as the 'root' of behaviour in people's attempts to live in good health and appear as 'beautiful'. To achieve this goal, persons are required to produce and distribute wealth, to engage in relationships. The term
paisewa embraces more than just physical labour. It is also used to refer to gift exchanges and, in particular, to everyone's efforts to mask inappropriate thoughts and emotions and follow the ethics of good living. These ethics are well articulated in discourse on exchanges because a person's general conduct is usually evaluated in terms of paisewa ("work"). The concept of 'work' is a useful starting point to explore the Dobu person.

Chapter Three: 'help' and 'apology'

Dobu persons live in a small social world that expands and contracts depending on the way a person maintains bonds of mutual 'help' (lema). At an everyday level, 'work' requires 'small gifts' of labour, betelnuts, fish, tobacco and cooked food. Some relations of such 'help' are more or less obligatory while others depend on free negotiation and strategic considerations. It appears that 'small gifts' create and establish symbolic and virtual paths that increase a person's strategic mobility and general ability to accumulate wealth and a good reputation. The ethical rules of sharing and hiding, asking and receiving, reveal the range of options and consequences of exchange conduct. These rules are tied to the concepts of amayaba ('respect'), alamai'ita (self-discipline), oboboma (generosity) and miabaula (to stay at one's place). In order to be 'happy', individuals have to control their 'inside' and 'work hard', to produce sufficient 'small gifts' and refrain from overt selfishness and arrogance. Persons are requested to appear humble and co-operative at all times – an impossible task. When self-discipline, diplomacy or strategy have failed, apologetic gifts can repair social (and physical) damage. Such gifts (ta'ona) can deflate conflict as they allow opportunities to express grievances in a displaced or indirect manner.

Chapter Four: large yams, pigs, shell valuables

While everyone has access to 'small gifts' to create 'paths', only senior adults command the means to cement relationships by exchanging Big Gifts. The production and distribution of large yams (bebai) are a female domain while pigs and shell valuables, a category called 'une, can be controlled by both sexes. Often, men appear as public orators though women are equally involved in decision making processes. While it is individuals who exchange 'small gifts', Big Gifts are
presented by a group (usually a matrilineage). They embody the capacity of the senior donor and his or her followers to 'work hard' and thereby accrue social prestige. Their value is committed to memory, as Big Gifts have to be returned in one way or another.

Chapter Five: 'poison'

Whether a person strives for fame or pursues a strategy of low-key engagement in social relations, pressure to behave morally is felt by everyone owing to the panoptic nature of hamlet life. 'Negative exchange' is based on gifts of 'poison' (bolausa) in response to bad conduct. In the circumscribed world of a Dobu person, the 'supernatural gaze' of witches, sorcerers and God reaches into the most secret places (physically as well as metaphysically), causing everyone to protect their 'inside'. From the perspective of gift exchange and ethics, this concern (guilt, bad conscience, fear) appears not as paranoia but rather as a self-reflective (and self-critical) consciousness of the gap between personal desires and duties.

Chapter Six: offering, credit

Since money has long become an exchange item, gifts of cash are significant in several ways. As a Big Gift, money is given in annual, competitive church offerings called ebwaea daita. As 'small gifts', cash is exchanged against store goods or shared as 'help'. In the latter case, it is redistributed in the form of lowaga, credit in trade stores. The ambiguity of cash as constituting either form of gift leads to a conundrum. While money can be declared to be 'like large yams or 'une', used only for special exchanges marked by balanced reciprocity, it can also be regarded as 'like betelnuts', that is, a form of everyday sharing with only a generalised sense of mutual 'help'. The ethics of exchange tend to fail as foundations for small-scale business, leaving storekeepers indebted in social and financial terms. Christian fellowships, on the other hand, successfully raise funds for their activities, as 'work for the Lord' is valued positively and opens 'paths' for fame. The dream of many young people of living like a dimdim ('Westerners') in a more comfortable lifestyle is based on vague ideas of dimdim ethics. If practiced, however, such a lifestyle severs many relationships, diminishes the domain of female responsibility in favour of a system based on male control, and reduces the overall significance of exchange
in favour of individual accumulation of cash in bank accounts.

Chapter Seven: *kula* shells

Persons who are ambitious, clever, self-disciplined and adventurous are chosen by their maternal uncles or aunts as heirs to their *kula* partnerships. From a Dobu perspective, shell necklaces (*bagi*) 'come down' to Dobu while armshells (*mwali*) 'come up', an image that defines Dobu as central. Circularity is conceptualised in terms of 'paths' for *bagi* and *mwali* as literal exchange routes or options defined by the presence of exchange partners. My description of *kula* exchange focusses on its experiential aspects: the competitiveness, risks and personal benefits of overseas expeditions. 'Playing *kula*' refers to the knowledge needed to develop successful strategies and make shell valuables 'run like water' by frequently circulating those of low value in order to establish a 'good name' and qualify for the exchange of more precious shells. *Kula* exchange is defined as 'work' because it requires self-discipline to sustain the hardships of travel and to have sufficient produce to host one's partners. I argue that a major motivation for involvement in *kula* exchange is the chance to escape from home by using 'paths' that lead to overseas adventures. *Bagi* and *mwali* shells, it follows, are associated with the qualities of the person who brings them home to Dobu, and their value is judged in comparison to one another in the way members of an expedition compete against each other. The 'best' person should receive the 'best' valuables as a result of the 'hard work' that it took to become a *kula* trader and to achieve renown as a reliable partner, knowledgeable strategist, superior magician, excellent host and co-operative voyager.

Chapter Eight: *love-gift*

As *une* (Big Gifts), *kula* valuables express bonds of 'kinship'. By using the detailed case study of a *sagali* feast, I explore the ethic of *oboboma* (generosity, 'love') as an ideological way of cementing 'paths' of relatedness between 'children' and 'fathers'. The 'love-gift' at the funeral of a 'father', called *pegita*, is only partly returned because it also represents a repayment for the 'work' of the 'father' in nurturing the children of his household. While marriages are not associated with any dogma of biological fatherhood, 'detachable husbands' convert into 'loving fathers' through
relations of 'work', as symbolised in the gift of *bagi* or *mwali* that is not reciprocated until the giver dies. Such optional bonds occur only when personal relations are good, when both parties agree to name a child (usually a son) after his father, so that he becomes his *waliesa* (namesake) and can later assume the role of 'substitute' (*lo'epa'elu*), and thus become a quasi-matrilineal relative.

The ethnographic framework of this thesis, constructed around 'names of gifts', implicitly challenges the dichotomy of 'Melanesians' and 'Westerners'. The ethics of exchange on Dobu cannot be contrasted with 'Western' ethics in a dichotomous way. Indeed, parallels with the protestant work ethic can be drawn. The Dobu person, it appears, is culturally defined by the concept of 'work', that is, strategic and self-conscious negotiation of thoughts and feelings within the moral space defined by ethics. While hamlet surveillance guarantees that interaction between its inhabitants never ends, gift exchange represents the overt form of communication and the creation of personal relationships. It follows that the individual's partly innate capacity to work hard is a key to the assessment of a person's qualities — opening paths as it does between hamlets, islands and even 'self-sufficient' matrilineages.
INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the Dobu idea of the person (tomota or, as a plural, tomotai). From a Dobu perspective, persons are individually manifested by their bodies in terms of gender and age. Based on linguistic evidence, I argue that the 'inside' (sola-) of a person is composed of individually shaped dispositions or character traits, ale-, intellect ('mind') and emotions (feelings), ate- and nua-. The body is perceived as moving through changing states of consciousness, or 'gears' of activity, such as sleeping ('eno), resting (ewai'ata) and, most importantly, 'working' (paisewa). On a metaphysical level, persons are conceptualised as having a 'spirit' (yaluyalua-) and a shadow (a- ma'amayau) that are essential for mental and physical health for as long as the person is alive (mayawasi-).¹ When interacting, people consciously attempt to display only those aspects of their 'inside' that are commensurate with ethical standards in order to be assessed as 'good' (bobo'a-) and to avoid social sanctions. The head is perceived as the centre of perception, communication and (filtered) expression of the 'inside', aspects of the individual person that are reflected in the symbolic importance of skulls and the metaphorical use of terms that point towards individual capacities, especially knowledge and status. Bodily fluids, in contrast, are perceived in a relational manner. Mother's milk (i- susu) is transmitted matrilineally, blood (lala-) is conceptualised as a product of nuturance.

¹ The word mayawasi- means 'with-life' and is used for all creatures except fishes. While Schlesier translated yawasi- as "Lebensfaden" ('thread of life') (1982:149), the expressions yawasi- maibo'ana i gumwala, (literally: 'having finished all breath'), to be breathless as after a steep ascent, and yawasi- i gumwala (literally: 'breath has ceased'), to be dead, clearly refer to breathing.
On the 'outside' (etana), a person's physical beauty and health appear as a result of his or her position in society, based on notions of conduct and visible on the skin (bwala-). The appearance of the physical body, therefore, is a result of innate and relational aspects of an individual, partly originating in maternal inheritance (her 'seed', i- ewana, and her blood, lala-), and partly created by interaction with others.

The idea of sickness as a social sanction for 'bad conduct' (see Chapter Five) implies that individuals attempt to follow ethical rules for the sake of their personal health and well-being. In order to be assessed as 'good', Dobu persons are expected to 'work' (paisewa) by 'helping' their 'relatives', thereby giving evidence of their social skills and physical adroitness. The concept of paisewa comprises not only physical labour but also gift giving, especially when it involves objects of high value. This perspective views 'work' as a social value; in fact, according to a Dobu proverb, everything depends on 'work' (literally: 'work sets the law', paisewa i loina). As a major form of gift in Dobu society, 'work' links persons, matrilineages and hamlets and enables individuals access to various resources. The significance of practice becomes obvious when 'work' is literally understood to exhaust a person's strength (a- waiwai) by sweating in the sun and suffering despite the option of resting at home in the shade with a betelnut and a cigarette. The way a person 'works', therefore, gives evidence of his or her character as 'hardworking' (paisewa ale-) or 'lazy' (gwau- toyase ale-). As such, the gift of 'work' is directly linked to valued personal qualities as well as to notions of gender and age. The social importance of 'work' will appear as a dominant argument throughout the thesis. 'Work' is the domain in which persons commit themselves, endure internal struggles of loyalty and morality, and thereby project themselves as agents of their own interests.

According to Fajans, Baining regard sweat as the "human fire", relating it to human activity in contrast to animals and spirits (1993b:64-5).
Dimensions of Personhood in Dobu

On Dobu there are different ways of referring to persons. The generic term *tomota* is gender neutral, encompassing not only human beings but also supernatural beings and yams. While *tomota* is often used to refer to human beings in general, Dobu language also allows more precise reference to human identity in terms of place of origin. The prefix *me-* (human being) with place of origin as a qualifier (*Mebuyowa*, a person from Buyowa) is often used when referring to a group of people. If particular individuals are referred to, this may be done by using the gender term (*waine* for woman, *tai* for man) with the suffix *-na* (sing.) or *-di* (pl.) in addition to the place name: *Dobu wainena*, this woman from Dobu, *Waluma wainedi*, these women from Waluma. The latter construction can be turned around so that 'a woman from Dobu' becomes *waine Dobu(na)*, a rhetorical way of stressing a person's place of origin.

Humans are divided into totemic clans and matrilineages, relating them to the land of their ancestors. Similarly, yams are divided into two types (variations) that are subdivided into types of seeds (cultivars). As each matrilineage owns the seeds ('*uma*) of only a few yam types, the relation between yam 'persons' and land is parallel to that of human 'persons' (see also Chapter Four). 'Supernatural beings', such as *tonitonibwa'a* (the red inhabitants and 'owners' of the ground) and *tokwatokwa* (the dwarfs that 'own' the surface, live in big trees and control wells), are subdivided according to the land that they live on. Taumudumudulele (said to reside on Oaiobe Island) is 'like a human' person but with distinctly superior knowledge of magic power.

The semantic frame of the term *tomota* appears to be characterised by individual predispositions and an ability to selectively display one's 'inside' in accord with an ethical code. This implies that *tomotai* not only experience but partly control their inner states of consciousness such as dreams, thoughts and emotions. This

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3 Compare, however, Macintyre's statement that Misima "like several other Massim languages" has a particular word for 'human being' (*gamagal*) distinct from other creatures (*bwasumu*) (1990:89).
consciousness distinguishes *tomota* from animals, *yobai*. In myths, pigs and
dugongs were turned into animals when their mythical ancestor behaved 'like an
animal' (*nadigega yobai*) by refusing to follow the ethical rules.

The word *tomota* is the source of the prefix *to-* that is used to denote personhood in
particular contexts: a slain enemy is referred to as *to'esilai* (person-killed), a dead
person is *to'mwamwasa* (person-dead). Expressions that use the prefix *to-*
sometimes refer directly to gendered activities of exchange, others do not. The
woman who bundles the yams that are counted and piled up in her yam house in
preparation for a mortuary feast is called *tolobwagila* (person-make-bundle); a man
building a house can be referred to as *to'abi'anua* (person-build-house). The roles
of persons during mortuary feasts are indicated in the same manner: *to'ebwabwale*
(person-make-bwabwale), *to'etabutabu* (person-forbidden-to-eat), *to'ai* (person-eat),
todedoi (person-cry), *topaisewa* (person-work), *to'sa'u kodo* (person-put-
basket), *toloina* (person-ruling), and *to'une* (person-gift-giving). These terms are
further explained in Chapter Eight.

The prefix *to-* is also used in relation to other activities. The owner of a yam house,
generally a woman, is called *to'abi'uma* (person-build-seeds), that is, the person
who builds up ('abi) the yam seeds ('uma). A healer is called *to'oba* (person-
healing) and a gardener is *tobagula* (person-garden). This construction puts
emphasis on the activity a person is involved in, like the leadership of a *kula* canoe,
tosana waga (person-put-canoe). It is also a euphemism to avoid the use of a
personal name for reasons of piety and respect, as in *to'ala* (person-carry) for a
deceased father; which alludes to one who had lovingly carried the speaker as a
baby. A dead mother, on the other hand, is referred to as *agu susu* (my breasts),
alluding to the intimate nurturing relationship between mother and child. A
deceased relative whose name cannot be mentioned might be referred to as
*tomialugu* (person-rest-inside-the-house), based on the fact that he remained inside
the house when he was very sick 'before he died'. The general term for those who
are in no way related and to whom one has no exchange ties is *to'umala*.
Interestingly, the dugong is called *tomadawa* (person-kula-canoe-from-Tubetube-
area), apparently referring to its large size and human-like features; but note that no
activity is associated with the suffix 'to' which in this case is purely descriptive.4

The facultative plural of tomat is tomati. This word is used as a classifying
attribute in contrast with 'Western' (dimdim), thereby distinguishing claypots ('ule
tomat) from aluminium pots (e'ule dimdim), outrigger canoes (waga tomat) from
dinghies (waga dimdim), locally caused sicknesses (le'oasa tomat, or asa
le'osasina, hamlet-its-sickness) from modern sicknesses (le'oasa dimdim), hence
between 'real' persons (tomot) and 'Westerners' (dimdim). The dichotomy between
tomat and dimdim is also mirrored in origin myths concerning the brothers
Tauwau (a dimdim) and Kasabwaibwaileta (a tomat).

Tauwau and Kasabwaibwaileta built the first boats. The former constructed an
outrigger canoe (waga or kewe'u) and the latter a dinghy. At night, Tauwau stole
the dinghy and left for Australia while Kasabwaibwaileta had to remain in the
village and use the canoe. This is why we have canoes and dimdims have motor
boats (William, field notes).

The dichotomy was also implicit in a statement uttered by sympathetic neighbours
after a quarrel between myself and my 'mother': "She does not treat you well, as if a
dimdim was not a person (tomot)"5 Dimdim can be referred to as tomat, too, as
the quote shows, if they share the world of Dobu.

'Work' as a personal gift

In front of my house stood a pomelo tree (kamakuku) and my desire to eat its
fruits grew stronger each day I watched them maturing. Every time a fruit
ripened I informed the children that I wanted to eat it myself, but shortly before
it was fully ripe somebody took it and left me disappointed. When I complained,
Kaibado explained: "The fruits are yours because you weed the ground around
the base of the tree. You are an 'owner' of Losina because you have 'worked' at
the sagali feast. You are a dimdim but your 'work' makes you become like us.
That is what we call 'paisewa i loiloina' (work sets the rule). That is our custom" (field notes).

4 Since madawa is the term for the tree used to make sea-going canoes, tomadawa might also be
rendered as 'person-floating-log'.
5 See Macintyre for a similar statement from Tubetube (1993:53).
Exchange is regarded as 'work' (*paisewa*) in Dobu, comprising labour, production, distribution and sometimes consumption. To 'work' for someone in terms of labour includes dragging heavy bundles of firewood from the bush to the hamlet, standing inside the smoke when preparing a pot for cooking, going fishing on a cold night when feeling tired, participating in a *kula* voyage, building a house or weeding a yam garden, staying up all night to sing at a feast — in short, performing tiring activities for other than one's own immediate benefit or pleasure.

The spiky edges of the sago leaves that we were preparing for the roof of Jack's house stung my hands. I complained to my friend Lele. She replied: Yes, you have thorns in your hand, me too. But we must not show it, because it would be like complaining. When we work for someone, we tell ourselves to just do it and stay quiet. Otherwise they might say that we are lazy. It is a hard life here on Dobu, unlike you *dimdim* who have machines for everything. Maybe we are tired, feel pain or anger, but still we work for others so that they can see we are good people (field notes).

This example shows that the way a person 'works' is evidence of his or her strength of character, especially in terms of self-discipline (*alamai'ita*, see Chapter Three). It is only to be expected that labour drains one's energy if done with the appropriate vigour; therefore 'workers' have to be served food (*buyo*) and given drugs (betelnuts and tobacco) when they have completed their task. This gift, called *niaula*, is an immediate compensation for their loss of strength, so they can 'regain their breath' (*loeyawasina*) and 'become hard' again (*loepa'ala*). These work ethics may have been the reason why Dobu men were known to be among 'the best workmen in Papua' (see Young 1983c).

Individuals who are exceptionally 'hardworking' are expected to become renowned, their physical and moral strength transforming into general potency (*a-waiwai*). The list below gives the titles and qualifications of individual achievement. For a man, this power is called *gilasalasa*, meaning: he can easily break everything he touches. For a woman, it is expressed as 'her cooking fire never burns down', meaning that her 'work' of yam gardening and managing the yam seeds enables her
to feed as many people as she wants.6

Table 1: Gender specific attainment of renown
(In bold: the most important qualifications)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alawata (wealthy, 'good' woman)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good at managing yams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good at planting yams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looking after children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looking after visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looking after 'une valuables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calling people for cooked food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tai esa'esas (wealthy, 'good' man)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good gardener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good fisherman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good kula trader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good canoe-builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good house-builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good gardener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good net-fisherman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good sorcerer (pre-Christian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good garden magician (pre-Christian)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The semantic field of paisewa includes just about everything that is not purely pleasurable, such as chatting with friends (egosigosiana), resting (ewai'ata), eating

6 For a similar description of 'work' in relation to leadership on Fergusson Island see Digim'Rina (1995:42 ff).
(e'ai), sleeping (eno'eno), or visiting (adadana). Subsistence activities which satisfy the immediate needs of consumption of one's own household are not usually termed 'work' but rather referred to by particular expressions such as 'I go fishing' (ya banibani), 'I come from the garden' (bagulega ya mai) or 'I am preparing dinner' (ama bebai ya eta'etagoa).

The fine distinction between 'work' and everyday activities like fishing in the afternoon or peeling yams for dinner seems to be related to the physical or mental strain that is caused when doing it, requiring a person to exercise self-discipline. It is, for example, 'hard work' (paisewa sinabwana) for a mother to look after her baby, and she demands acknowledgment of this as soon as the child is able to help her, so that by and by a relation of co-workers is created, and later reversed, when the strength of the mother begins to fail and the child takes over the major part of her work. This form of generalised reciprocal exchange is often explained in terms of 'respect' (amayaba), as the morally correct way to compensate a care-giver for the inconvenience by 'working' in return. 'Work' often thus becomes a moral duty, an expression of love and gratitude, as when caring for frail relatives or expressing grief by mourning the death of a paternal or affinal relative. Individuals who fail to conduct themselves appropriately in these contexts are branded as 'disrespectful' (see also Chapter Eight).

The social value of 'work' is based on the awareness that it involves voluntary discomfort, sweating, fatigue and mental discipline. Implicit is that an individual may always choose to stay at home, either pretending to be sick (le'oasa kabokabo), or to have some other job to do, and to some people the option of being talked about as 'lazy' is preferable to getting involved in too much 'work' (adolescent males especially work very little). While it is often possible to avoid everyday gift giving and communal work such as yam planting and Church activities (or at least, to

---

7 Yet birthing is not referred to as 'work' but as 'sickness' (le'oasa); see Macintyre for a similar perspective from Tubetube (1993:48).

8 Compare Myers' analysis of Pintupi 'nurturance' as a form of hierarchical exchange that creates specific and collective identities (1993:38ff).
participate as little as possible), persistent avoidance is sanctioned in the long-term loss of status that affects one's inheritance and authority. Persons who are branded as 'lazy' cannot develop a reliable network of support, and the chances are that they will find little sympathy and help in case of need (see also Chapter Three).

As I have said, persons are defined by their ability to exercise self-discipline and act according to ethical rules. They have to suppress some of their dispositions, thoughts and feelings in favour of those that conform to the general concept of the 'good person' as 'respectful' and able to 'work' without complaint or loss of stamina. This raises the question of how these individual qualities are conceptualised within the physical body.

'O N T H E I N S I D E '  (S O L A N A Y A ): N O T I O N S O F I N D I V I D U A L I T Y

Thoughts and emotions, perceptions, dreams, character traits or dispositions, are issues of consciousness and personal experiences that are difficult to assess. In linguistic terms, a person's thoughts and feelings are related to located and unlocated parts within the body. Different states of consciousness are explained by the capacity of a person's 'spirit' (valuvaluwu-) to perceive, think and feel even when temporarily separated from its physical body.9 I collected more than seventy expressions that refer to emotional states. It is interesting that many of these words are collocations, the first half formed by a term for a body part and the second half offering some sort of qualification of this body part. The body parts commonly used are the head (deba-), the eyes (mata-), the back (gwau-), and inner organs (sola-), such as the liver (ate-) and the abdomen (gamwa-).10

The word for 'character, personality' (ale-) was translated by Fortune as 'root': "the root of laughter they" (1932:250). He did not provide the Dobu phrase, which was almost certainly 'edagi aledi' (literally: 'laughter-root-they') and which I would prefer to translate as 'they are basically silly'. The word ale- refers to character traits

9 See also Macintyre's discussion of the conceptualisation of the person in Misima (1990:88ff).
10 For a list of words referring to 'inner' states, see appendix 1.
as well as to basic reasoning ('this is so because...'). A child that does not listen to advice is described as having a 'hard head' as a disposition or 'basis': gwama nina deba pa’ala alena (literally: 'child-this-head-hard-its-root'). Similarly, natural reasoning is 'based on' something, as in the phrase 'betelnuts are rare at this time of the year because of the seasons':

\[
\text{magi} \quad \text{ana} \quad \text{ala’aa} \quad \text{alena} \quad \text{magi} \quad \text{ma’ana} \quad \text{tuta.}
\]

betelnut its shortage because betelnut with its time.

In its most concrete sense, ale- is the term for the base of a tree, (as in 'I will meet you under the Pomelo tree':

\[
\text{ta} \quad \text{itayo} \quad \text{kamakuku} \quad \text{alena.}
\]

we (incl.) see you pomelo tree its base.

These examples show that the concept of character (ale-) refers to specific types of personalities, explaining typical behaviour or attitudes of individuals as their 'roots'.\(^{11}\) As a noun, ale refers to the 'name' or 'fame' of a person (ina ale bobo’ana literally means 'his/her name good').

The words for 'mind, thought, desire' (nua-) and for 'feeling/compassion' (ate-, literally: 'liver') describe a rather amorphous structure 'inside' the body that is the seat of emotional states, memory and intellect. E. Schieffelin points out the inherent problem of translation and classification: "It seems doubtful, for example, that terms for emotions or feelings can readily be mapped onto a set of discrete and unambiguous internal states" (1985:170).\(^{12}\) Edoni, a fluent (but not native) Dobu speaker, analysed the metaphorical use of words for body parts in relation to inner states, objects, animals, actions of the body, personality and character, and spatial and abstract qualities (1989). In relation to inner states she claims that no distinction between intellect and emotions can be made on the basis of words:

\[
\text{[I]t is difficult to distinguish the meanings dividing the areas of emotions, the intellect, the spirit, the physical properties of man and his characteristics. It would appear}
\]

\(^{11}\) See Lutz for a detailed analysis of a similar concept among the Ifaluk of Micronesia (1988:114).

\(^{12}\) See also H. Geertz 1959; M. Rosaldo 1980; Feld 1982.
therefore that because these meanings are so intertwined with the simple names of the physical areas of the body that the Dobuan sees all the meanings as being an integral part of his whole self (1989:25).

My own informants were equally unable to locate emotions and thought within particular areas of the body as, for example, the 'seat' of memory (which Fortune claimed to be the stomach, 1932:149), although they assumed that the brain had always been held to be the 'seat' of thought and memory (similar to the concept of 'mind', nuwo, in Sabarl [see Battaglia 1990: 39]). While Dobu speakers and the Dobu language versions of the Bible translate ate- as 'heart' into English, the heart is actually named nuamagi.13 When Dobu speakers use ate- to describe emotions, they form collocations such as ategui uya'uya (literally: 'my liver hurts') for sadness, ategui pisali (literally: 'my liver explodes') for anger, and ateguya umiamia ataya (literally: 'in my liver you shall remain forever') for sentimental love. Far more numerous, however, are fixed collocations based on the word nua-, listed in the table below. It appears impossible to distinguish between intellect and emotion on the basis of the use of these terms:

Table 2: Collocations based on the term nua- ('mind')

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dobu</th>
<th>Literally</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>atenua'ole'ole</td>
<td>'heart'-mind'- pity</td>
<td>compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuato'umalina</td>
<td>'mind'-bad</td>
<td>angry, upset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nua'ebuni</td>
<td>'mind'-to uproot-like-a-tree</td>
<td>repent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nua'etanidiegala</td>
<td>'mind'-from-above</td>
<td>hypocrisy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nua'i'isi</td>
<td>'mind'-to-care</td>
<td>to remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nua'i'ita</td>
<td>'mind'-to look-after</td>
<td>to care for, to feel responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nua'i'ila</td>
<td>'mind'-to return</td>
<td>to think about the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nua'ole'ole</td>
<td>'mind'-to-build-a-fire</td>
<td>pity, mercy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nua-i yowana</td>
<td>'mind'-is-wandering</td>
<td>wondering, amazement, confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuagibu</td>
<td>'mind'-blind</td>
<td>to be dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 According to Bromilow, the mind is located in the chest and the throat and the emotions in "vital parts" (1914:546). Macintyre's statement that in Tubetube the heart is the 'seat' of nua adds further confusion (1987:209).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nudaalele,</td>
<td>'mind'-bitter</td>
<td>to be bitter/sour minded, resentful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuatomatoma</td>
<td>'mind'-swallow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nualoba,</td>
<td>'mind'-to find, 'mind'-hot</td>
<td>to remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuayai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuamwavuta</td>
<td>'mind'-to-descend</td>
<td>to be humble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuamwau</td>
<td>'mind'-heavy</td>
<td>sadness, disappointment, grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuanua</td>
<td></td>
<td>to think, want, plan, wish, sexual desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geyanua-</td>
<td>not-'mind'</td>
<td>not to like, desire, wish, want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuapotata</td>
<td>'mind'-clogged</td>
<td>to be stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nusiwaloa</td>
<td>'mind'-quiet</td>
<td>peace of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nualue</td>
<td>'mind'-going up, 'mind'-high</td>
<td>to be boastful, conceited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuamwataya</td>
<td>'mind'-long-like-snake (?)</td>
<td>to forget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuseyana</td>
<td>'mind'-to-move-out</td>
<td>to be generous, thoughtful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nualulu</td>
<td>'mind'-bone</td>
<td>to forget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>senua</td>
<td></td>
<td>to be desperate, to commit suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esinua</td>
<td>also-'mind'</td>
<td>to choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuayaina</td>
<td>'mind'-firm</td>
<td>to think intensely, to hope, to wonder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Language, possession and space**

Fortune claimed that the "possessive affix" of extreme closeness includes: "a part of the speaker's body, a state of 'mind', a trait of his character, a legitimate relative of his" (1932:67). This observation is correct as long as the analysis is confined to those words that refer directly to 'internal' regions of the body (like nua-, 'mind'). A closer examination of words for states of mind and character traits, however, reveals that he simplified the issue by overlooking terms that have no overt relation to the physical body. When words for body parts are not used in collocations, states of a person's 'inside' are expressed by using a form that indicates possession (deictic stem plus emotion word) rather than embodiment (body part plus inalienable suffix). While the terms for character traits (ale-), emotions and 'mind' (nua-, ate-), and 'spirit' (yaluyaluwa-) are indeed constructed in the same way as other parts of the body, those for 'gut feeling/taste' (a- lotona), 'compatibility' (a- lobwene) and shadow/spirit (i- ma'amayau) are not. To clarify these statements, I shall first
discuss the linguistic concept of possessive particles.

The relatedness of possessive particles to spatial distance has been described by Bromilow (1904b:149), Fortune (1932:67), Arnold (1931:11,12), Lithgow (1975:31-2, 1978:35-38, 43-44). Although these sources offer slightly different classifications of possessives, they all agree that in the Dobu language possessive pronouns are used to indicate the closeness or remoteness of things relative to the person. David Lithgow stressed that the Dobu notion of possession is quite different from its English counterpart: "Possession has a wider range of meaning in Dobu than in English, so we find it much more in the Dobu language than in English" (Lithgow 1978:35). Along similar lines, Macintyre classified the possessive particles in Tubetube language as 'alienable', 'semi-alienable' and 'inalienable' (1995:35). The following diagram illustrates the uses of possessive particles.

Diagram 2: Spatial dimension of possessive particles

Deictic stem <aagu> for objects of one's consumption

Deictic stem <agu> for objects that are essential or in use

Suffix <-gu> for body parts, kinship terms, shadow, 'spirit', friend, indicating extreme closeness

Deictic stem <igu> used for objects and animals that belong to oneself

---

14 For further details about the use of possessives see Chapter Four on kula valuables.
My informants insist that there are four different forms of possessives, while the literature has so far mentioned only three. The subtle distinction between \(<agu>\) and \(<aagu>\) must have escaped linguists’ ears. Native speakers, however, often corrected the way I pronounced the vowels (in terms of length and glottal stop), pointing out subtleties as between \(wuola\) (sea water) and \(ola\) (house post), \(wa \ 'ita\) (you -pl.- look) and Weitaa (hamlet name). They occasionally praised me for my (German-based) clarity of sound, explaining that native English speakers had problems forming pure vowels and never achieved a proper pronunciation of their language.15

Missionary Sister Billing noted in 1895, that the Italian anthropologist Loria, who visited the newly established mission, was helpful because he was "especially clever in distinguishing the different vowel sounds"(1930:49). This is not surprising, as the vowels in Italian are very similarly pronounced as in Dobu. The following table lists the possessive forms in Dobu.

Table 3: Possessive particles in the Dobu language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>1st Exc.</th>
<th>1st Inc.</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deictic stems</td>
<td>igu</td>
<td>imu</td>
<td>ina</td>
<td>ima</td>
<td>ida</td>
<td>imi</td>
<td>idi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td><em>igu susu</em> = my own matrilineage; alienable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agu</td>
<td>amu</td>
<td>ana</td>
<td>ama</td>
<td>ada</td>
<td>ami</td>
<td>adi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td><em>agu susu</em> = my comforting breast; semi-alienable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aagu</td>
<td>aamu</td>
<td>aana</td>
<td>aama</td>
<td>aada</td>
<td>aami</td>
<td>aadi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td><em>aagu susu</em> = my breast milk that I drink; consumable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffixes</td>
<td>-gu</td>
<td>-yo</td>
<td>-na</td>
<td>-ma</td>
<td>-da</td>
<td>-mi</td>
<td>-di</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td><em>susugu</em> = my own breasts; inalienable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

15 This critique matches my own observations and was confirmed by Digim'Rina (pers. comm. 5.2.1995). See, for example, Watson’s mistaken attempt to render ‘Dobu’ in phonetics for his Australian readers by spelling it ‘Doughboo’ (1941:1). By native speakers, Dobu is pronounced with short, single vowels.
Many inner states, like sadness, tiredness, happiness, fear, worry, or anger are metaphorically related to body parts. In these cases, the body part is referred to with the appropriate inalienable suffix, e.g. matagu i 'eno'eno (literally: 'my-eye-is-sleeping', I am tired). Yet statements about emotions can be alternatively phrased by using a noun that carries the possessive form of ownership rather than one of closeness. 'I am angry' can be translated as ma'igu gamwasoala, which literally means 'with my stomach upset'. This indicates that the use of the suffix <-gu> is not related to the closeness of the state of 'mind' per se, but rather follows the usual grammatical form required by a body part term (which carries this suffix automatically). In such cases, the suffix does not allude to notions of "nearness or distance" (Fortune 1932:67) in the sense of emotions being closely tied to the person, as Fortune seems to suggest (see above), although their status as collocations of body part terms plus a qualifier certainly indicates a perception of inner states in terms of general embodiment. Furthermore, some emotions are not expressed by collocations based on body parts at all, such as envy (igu e'ipi'ipi), and 'love' (igu oboboma). These words do not carry the suffix <-gu>, a fact that undermines Fortune's assertion to some degree.16

The stem nua-, to give another example, can carry the suffix <-gu> as well as possessive deictic stems. I shall briefly describe the way it may change and discuss whether semiotic differences are related to the forms.17

1. nuagu i mwau (literally: 'my 'mind' is heavy' = I am sad). Nua-, like ale- (personality, character), seems to be perceived as somehow belonging to the body according to the possessive suffix that it carries. This grammatical form treats the stem nua- in the same way as a localised body part, e.g. matagu i 'eno'eno (literally: 'my eye is sleeping' = I am tired). Many of the words listed in Table 3 can be constructed this way, implying that the 'mind' seems to be an

16 Fortune may have been confused by the fact that adjectives and verbs carry the same suffix as body parts etc. <-gu>, but there is no relation to spatial aspects in these forms.

17 Note also the subtleties with regard to the word 'respect': i- amayaba is used to refer to the respect that someone gives; a- amayaba for the respect that someone receives. In its verbal form, the suffix <-gu> is used: 'u da amayabegu (you shall respect me).
abstract concept within the boundaries of extreme closeness although it cannot be localised within the body.

2. **igu nuanua oyo** (literally: 'my 'desire' is you' = I want you). On the other hand, in the reduplicated form **nuanua** (synonymous with **nua-**) the grammatical construction with the pronoun **i-** indicates distance and ownership rather than closeness. This form is used when the emphasis is on an actual activity of thinking rather than on a state of mind.

3. **nuanuagu e'ai** (I wish to eat). In its verbal form, unlike most other intransitive verbs, **nua-** carries a possessive suffix and often the particle **be** (and). Arnold classifies it as expressing an optative mood (1931:29-30). Interestingly, only three verbs are connected with **be**, all of them having an undertone of irreality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Particle</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sawesawanaya</strong></td>
<td>be</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>tatauya</td>
<td>I should be able to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kapekaena</strong></td>
<td>be</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>pilisinem</td>
<td>I might run away from you (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nuanaugu</strong></td>
<td>be</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>da</td>
<td>I wish you (pl.) would come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>run away you (2. pl.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>shall</td>
<td>come here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Closeness as an element of relatedness is expressed by the deictic stem **a-**, either in social relationships (**agu to'ali**, 'my deceased father' [literally: 'my carrier']), or when qualifying objects (**ana ita bobo'ana**, 'it looks good' [literally: 'its look is good']). Only two emotion words are expressed in this way. One is the word for 'personal compatibility', **a- lobwene**, mainly used in negated form in the sense of 'I don't like it' or 'I cannot tolerate it/have an allergy against it' (**nigeya agu lobwene**). The second term, **a- lotona**, is used to refer to one's 'feeling' in the sense of 'gut feeling' as well as 'body feeling' in general and taste of food:

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18 Also: **ana waiwai**, its weight; **ana mwau**, its trouble or hardness; **ana bobo'ana**, its goodness; **ana maisa** or **ana e'isa**, its price or response; **buki ana sawa**, the contents of a book (literally 'book its reading').
Agu lotona nigeya bobo'ana. I don't feel well.

My feeling not good.

Masula nina ana lotona to'umalina. This food tastes bad.

Vegetable this its taste bad.

What I tentatively call 'gut feeling' (or taste) here is often referred to in folk tales when people are away from their hamlet and 'feel' that something is going wrong back home.

In the well-known story of 'Amayaba and Gagasa', two brothers paddle to another island where they find their wives. The first, named Amayaba ('Respect'), treats everyone he meets in the ethically appropriate way. He is polite, obedient and friendly. When he encounters an old woman, he works for her and is given one of her daughters, a beautiful woman. Seeing his brother return so happy, the other brother sets out to find himself a wife too. His name is Gagasa ('Show-off') and his conduct is accordingly boastful, rude and impolite. Although he also works for the old woman, his attitude is utterly disrespectful and when she gives him one of her daughters, she is old and ugly. In fact, she is a witch who is so powerful that his attempts to push her from his canoe fail and he is forced to take her all the way home as his wife. Gagasa treats his wife badly, however, and the two sisters decide to leave, running away from their husbands while they are out in the bush. After the women have left the hamlet, their husbands 'felt uneasy'.  

Ta enega nada egamu si ta ga mitawayya
But so there back there they went and in the bush

ni'atu si adadana ta adi lotona
already they walk and their feeling

ni'atu nigeya bobo'ana. Sai, Amayaba
already not good. Especially, Amayaba

wate ana lotona nigeya bobo'ana, mwanena ni'atu
also his feeling not good, spouse-his already

i tauya.
she left.

19 See appendix 2 for the transcript and translation.
This term for feeling, *a-lotona* (in verbal form, *lotoi*) is grammatically constructed as close to, but outside of the body, as close as essential clothes or deceased/illegitimate kin. At the same time, it is constructed as a bodily sensation, as in the example above and similarly in the phrase *ana lotona 'u da lotoi* ('now you feel it', literally: 'its feeling you shall taste') to comment on someone's well deserved punishment. Its ambiguous position between the body and the outside world might indicate its mediating quality between the inside and the outside, similar to other perceptions like *ana ita* ('the way it looks'), *ana nono* ('the way it sounds'). If this is indeed the case it can be stated on the basis of linguistic analysis that this kind of feeling is perceived as a bodily perception rather than as an emotion *per se* (as German or English would have it). The following diagram attempts to summarise what has been said with regard to possessives and 'emotion words'.

**Diagram 3: Embodiment of words for inner states**

- my head [debagu]
- my eye [matagu]
- my mouth [awagu]
- my skin [bwaragu]
- my back [gwaugu]
- my inside [solagu]:
- my liver [ategu]
- my stomach [gamwagu]
- my feeling [agu lotona]
- my shadow [agu ma'amayau]
- my compatibility [agu lobwene]
- unlocated: my personality [alegu]
- my spirit [yaluyaluwagu]
- my 'mind' [nuagu]
To conclude, linguistic formulations of aspects of personhood on Dobu differentiate between character traits (ale-) and mental and emotional states (nuat-, ate-) that cannot be located within a metaphysical 'inside' (sola-). These dimensions of personal perception are grammatically different from words that refer to perceptions (ita-, lotona, nono) and 'individual compatibility' (lobwene). My analysis has shown that possessive particles are not an entirely consistent indication of physical closeness or embodiment, as 'emotion words' often carry the alienable deictic stem i-, as in igu nuanua (my thought) and igu gamwaso'ala (my anger). In general terms, however, it appears that the 'inside' of a person is treated linguistically as an integral part of the body, as an individually shaped entity. Persons have to negotiate their character traits, feelings, desires and thoughts with the demands of ethical rules when interacting, creating an image of their personality by the way they act ('work'). Attempts to conceal those aspects of their 'inside' that do not conform to the ethics are met by others' assessment of their character and inner feelings ('he really has a choleric character', tauna i gamwaso'ala alena). During field work I overheard a friend's comment on an event that made him so upset that he displayed anger and disappointment without the usual self-restraint. "Truly, my inside was out," he said in the mixture of Dobu and English that can often be heard among fluent speakers of English: "Ona ai'aila, solagu i out".

**Spirit and person**

Another dimension of personhood that is based on notions of individuality is the spirit (yaluyaluwa-). While normally located somewhere 'inside', it is constructed as detachable under certain conditions, having the full range of capacities of the body; it can move, perceive, consciously experience inner states and react to the outside world. However, this state is only temporary and spirit and body have to be

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20 See also Macintyre's observation that on Tubetube "will (nu-) invariably implies a notion of individual personal identity that sets the person in clear opposition to the social world of family, hamlet and community" (1995:42).

21 For a similar view from Misima see Macintyre (1990:92).
reunited after a time in order to avoid damage to the person as a whole. Body and spirit are regarded as one when the person is awake, unless the person is mentally sick (kabalea), a state that manifests a division between body and spirit. It is during sleep, when the physical body rests, that mentally healthy persons can experience and experiment with states of separation between body and spirit.

Dreams are classified into three distinct categories: the ordinary, sometimes prophetic dreams during normal night sleep, and two ways of 'leaving the physical body' while it is asleep. The methods that allow the person to separate from the body are called 'enomata'ita'ita (literally: 'sleep-eyes-are-watching') and 'enobe'u (literally: 'sleep-fall') (see Fortune 1932:181). They can probably be classed as states of trance, as Stephen convincingly argues in her article on altered states of consciousness in Melanesia (1979:5ff). While the first type allows the spirit to wander about on Dobu Island, the second type lets the spirit travel across the strait to Mt. Bwebweso, where the spirits of the dead live. The latter is more dangerous due to the greater distance and the expectation of deeply emotional experiences when contacting beloved ones on Bwebweso. But even the first type of dream-travel is risky, because one is likely to encounter witches or other spirits who can injure those who have no protective magic. Both methods are secret techniques that I was told about with some hesitation because my informants were worried about the effect on my mental health if I were to try them out myself: the sleeping body must not be disturbed while the spirit is out and about; otherwise it cannot re-enter the body and the person goes mad (kabalea). Technically, both methods are performed by rubbing two particular leaves against each other and placing them under the wooden headrest (gedo) before going to sleep.

The separation of spirit and body can only be experienced temporarily while a

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22 According to my informants, prophetic dreams usually occur just before daybreak, see also Young for a somewhat different classification of dreams in Kalauna (1996).
23 See also Munn (1990:15n.9).
24 For the relation between witchcraft and madness see also Schlesier (1983:125).
mentally sane person is alive. Following death, of course, this state is permanent after the spirit is sent away from Dobu during mortuary feasting (see Chapter Eight). From this perspective it follows that the distinction between wakefulness and sleep is determined by the state of the physical body only. The spirit is regarded as a separate entity that can leave the physical body while still managing to control all perceptions and movements - even more so, for the senses are said to be sharper in sleep. Small children can distinguish between real persons and spirits, a capacity that is lost when a child is about two years old. This is the reason, it is said, why they often cry at night: "When Mandi wakes up at night and cries, it is because he has seen a spirit or a witch. Because children's eyes are still clear and they can see everything" (J.J.).

The head (deba- or bulubulu-)

The head has a dominant position among the body parts. Before the missionaries changed mortuary ritual, skulls were kept and held at dugumalala dances by the matrilineage of the deceased. The belief that witches divide and distribute the corpse of a human victim for consumption includes the notion that the witch who receives the head has to provide the next victim. In both cases the head represents the whole person. The head is the seat of the senses of vision (a-ita), smell (a- goi), taste (a- lotona), hearing (a- nono) and the locus of speech (ena-) and gaze (a-dune). It is arguable that this sociable dimension is the basis for the head's significance and for the ritual use of skulls in former times.

The head is used as a metaphor in describing stinginess (deba'ose) and stubborn egoism (deba paala, 'head-hard'). Both metaphors also point towards individuality as a negatively valued character trait. They are insults if spoken directly to

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26 See also Kulick's analysis of the Tok Pisin use of the term hed in relation to egoism that needs to be suppressed (1992:102 ff).

27 See also Kulick for hed as a symbol for individualism (1992:102) and save as knowledge and observing ethical precepts (1992:119); save is inborn and "'breaks open' (bruk, ...) inside the child, like an egg." (1992:120).
Someone's face and are mostly used to explain unsociable behaviour of children and young adults:

One night, we heard a lot of noise: the engine of a dinghy, a crash, a scream, some swearing and fighting. Shortly afterwards, a child came past our veranda and gave a quick report. The boys were drunk, the dinghy disturbed M. who was fishing; he swore at them, they turned around and ran across his canoe. Then M.'s sons helped him and they started fighting with the boys on the dinghy. They were separated and everyone went home. When I asked why the boys behaved like this the answer came from everyone: because these tubuau (adolescent males) are so big-headed! Truly that's the basic characteristic of teenagers! (Tubuau maibo'adi debadi pa'alidi. Ona ai'aila, deba pa'ala aledi! (field notes)

My informants identified the head as the seat of thought, perception and social skills in general, although they could not decide whether nua- was in the brain or in the trunk, like ate-. Linguistic evidence, however, points towards a conceptualisation of the brain (mapulu) as the locus of knowledge, as in the insult 'dog's brain' (mapulu kedewa) that compares the 'big-headiness' and low intelligence of a person with the antisocial stupidity of a dog. The expression debagu i sakosakowasi (literally: 'head-my-it-is-going-around) describes dizziness caused by sickness, drunkenness, or betel intoxication. In such states, one's mind is not under the usual control; balance and perception are changed and speaking needs more deliberation.

In addition to these expressions, there are other reasons to assume the particular importance of the head in regard to personality. It must not be touched by a stranger but is the only part of the body that can be touched with affection in public, as when delousing a spouse or close kin. As lice are very common, the head needs and typically receives most bodily care; the hair is combed, split into sections and searched for lice ('utu) and nits (neda). Stories ('accounts of our ancestors', 'emwasala tubudao) are compared with head lice when the person who finishes telling a story calls for the next one:

Neda bubune, kalakea sopile. Sopile ga sopile, Simon debanaya. The meaning is not entirely clear but it seems to translate as: 'Nits are like that, baby lice can jump. They jump and jump, onto the head of Simon' (field notes).

One might deduce that this reference to lice indicates that knowledge of stories is a
sign of intelligence, 'seated' in the head. The same symbolism can be employed for the highest valuables of *kula* exchange. The width of the *mwali* shell, a significant indicator of its value, is called its 'head' (*deba*). The highest category of *kula* shell valuables is called *dagula*, the usual term for a feather or flower that is tucked into the hair.\(^2\) The class of second best valuables is called *bulubulu* (skull, head). In precolonial days it was possible to pay compensation (*pwaoli*) for a human victim with *kula* shells of these two highest classes (see also Macintyre 1995:37).

In body language, the way of holding the head is indicative of a person's feelings: upright and relaxed with a friendly expression, bowed in anger or sorrow or hung in shame or grief. It should be bowed when passing in front of sitting persons as a sign of 'respect'. For this reason, a widow(er) has to hold it down and keep it covered at all times when leaving the hut during mourning. The connection between the position of the head and the demonstration of 'respect' reveals its symbolic significance in terms of personality, autonomy, and hierarchy. The cultural ethic of self-control of one's 'inside' (*alamai'ita*) demands that facial and verbal expressions be restricted to a friendly mask. This is said to be one reason why some people wear dark glasses whenever they fear exposure of their 'true inside' in fraught emotional situations (for example, when being accused at a village court hearing). Female mourners often hold a towel to their face when wailing, not only to wipe away the tears but also as a mask in case their prescribed grieving performance is poorly enacted.

Life on Dobu is greatly influenced by the constant presence of others, who can see, hear, smell, or otherwise deduce what one is doing. Even if no one is nearby, there is no guarantee of privacy of the 'inside', because witches and sorcerers are believed to have the ability to observe others invisibly (see also Chapter Five). The spirits of the ancestors, too, are believed to watch, smell, listen, and react to what they perceive. Since the burial grounds were shifted away from the centre of the hamlet and skulls are no longer kept in houses, the presence of the spirits is less pervasive.

\(^{28}\) According to early missionary records, feathers in the hair of men were signs of homicide (Tinney, 7 July 1892, also quoted by Syme 1985:58).
but remains a significant cause for caution. It follows that the human head is a symbol of a person's ability to perceive and understand the world and to communicate selected thoughts and emotions, thereby consciously negotiating ethical values and representing the whole person. It is the visible part of the body that stands for individual integrity and personal agency.

THE RELATIONAL PERSON

Personal relations are understood to form a person's physical body, in particular the blood and skin. While blood relates a person to his or her matrilineage and other kin, the skin is a visible sign of totemic descent, personal history and current state of the body (such as pregnancy and general health). As such, the skin gives evidence of a person's general conduct and social standing. By examining these elements of the concept of the person in more detail it appears that individual and relational aspects overlap whenever persons act, displaying parts of their 'inside' strategically, using their physical body to perform as social persons and in turn showing the signs of these actions on their skin.

The blood (lala-)

Blood is understood to be the essence created by the eating of food; it makes bodies grow (as during pregnancy) and gives strength and energy to a person.29 It is the mother's blood that 'makes' the baby. After the sexual fluids (a-molo) of man (or men) and woman have accumulated in her womb and stopped her period (navalae, also 'moon'), the baby grows exclusively through her blood.30 Later, her breast milk (susuna) nourishes the infant. It is through her molo, blood and milk that the child becomes a member of her matrilineal group (i-susu). But the father's role is also taken into account. Through his subsistence work in feeding mother and child, and

29 Dixon mentions two synonyms for lala (rara): deasa and buyaa (n. d.:29,36,153), but I have never heard them being used. The blood inside a mosquito is called se'a (n. d.:15)

30 When twins are born, the first child is referred to as gwamana (her child) and the second one as lalana (her blood). These terms might be related to the former practice of infanticide of the secondborn twin (see also Bromilow 1909:8).
giving strength (*a-waiwai*) to their blood, he becomes the child's relative. The child is supposed to show his or her gratitude for the 'work' of both parents, but in different ways according to their contribution (see Chapter Eight for a discussion of the role of father). Hence, blood is a significant indicator of the social space of a child by relating him or her to a specific matrilineage and to a particular male caregiver.

The mother's blood infuses the child during pregnancy. But as the child grows, other persons assume roles as helpers (*to'lema*) by directly or indirectly providing food. With such persons, among them maternal and paternal relatives, family friends and namesakes, the growing child begins to engage in exchanges. Individual adults therefore embody the 'work' (*paisewa*) of many people; they are indebted to people of several hamlets for their 'work' in helping them to mature. It is this indebtedness that creates life-long bonds between several such adults, maternal as well as paternal relatives. These bonds are articulated and manifested in regular exchanges, mainly of betelnuts, fish, yams and pork.

Blood is a consumable body fluid, a fact that is illustrated in the way pigs are slaughtered:

> After spearing the pig, Simi put a piece of coconut husk into the wound to keep the blood inside. He explained that it makes the meat look nice and red as well as improving its taste. Some boys killed their pig with the blunt side of an axe, hitting it again and again until eventually it died. I asked why they chose such a slow and painful death for the pig. They explained that it keeps all the blood inside and makes the meat look nice and red (field notes).

The early literature refers to Dobu as a place where people "drink human blood raw". Even if this were not true (none of my informants knew about such practice), the rhetoric of some magical spells suggests familiarity with the concept of 'drinking blood'. Bleeding wounds can be dried by covering with leaves of the *lalanuma* tree (literally: 'blood-drink') after they have been roasted on a fire and bespelled with secret words. The term *lalanuma* also refers metaphorically to a

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31 Bromilow (1910:476).
particular fighting spell that stuns enemies and weakens them so much that they can be punched in the face and so 'drink their own blood'.

Blood can be 'bad' (*to'umali*-*), a condition that is related to bodily weakness and illness. The broad concept of 'bad blood', includes small, itchy boils (*lala edeyana*) as well as menstrual blood and the very serious sickness called *lala*. This last form of 'bad blood' is caused by the consumption of 'forbidden food', usually food that is designated to symbolise a dead body, either during *bwabwale* (mortuary feasting) or afterwards, by eating food that has grown on the land of a deceased paternal relative. The fear of 'forbidden food' is still acute although one would expect the threat of *lala* to be less serious than in pre-colonial days, when apparently anyone who was sick with *lala* was thrown into a cave at the northern end of Dobu (at Sailele Island) to die without further assistance. This was done from fear of becoming infected with this deadly disease. When making my enquires about *lala*, I found little concrete knowledge but much fear.

'Bad blood' is a result of misconduct, either directly caused by eating 'forbidden food' or indirectly induced by someone's magical techniques in order to punish a person for 'bad behaviour' (*bubuna to'umali-*). It has a black colour and in the case of a boil (*lala edeyana*), the condition can be cured by making a small cut with a thorn that releases some drops. Headaches are usually caused by 'bad blood' and one common remedy is to rub the forehead with a leaf from the *kwatekwateya* vine, this causes a prickling sensation on the forehead and dissolves the 'bad blood'. *Lala* is said to be the blood of dead persons, either caused by 'eating a dead relative', or manoeuvred into one's body by means of sorcery or witchcraft. In the latter case, it can often be detected and removed by a healer (*to'oba*), in the first case there is no means of cure.

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32 See also Schlesier (1983:126ff, 219).
33 Schlesier reports for Me'udana, that *lala* can affect any *susu* relative near the sick person but would not be contagious for their spouses (1983:128).
The skin (*bwala*)

The skin is the barrier and conduit between the inner and the outer body, testifying to the state of health, age, social skills and knowledge of a person. As such it is a metaphor of social integration. Before the advent of textile clothing people displayed more skin: women wore about three layers of fibre skirts (*dobe*) of knee length and men a pubic leaf (*alai*) that covered their genitals. In Dobu terms, people were 'with the skin' (*mabwala*-). A great number of myths in the Massim area exploit the notion of 'double skin', that is, a diseased and ugly outer skin which conceals a beautiful and healthy inner skin (see Young [1987:224-5]; also Chapter Six). This snake-like attribute subverts the reality according to which a person's skin reveals his or her ethical status. It might express the wish of being able to shed the shame of one's personal history of 'bad conduct' to reappear as a good person.34

The ideal of beauty is reflected in the finery that is worn at mortuary feasts, when both men and women should be decorated with armbands (*nipuna*) and feathers in the hair (*dagula*). The lips should be bright red from betel chewing that also produces its characteristic astringent smell, generally perceived as fresh and attractive. Hibiscus flowers (*kenakena*) and the red *bagi* necklace (*talamaga*) add further colour. In addition to these items of clothing and decoration, the skin is covered in aromatised coconut oil and appears shiny and evenly coloured.35 Black lines with white dots are drawn on the cheeks, and other body paint (*saba*) is added according to taste. Persons who are decorated like this smell beautifully of betel, coconut oil and aromatic leaves. At important feasts, women wear valuable *bagi* necklaces around their necks with the decorative ends dangling down the back. The woman holds the centrepiece (*bole*) of the *bagi* away from her neck with a single finger when she feels the weight too heavy on her throat. This gesture in itself expresses beauty and wealth. Although it constrains women's activities by engaging

34 See also A. Strathern for a discussion of the notion of shame as being 'on the skin' (1977:99ff)
35 The ideal of beauty favours light brown skin, as it 'shines' (*nanamala*) more than darker skin.
one of their hands, it does not hinder them in doing their 'work'.

The skin offers rich information about the current condition of a person. Its structure gives evidence of approximate age; women's skins reveal pregnancy (when the nipples turn darker) as well as their history of birthing and breastfeeding. Scars tell tales of past injuries and the degree of healing indicates how much time has passed since a wound occurred. Before missionisation, some people had their septums pierced, and today teenagers pierce their ear lobes and make each other simple tattoos. The skin shows the first signs of puberty, when girls develop breasts and are classed as *gomagweine* and boys begin to grow facial hair and become *tubuau*. A few years later, when a girl's breasts are fully developed and drop a little, she is called *siwaboa* and considered ready for marriage. A young man whose beard starts growing more regularly and whose stature has changed into that of a man (*tai*) is expected to end his relatively unrestrained life as a bachelor.

Facial expressions evince emotions and also a person's capacity to suppress them in order to maintain a 'friendly outside'. Skin needs to be warm in order to feel comfortable. Such a feeling of comfort is referred to in one of the rituals for marriage, called *lo'e bwala yatayai* (literally: 'making-skin-hot'). The bride cooks in the groom's hamlet, sweeps it thoroughly and gives a plate of food to each household. The women of the hamlet roast a long yam (called *egoi*, literally: 'to become-smell') and hold it under the nose of the bride to 'make her smell the food', a gesture that enables her to eat in the groom's hamlet without feeling ashamed. This is repeated when the groom's female relatives cook for the bride's hamlet later on. The 'skin becomes hot' and the nose accustomed to the food of the affines, which, in fact, might be a different cultivar (*uma*) of yam and therefore smell and taste unfamiliar. Hence 'heating up the skin' symbolically represents the process of becoming a resident affine (*aiyai*); it is a metaphor for feeling comfortable in strange territory.

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36 See Munn for notions of beauty in relation to *kula* in Gawa (1986:102-3).

37 These tattoos often carry cryptic messages, such as 'ITALY' (I Truly Always Love You).
Certain lines on the palm of the hand are read as representing a person's totemic clan bird. The right hand, it is said, shows the mother's clan, 'because the right hand is more important' (L.B.), while the left hand shows the father's clan. Although I did not meet anyone who could tell me the signs that allow for this reading of handedness, my enquires elicited folk models when I showed my own hands. "Hm, let me see... ah, yeah, you are magisubu (sea eagle), like me. Look, both our hands look the same, they have these lines that form the letter 'M' like magisubu" (M.T.).

Skin diseases like ringworm, boils, and ulcers are usually interpreted as visible signs of property violation such as trespass and stepping onto a tabu spell placed by the owner to punish intruders. The outbreak of a boil or ulcer is the first sign but if it does not heal after a short while and becomes worse the community interprets this as a further punishment, either because the person who has placed the tabu refuses to remove it, or because the victim of the tabu has not yet apologised (with a ta'ona gift, see Chapter Three) and explicitly asked for its removal with its counter spell (loulasa or siwa'utua).

The tabu to cause sipoma, an ugly skin disease (Tinea imbricata), can be put on any plant or object that its owner wants to protect from thieves or intruders. The secret spell can either be whispered on the (similarly ugly) fruit of the kayasi tree, a wild fig, that is then thrown against the object to set the tabu, or it can simply be whispered in front of the object before spitting on it. The spell mentions body parts that will be afflicted with the disease. Only the person who has set a tabu can remove it by reversing the spell. The secret words have to be muttered over water that has been collected early in the morning, when the last stars are still visible. This prepared water cures the disease when the afflicted person washes with it (field notes).

The skin needs to be 'strong' in order to heal quickly after minor injuries of everyday life, and babies are washed at intervals with special mixtures, such as buyobuyowa leaves, in order to make their skin strong. A baby with a skin disease suggests negligent parents. Healers seem to extract small objects from 'under the skin' of a sick person that give important diagnostic information about the kind of illness and its possible cure. These objects are held to be proof of harm done by

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38 See also Schlesier (1983:27).
39 See Chapter Five for a more detailed account of tabu as 'negative exchange'.

either witches or other beings, such as Tokwatokwa.

States of the body

Sickness is a visible sign of misconduct and closely linked to moral behaviour because 'good people' are far less likely to fall victim to witchcraft or sorcery. This had been expressed by Christopher Obedi Me'u'yo of Duau in exactly the same way as it is on Dobu (Schlesier 1982:149).

Ta abo'agu ya atesa'ala Me'udana enaya, ya mautata (sic) sinabwana. But I was scared to marry into Me'udana, I was really very afraid.

Ta wahagu e'onegu, e'ona: "Sawesawenaya u hai Me'udana, nigeya u matauta.

Eguma imu bubuna e'i tai'esi, u miyami Me'udana dudulana. If your behaviour is that of a good man you will live for a long time in Me'udana.

Ta abo imu bubuna nigeya e'i tai'esi, ma'etamo Me'udana enaya yawasiyo si upwa. Only if you are not behaving like a good man sooner or later in Me'udana they will cut off your breath [kill you through sorcery].

Manuna bubuna to'umalina ana isa mwawasa, ta abo imu bubuna bobo'ana, nate u miya amana".40 Because the answer to bad manners is death, but if you behave well you will have a long life".41

Detached parts of the body, like hair that has been combed out, finger and toenail parings, are perceived as still being attached to the person in spite of their spatial separation. These relics (sumwana - rubbish) have to be hidden from others, just as excrement, betelnut husks, cigarette butts and other objects that have had an intimate relationship to the body. Such things can harm the body if they are treated

40 The text is not in perfect Dobu because Obedi is a native speaker of Me'udana. The correct text should read: Ta abo'agu ya atesa'ala Me'udana enaya, ya mautata sinabwana. Ta wa'agu i e'onegu, i ona: "Sawesawenaya be 'u ai Me'udana, geya'abo 'u matamatauta. Eguma imu bubuna nadigega tai esa'esa, ma'etamo 'u miamia Me'udana tua dudulana. Ta abo imu bubuna nigeya tai esa'esa, ma'etamo Me'udana enaya yawasiyo si e'upwai. Manuna bubuna to'umalina ana e'isa mwawasa, ta abo imu bubuna bobo'ana, nate 'u mia ataya".

41 My own translation of Schlesier's German version. Young has suggested that 'advice' given in this form constitutes a special genre of orally presented wisdom in the Massim (1983e).
badly: hair that is burned in a fire will stop hair on the head from growing. If a strand of hair is blown around and a pig or a dog urinates on it, hair on the head will fall out. As well as these direct impacts, body relics in general can be picked up by someone who might use them for love magic or sorcery. Footprints are said to have the same vulnerability but I never saw people trying to erase their prints on a beach or path, though it was obvious that some were concerned about my ignorance when I burned the hair after cleaning my brush. Relics are never left behind because it is possible to identify the person who left a betelnut husk or cigarette butt. As long as the person is known, the connection still exists. The only place where such relics can be disposed safely is the sea. Rubbish is swept up each morning and thrown into the water. Used grass skirts were disposed in the shallow water at the beach. The hamlet's latrine is constructed as an off-shore cabinet, here fishes eat the faeces. Sorcery and love magic require some personal object for an effective impact on the owner's inner states:

When I was young, I was really smart. I worked in Samarai, and one day I wanted to sleep with this woman. She was married but I thought 'maski, I want her'. So I got some tobacco, rolled a cigarette and sat down with her. We sat down and I offered her the cigarette. She had some puffs and I got the cigarette back, spent it and kept it. Later, I lit a fire, took the two halves of an empty coconut shell, put the butt inside and said my spell over it. Then I put the shell into the fire so that the smoke of the tobacco came out through the holes of the coconut shell. By then I knew she was mine already. So I finished this magic and went home. I slept for an hour or so and then she knocked at my door. I told her how to divorce her husband and it all went well. We were married for about a year and then I went back to Dobu (K.J.).

The shadow (a- ma'amayau) can be used for this kind of magic as well. When I had my first attack of malaria, a couple of people diagnosed my sickness as being related to the shadow. Somebody (they independently explained) must have taken a relic from my body and 'played with it' (gewana) in the afternoons, when I felt worse. The result of these manipulations was the sickness ma'amayau, causing my weakness, frequent headache, and raised temperature. I was offered herbal remedies (I'll give you some kaiwe [bush medicine] and you'll wash with it and it will

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42 Note the difference between a person's 'shadow' (a- ma'amayau) and photographic image (ma'amayau-). The term for shade, as of a house or tree, is yauyaukwa.
finish'), but for the sake of my health (and sanity) I preferred to trust in antibiotics and antimalarial tablets. In cases of sickness, the first question to be asked is 'who did it' rather than 'what is it'. As I was forced to spend my time in bed, I wondered who might have felt inclined to make me sick and thus I began to understand the social consequence of this concept of illness.

There is a kind of sickness that can be glossed as a 'social syndrome', as it appears collectively among the dwellers in a hamlet (disregarding their relatedness in kinship terms). This malaise is called gwasa or nadiwala. It causes hangover-like symptoms and obliges everyone to stay at home for two days, chewing betelnuts to find some relief from tiredness, various aches, and a general feeling of being unwell. Gwasa is caused by absence. If a hamlet-dweller stays away overnight, he or she leaves 'his' or 'her' gwasa behind. Fajans has reported a similar syndrome from the Baining of New Britain and explained it in terms of the interdependence of a person from the group (1985:380-2). Yet on Dobu even unrelated visitors, like myself, are expected to cause it or to suffer from its symptoms, a fact that makes me wary of accepting Fajans' explanation for Dobu. To my understanding, gwasa is a way of reinforcing the ethic of miabaula (the injunction to stay at home and mind one's own business); it is an embodied sanction because it discourages people from staying away overnight without good reason, as they are scolded about gwasa when they return home. Gwasa is an inner state that sheds an interesting light on the concept of the person, because something is left behind when a person goes away. It is not sadness about the temporary loss of a group member but rather having to put up with someone's gwasa that is the issue. Everyone can cause gwasa, but 'strong' (waiwai) persons leave a 'stronger' gwasa behind when they absent themselves: "Oh Sussie, you went to Esa'ala and here in Losina we all had gwasa. Really, your gwasa is strong!" (O Sussie, 'u tauya Esa'ala be bada abo'ama meLosina maibo'ama gwasa. Ona ai'aila, imu gwasa waiwaina!) (Loise).

43 See also Roheim (1950a:175-6); Kuehling 1996.
When sickness is associated with a breach of ethics, as is the usual case, it is called *asa le'oasina* (hamlet sickness). Some cases are thought to be caused by germs (literally: 'worms', *mwatamwata*) deriving from the Western concept of sickness (*le'oasa dimdim*), especially if medical treatment heals the patient. Yet there is another dimension to sickness that is closely related to the development of a person: this lies in the interrelatedness of growth and sickness in children. I was frequently informed by mothers with sick children that there is a rhythm of sickness and progress:

Children get sick, and then they change. They get sick and afterwards they can sit. They get sick and then they can crawl. They get sick and the teeth break through. It is always like this. They get sick and then they walk, and so on, until they are big (R.I.).

In this sense, sickness can be a normal phase of maturation, a state of being that is necessary for a person in order to grow up, an element of his or her individual development. Birthing, for example, is conceptualised as such a sickness that occurs normally in women's lives. Sickness and health are also related to notions of 'wetness' and 'dryness'. For example, women are supposed to wait some years after one birth before becoming pregnant again in order to become 'dry'. This process begins with the seclusion after childbirth which is explained as 'roasting' the woman to 'dry' her out. While in seclusion, women remain on a strict diet called *bodaita*. Their food contains no sea water, coconut cream, fish or meat and tastes as bland as the hot water that is their only drink. This diet is given to all who are sick because people believe that only by eating *bodaita* can the sick body return to a dry, strong and healthy state.44

**Person and gender**

Gender differences are particularly significant on Dobu due to witchcraft (see also Chapter Five). This complex belief system is based on the general assumption that

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44 See, in contrast, Damon's account of 'wet' and 'dry' in terms of gender distinction in the Northern Massim (1990:207).
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every woman is a witch (*welabana*), and has been given particular knowledge in her early childhood when she was swallowed by her mother and passed out again through her anus. Women always deny being witches, however, and it is an unforgivable insult to call a woman a witch (*awa welabana*). Only a few women were actually pointed out to me, behind their backs, as 'champion witches'—the most dangerous beings on Dobu.45

In short, witches are said to have superhuman abilities: they can fly, be invisible, see, hear, and smell much better, and eat decaying flesh without getting sick. Their eyes, ears, nose, and mouth are enlarged and they love to meet nightly for dances and conspiratorial meetings. The most prominent characteristic of witches is their uncontrollable appetite, in particular their craving for human flesh. This antisocial desire impels them to kill within their own hamlet, preferably their husbands. Men are aware of the dangers that come with matrimonial bliss: sexual intercourse with women can make them weak and sick through the fire inside the womb (*kaiya*). If a woman steps over her sleeping husband at night she may drain his life energy. The idea that witches have an internal fire appears in myths that tell the story of the first cooking of food (see Fortune 1932: 295-6; David Lithgow 1975, Bromilow 1910:484, 1912:425). While witches have fire in their pubes, women's menstruation is associated with the moon (*nvalae*) and described as a 'cold' state. This contradiction is typical of the notion of witchcraft. As other Massim researchers have noted, the witch is in many ways the antithesis of the ideal female gender role; destructive instead of nurturative, uncontrolled instead of disciplined in her emotions, immoral instead of moral (see, for example Macintyre 1995:39ff; Lepowsky 1994:204).

When women are not in the alternative state of being witches, they are life-givers, creating babies in their wombs and yams in their gardens. They have control over

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45 Contrary to Trobriand belief, the flying witch or sea witch (*gelaboi*) is not feared as much on Dobu. The *gelaboi* usually likes to be out at night for fishing, minding her own business, and although she can kill without clear motive she might occasionally also help people in need. Thune called them 'special ocean witches' (1980:174), and Schlesier was told that *gelaboi* (also called *menumu*) are residents of the hamlets under the ground (*asa huhuna*) (1983:113).
these fruits of their 'work' and display great self-confidence and authority in everyday affairs. Unlike in many other societies, they are able to take up plenty of space when sitting (with legs wide apart if they like), and when walking (with a basket on their head and swinging movements of their arms). Their overall posture is marked by a straight spine and a raised head, expressing strength, dignity and the liberty to claim all the space they need.46 This posture was remarked by Missionary Sister Billing in 1885: "They have such straight backs, as they always carry on their heads, so have to hold themselves well. The men carry on their shoulder, and are not nearly so erect as the women" (1930:76). As witches, however, women are said to walk bowed, to meet outside the settlements for their nightly dances and carry no baskets; in short, to withdraw to the margin of society and act without the usual self-confidence of legitimate presence.

The belly of the woman is not covered by her fibre skirts (dobe) which hang low on the hips, following the natural line of the belly and buttocks. The right side, where the skirts are tied (a routine motion of the twirling fingers as skirts are frequently changed or adjusted) remains slightly open, but it is essential to keep the thighs covered. The shape of the dobe skirts at a woman's back is a telltale sign of her degree of industriousness. My friend Kaibado explained that "when the fibres are leaping out she must be working hard, but when they hang down and form a round shape the woman is lazy". As women are breastfeeding for long periods of their lives, the erotic allure of breasts in the Western sense applies mainly to adolescent girls (gomagweine) with breasts that 'stand as if they pierce'. Today, cotton skirts are still worn low on the waist as this is 'more comfortable', and although T-shirts cover their breasts women are not particularly concerned about keeping them hidden. While cotton clothes add a heavy workload to the women's daily chores, they do not restrict their bodily expression. Moreover, as skirts and shirts cover much of the body they help to conceal early signs of pregnancy, sipoma disfigurement, and other indicators of a woman's conduct.

46 Macintyre also describes the Tubetube women's "confident bearing" (1993:56).
To conclude, women's role is ambiguous but powerful either way. The division of labour gives them the major chores of raising children and growing yams, cooperating with their husbands in everyday matters of subsistence and with their brothers in matrilineage matters and hamlet politics. Their 'work' is fully acknowledged (see also Chapter Four) as crucial for the survival of Dobu society.

Men, in contrast, are far less tied to everyday duties but have to divide their energies between their sisters and their wife's matrilineage. Their gender role includes all heavy labour of house- and canoebuilding, clearing of new gardens and cutting firewood. Men are in full charge of banana plants and occasionally go for nocturnal fishing. Many of these tasks do not occur on an everyday basis, or do not require quite as much time as the female chores. As a consequence, men tend to spend time in different hamlets and seem to enjoy longer periods of leisure than women, a fact that causes women to speak in a somewhat derogatory fashion about their 'usefulness'. However, men often act as speakers for their matrilineage, demand deference from their wives and younger sisters, and regard themselves as the dominant gender: a posturing that causes Dobu women to gossip about them as 'showing-off for nothing' (gagasa daidaita).

WHAT ARE 'MELANESIAN PERSONS'?

A concept of the person emerges from my data that is based on an interaction between the 'outer body' (etana) and the 'inner body' (sola-) in different states of consciousness (such as sleep), and in different modes of activity (such as 'work'). Some elements of the person so constituted are regarded as innate individual features, while others are the result of social interaction and personal conduct. This concept of the person is ultimately based on the notion of 'correct' behaviour in responding to the demands of standard ethical rules. The expression of thoughts and emotions is filtered and monitored according to strategic aims in the attempt to create an image of the self that is favourable in moral terms. Only witches are totally antisocial, but when a woman is in the 'mode' of witchcraft she is no longer regarded a person (tomota).

My argument stands in contrast to a recent approach to Melanesian exchange
systems that addresses the notion of 'relational personhood' from the perspective of an 'idealised Melanesia'. In *The Gender of the Gift*, Marilyn Strathern attempts to redefine the dichotomy of 'Westerner' and 'Melanesian' on the basis of several case studies from the Highlands and the Massim.\(^\text{47}\) The Melanesian person, for Strathern, is a gendered microcosm ('dividuum'), able to activate male or female aspects, act as a single person or as a group, using gender symbolism for a structuring of the world of relationships:

> The general enchainment of relations means that persons are multiply constituted. There is no presumption of an innate unity: such an identity is only created to special, transient effect. The transformation is made visible, then, as one which turns multiple into single sources of identity (1988:165).

Current debate on issues of personhood has criticised *The Gender of the Gift* as oversimplifying the differences between 'Melanesians' and 'Westerners'. Jolly claims that 'dividual' aspects are not exclusively 'Melanesian': "Do we never see persons as composites of relations? Do we not recognize agency elicited by others rather than always as the action of a motivated individual?" (1992:146). Macintyre expressed her discontent with the notion of the Melanesian person as 'partible':\(^\text{48}\)

> I reject this dichotomy and suggest that Massim cultures and Western cultures both distinguish between the person as a uniquely constituted being and the person as a relational, social being.... The representation of Massim cultures as integrative and communalistic is, I shall argue, a partial view (1995:32).

To J. Carrier, Strathern "slights the question of the historical specificity and social partibility of gift relations in Melanesia ... just as she slights the question of the social partibility of commodity relations in the West" (1992:33 n.12). Strathern writes on a highly abstract level (1988:16-18, see also Gell 1995), but as Douglas points out, "her abstracted 'Melanesian' consistently draws on a precise regional ethnography and is routinely *read* as real, to that extent endorsing the opposition

\(^{47}\) See also Battaglia for a similar perspective of 'relational persons' based on her Sabarl data (1990:11,188).

\(^{48}\) See also Douglas (1997) for a recent critique of Strathern's dichotomous use of the notions 'Western' and 'non-Western' or 'Melanesian'. 
Strathern's case studies focus on exchange as a "ritual of a kind often regarded as quintessentially constituted through 'symbolic' behavior", creating "a vantage from which it will be possible to imagine the kinds of interests that may be at stake as far as Melanesians are concerned" (1988:4). When gifts are involved, Strathern refers to exchange as a "ceremonial" or "mediated" mode, in contrast to work of production which is a mode of exchange marked by "unmediated relations", through which "one person directly affects the disposition of another towards him or her, or that person's health and growth" (1988:178-9). As such, unmediated exchange is "gift exchange without a gift" (1988:179). This dichotomy enables her to remain entirely within the domain of 'gifts' as opposed to 'commodities' (following Gregory). As 'Western' forms of production are different from 'Melanesian', she claims that 'labour' does not exist in Hagen society:

> Perhaps one should abandon the term labor altogether. If we follow the distinctions between work (purposive activity in the production process that creates use value) and labor (which is apprehended as having social value)..., one would have to say that in the Hagen case 'labor' is not an instituted category. That is, there is no objectification of work apart from its performance. It is social relations that are objectified in pigs and gardens: work cannot be measured separately from relationships (1988:160).

While the labour of 'Westerners' is directed towards the production of objects, Strathern emphasises that Hageners' work "is directed towards effectiveness in relationships" because "the products of work are expressive of the person's own mind, what she or he decides to do". As such, "[t]he mind is made visible in the context of multiple social relations with others" (1988:164).

This dichotomy, however, cannot be applied to Dobu, where persons 'work' for valuables and subsistence as well as for renown, where women grow and manage yams, men grow and manage bananas and both sexes look after (and manage) pigs and kula valuables. In fact, Dobu persons have a long tradition of 'working' for 'Western' wealth, too. It appears that a world of ethnographic difference lies between Hagen and Dobu: "What I call gifts Hageners call by a term that we would otherwise happily translate as 'things'"(Strathern 1988:136). "One person cannot 'give' work to another, in the way that a donor gives a gift (or 'thing' in the Hagen..."
language) to a recipient. Such 'things' appear to be created by transaction, not by work" (1988:163).

I also have doubts about Strathern's dichotomy between 'Westerners' and 'Melanesians'. From a Dobu perspective, the 'social value' of work is an individual effort to display good moral behaviour (see Chapter Three) as well as a 'dividual' demonstration of relatedness (see Chapter Eight). In fact, the Dobu concept of 'work' (paisewa) eclipses forms of mediated and unmediated exchange, substitution and replication (Strathern 1988:181-2) as well as gifts and commodities. As a starting point for my analysis of the Dobu concept of the person, 'work' appears as the manifestation of individual strategies, aimed at creating, maintaining or terminating relations, using bodily resources in a conscious manner. These resources are drawn from 'inner' and 'outer' dimensions of the body, they are 'individual' as well as 'dividual', 'natural' as well as 'cultural'.
Chapter Three

PATHS AND PATTERNS OF EVERYDAY EXCHANGES

Name of the gift: lema ('help'), ta'ona ('apology')

INTRODUCTION

Gifts of mutual help, called lema (or bwaga) and of 'apology', called ta'ona (literally 'we speak') are the keys to everyday exchanges. In Dobu, such gifts are typically low in value and occur within the immediate social vicinity of a person, most frequently within the hamlet of residence but also between patrilateral kin and members of the same totemic clan. Although they are 'small', these gifts are significant for a person's social standing as they reveal his or her personal qualities; it is through everyday conduct of sharing and supporting that individuals are considered to be 'good' or 'bad'. This chapter examines the ethics of interaction as they present themselves in the exchange of 'small gifts', focussing on the bonds that are manifested by relations of 'help' and on the strategies of creating and maintaining them.

The ethics of everyday exchanges favour generosity and an almost unlimited sharing of possessions. Persons are encouraged to give away food, lend tools and other possessions with or without being asked to do so. These ethics of conduct often lead to conflicting interests when persons are torn between the urge to keep, and the need to share their food, labour, drugs, and other belongings. Bambi Schieffelin reports from the Kaluli people of the Papuan Plateau, that the imperatives of giving and taking and the desire to keep for oneself are the basis of the 'central tension' in Kaluli life (1990:136). Annette Weiner identifies this tension as a universal social conundrum:

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1 See also M. Rosaldo (1980:78) and Peterson (1995:864) for similar concepts of 'sharing or hiding'.
Yet it is the paradoxes of social life that contain the seeds of first principles - those
duplicities and ambiguities that create tensions that can only be ameliorated and never
resolved. Exchange is predicated on a universal paradox - how to keep-while-giving
(1992:5).

The dominant requirement of 'custom' (bubuna Dobu) can be summarised as
'respect' (amayaba). To be a 'respectful' person (amayaba ale-) requires 'self-
discipline (alamai'ita) and 'generosity' (oboboma). I argue that these ethics are
effective in constraining a person's selfishness and in serving as strategic tools of
interaction. My understanding of the psychology of everyday life on Dobu is
generally in line with Weiner's analysis of Kiriwina:

Individuals are faced with the task of protecting their personal space from the influence
of others, while simultaneously, they may be attempting to impose their influence on
others. Out of the possibilities of wanting and needing, in a never ending scheme of
demands, an individual must act as if she or he wants nothing, needs nothing, and will
demand nothing. How a person negotiates his or her own desires with the desires of
another person is an extremely delicate undertaking (1984:164).

Gifts of 'mutual help' form individual networks based on solidarity. This solidarity
is expressed in terms of kinship, but, as previous research in the Massim has shown,
itis depends on an individual's agency to verify and make use of these links within a
wide range of possible options. Dobu individuals have a considerable amount of
flexibility and choice, in the way that Lepowsky describes for the Louisiades:

Vanatinai social collectivities, such as lineages, hamlet coresidents, speakers of a
Vanatinai dialect, or exchange partners, are unbounded. You are born to a Guau clan,
but you are not obliged to activate or strengthen reciprocal ties in your lineage or to
incur your neighbour's gratitude and indebtedness. You can move away: you can
always find other Guau, even on distant islands (or people with the same bird). Or else
you can activate land rights that come from some other connection and develop ties of
coresidence, fictive kinship, affinity, and exchange with others, who are likely to
exchange with you eventually if you give generously of your labor and your wealth

For those who do not want to move away from their hamlets, however, there is
little choice but to attempt to be judged a 'good' person. The pressure of cooperating
and sharing in order to be assessed as 'respectful', that is, generous and disciplined,
is most accentuated in the hamlet of residence, among those people who, by
definition, form a solidary unit.
The 'small gifts' of 'help' entail 'work' (paisewa) and objects for consumption and use. While the use of a borrowed tool demands a compensatory return gift and 'work' is immediately repaid with a meal (e'oasi) and the provision of betel and tobacco to maintain stamina (ni'aula), the sharing of objects of consumption is reciprocated when an appropriate occasion arises. In Sahlins' terms, 'help' is a form of gift that is based on the concept of 'generalised reciprocity' (1972:193-4); in Dobu, however, it is sometimes perceived in more balanced form as a direct compensation: for example, when a worker is fed or a borrowed fishing net is returned with a gift of fish.

**HAMLET LIFE AND THE DUTY OF 'HELP'**

Most of a person's lifetime is spent interacting within the hamlet (asa), particularly with neighbours of the same sex. During daytime, when the chores of gardening and housekeeping allow a person to enjoy leisure, people usually sit together in the shade of a veranda, supervising the smaller children, sharing betel and tobacco and talking about everyday matters such as the weather, garden work, the bad behaviour of their spouses or teenage children, or incidents of general concern (such as court cases, market days, school fund raising efforts and church activities). Almost all family life takes place in public, as the inside of the house is only used for sleeping at night and for storing one's few possessions. Each house has an extensive veranda where household members sit together in idle times and during the meals. Although some houses have a low roof that allows some privacy, family life is always subject to the gaze of neighbours (see Chapter Five).

Matrilineages (susu) are the predominate groups among hamlet residents. There are 86 matrilineages on Dobu Island according to my 1993 census. The social importance of the matrilineage has been described in numerous monographs about the region (most recently by Digim'Rina 1995:30ff,77ff). The matrilineage consists of all those who have 'drunk from the same mother's breasts' (susu-), in a factual as well as metaphorical and historical sense over generations (epata). They are internally segmented in terms of primogeniture ('big matrilineage' [susu sinabwana], 'middle matrilineage' [susu gamwana], and 'small matrilineage' [susu
Members of a matrilineage are expected to support each other unconditionally, with cross-sex siblings forming the most enduring unit of cooperation (manu'una). In practice, however, many hamlets have histories of division and separation, often caused by conflicts between brothers or sisters (matasina), resulting in the creation of branch hamlets (asa si weyalidi).

Those who live in the same hamlet are morally obliged to support each other. The Dobu term sogigi (literally: 'like teeth') refers to this communal sense; it is a metaphor that equates hamlet members with teeth belonging to one mouth, operating for the benefit of all. This ideal principle of hamlet solidarity is rarely found in practice, where interpersonal tensions have disruptive effects on everyday life. The notion of sogigi expresses the desire for living in peace and harmony, values that can only be achieved if individuals follow the ethics of communal life: respect, self-discipline and generosity.

Most of the 53 hamlets on Dobu are small, consisting of fewer than ten houses, each being the home of a nuclear family with maybe one or two extra relatives. I counted a total of 284 houses in 1993. Hamlets are typically very close to each other so that an outsider finds it hard to distinguish single hamlets within a hamlet cluster (the term used by Thune 1980). The hamlet is inhabited by people who are either members of the landowning matrilineages ('owners', toni asa), their spouses (aiyai), or the children of male 'owners' (labalaba). Spouses are expected to display a subordinate demeanour towards the 'owners', exemplified by the rule that 'in-laws must not approach their spouse's hamlet empty handed'. As a matter of 'respect' towards the 'owners', they should not raise their voices, cross the centre of the hamlet needlessly and display humble attitudes at all times.

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2 See Macintyre for a similar observation on Tubetube (1988:193).
3 M. Strathern calls these bonds 'looking after' relationships (1988:148).
4 I continue to use Fortune's term 'owners' as synonymous with toni asa. Ownership, however, is a concept that needs to be qualified. On Dobu, it means 'belonging to something' rather than 'having absolute rights over something', and only senior 'owners' who over the years have proven their personal capacities gain a high degree of authority as esa'esa or alawata.
Typically, Dobu hamlets consist of female 'owners' with their husbands, because residence is predominantly uxorilocal and matrilocal. Fortune's description of Dobu residence as ambilocal with annual shifts between the spouses' hamlets (1932:4,76) is incorrect according to my data. My 1997 survey showed that about two thirds of all marriages on Dobu were uxorilocal (for similar proportions in Me'udana see Schlesier 1983:97). One of my informants explained Fortune's statement as a result of former administrative orders that were meant to avoid quarrels between susu concerning the equal sharing of a couple's workforce. Such quarrels do occur these days, but normally they are either kept under control by temporarily moving when the husband's hamlet is preparing for a feast, or by giving kula valuables to the aggrieved matrilineage after the spouse's death at his or her bwabwale feast.

According to my observation, residence depends on several factors, depending on the actual situation within the two hamlets of the married couple. If, for example, the husband's hamlet has no adult men, he is likely to be prevailed upon either to live there or to spend a considerable amount of time helping his mothers and sisters. If, on the other hand, the wife's hamlet is short of mature women her mother would be very reluctant to let her go. Similarly, if old or sick people have to be cared for by their younger relatives, a couple has no choice but to stay in the hamlet where their help is most needed.

Another factor is the availability of resources. If either of the couple's hamlets has access to an abundance of garden land (bwa'a), good fishing reefs, or is located conveniently close to the school or other facilities (like fresh water, or hot springs for washing clothes), the decision might well be influenced by these considerations. However, ideally each couple should move between both hamlets several times during the course of their marriage, building a house inside the hamlet (asa) and making a garden on the land that belongs to the spouse's matrilineage. Yet it appears that while each spouse usually prefers to be in his or her own hamlet,

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See also Thune for a critical view of Fortune's statement that 'Dobuan' residence is alternating (1980:181). Macintyre's account of Tubetube residence reveals the same pattern that I found on Dobu (1993:54).
women manage to spend more of their lives in their hamlets than men do, a fact that points their reluctance to subordinate themselves as disempowered affines (aiyai).

A further reason for uxorilocal residence is related to the position of children. The children of resident men are in an ambiguous position. Their fathers are 'owners' who have a say in matrilineal matters, but they are not 'owners' themselves. The children of female 'owners' (also true 'owners') are their playmates, but while the children of female 'owners' call each other 'brother' or 'sister', the reciprocal term of address between cross-cousins is niba-. The difference is understood by children from about three years of age onwards, and as children lack the self-discipline and 'respect' that marks relations between adult niba-, childish quarrels can upset the mother (who is a disempowered affine) and result in divorce. In such cases, the mother would take the children back to her own hamlet. This theme is frequently to be found in myths (emwasala tubudao), suggesting that the ideal of social harmony (sogigi) is threatened by virilocal residence (see also Chapter Eight).

The ethics of exchange mirror the ideal relations of hamlet residents. Expected to co-operate 'like teeth' inside one mouth, hamlet 'owners' are under compulsion to support each other 'without even asking'. The only exception is made for yam seeds, a fact explained in terms of individual subsistence and status by Dobu informants. Children can help themselves to the possessions of anyone within their nuclear family or move to live with a maternal relative on the basis of generalised reciprocity. The normative expectation of solidarity and co-operation that forms the basis of relationships within the matrilineage, and, to a lesser degree, with members of other matrilineages in the same hamlet, does not apply to the spouses of 'owners'. Although resident affines are also expected to share their betel and tobacco with 'owners' to show 'respect', they should never be asked to do so unless the request is first directed towards their spouse, who transmits the request to his or her partner and communicates the response to his or her matrilineal kin. Likewise, affines

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6 I was once told that uxorilocal residence is preferable because it prevents 'brothers from fighting' and helps to maintain matrilineage harmony.

7 To be precise, the terms mean 'same-sex-sibling' (tasi-) and 'opposite-sex-sibling' (nu'u-).
cannot ask 'owners' for anything unless by using their spouses as proxy to present their plea. This rule of 'respect' emphasises the marginal status of 'those-resulting-from-marriage' (to use Fortune's term), defining them as supporters of their households who have to give proof of their good character by 'making their spouse's matriline happy'. This rule relaxes as time goes by, and senior affines who have shown 'respect' to their spouse's matrilineage for many years gradually gain a status that approaches that of 'owners'.

The hamlet, it follows, is the place of solidarity, or quasi-unrestricted sharing, of 'caring' relationships and co-operative action. As the term sogigi suggests, its residents are bound by the ethic of mutual dependence and support. In practice, every married adult lives for some time as a resident in a different hamlet, either as a dominant 'owner' or as a subordinate affine. The way a person responds to these imperatives gives evidence of his or her character and social skills.

**OPTIONS OF SUPPORT**

In contrast to everyday hamlet life which obliges if not forces residents to co-operate, relations between people of the same totemic clan (manua) and between paternal kin depend on personal initiative. It is positively valued to maintain relations of 'help' that are based on such links, creating individual networks of mutual support (see also Chapter Eight), but there is a considerable degree of choice.

On Dobu, kinship terminology is bilateral as long as one's father (or 'male care giver') is alive, so that father's brothers (also called 'father', tama-) are terminologically married to 'mothers' (sina-), their children being addressed as 'siblings' (tasi- and nu'u-). The diagram below shows the links that allow a person to relate to paternal cousins as 'siblings' in spite of the fact that they belong to different matrilineages. While a man's death restructures the relation of his matrilineage with his children into hierarchical and morally restricted forms (see

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8 Senior affines of high standing can even act as leaders of a hamlet, as I show in Chapter Eight. Until about the 1960s, exchanges between a couple's hamlets were the key to their social position as affines. See appendix 3 for a list of 'names of gifts' for such affinal exchanges.
Chapter Eight), his brother's children continue to provide options of support with other matrilineages that are based on notions of equality. Similarly, grandparents, (tubu-, MF, FF) are supported and would give support if a relationship of 'help' has been established. This system ends with the second ascending generation as great grandparents are termed 'born again' (tubua limana), indicating that there is 'no kin relation'. Any patrilateral relation that goes further is called to'umala (stranger).

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Diagram 4: Bilateral kinship terms

I would argue that, generally speaking, men add breadth to the kinship system while women provide depth through descent, thereby creating a form of social structure based on the concept that matrilineages exchange men. As terminological siblings (also called 'cousin brothers and sisters' or 'uncles' when speaking in English), the children of brothers are 'owners' in different hamlets and can provide access to resources if there are established relations of 'help' between them. They are labalaba with respect to the same hamlet and might have co-resided for some time during their childhood. I was told that it is often on the basis of childhood experiences of friendship that supportive relationships are maintained in adult

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9 See Kelly (1968), however, for a structuralist perspective of the exchange of women on Dobu based on Lévi-Strauss (1949).
years. The diagram below shows how these optional networks are legitimised as links between 'brothers' and 'sisters'.

![Diagram 5: Exchange of men](image)

The bird clan (*manua*)

Patrilateral relations of exchange, however, are dependent on the quality of the parent's marriage. If it ends in divorce, or if the father's matrilineage is not interested in creating close ties with his children for any reason, these links will not be available. For this reason, people may state that they prefer to invest in supportive relationships with persons who are related to them by belonging to the same 'bird' clan (*manua*). The totemic classification into bird clans is typical of the Massim area (see, for example, Young 1991c:380ff). As stated in Chapter Two, people on Dobu also claim that the pattern of lines in the palm of a person's hands gives evidence of his or her totemic clan.¹⁰ I could not see any proof of this visual connection myself, but the fact that the totem is perceived as being inscribed on the skin is evidence of its 'naturalness' as inherited through matrilineal descent. It is a body part which cannot be changed; *nima-* ('hand' plus possessive suffix) can be

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¹⁰ Dobu people state that the knowledge of determining one's clan by looking at the palm lines is more elaborate on Kiriwina. See also Schlesier for a more detailed analysis of palm lines in Me'udana (1983:26-7). Macintyre reports that her palm lines served as a *post hoc* explanation for her adoption into the *magisubu* clan (1993:51).
used synonymously with *i-manua* (possessive alienable deictic stem plus 'bird'). I did not find any evidence for additional totemic classifications (fishes, trees) that were reported by Fortune (1932:36,228). While this system of classification assumes 'natural', automatic links between individuals, it is through relations of 'help' that such links are activated.

The clan is connected to land (though less specifically than the matrilineage which has marked boundaries), giving options of creating links that can be used to legitimise a person's adoption and inheritance. In the past, people of the same clan were expected not to kill and eat one another (see Bromilow 1910: 475), while exchange partners in the *kula* were preferably from the same clan (Macintyre and Young 1982:219). Every hamlet maintains links of mutual help for mortuary ritual with at least one 'sister hamlet' (see also Macintyre 1983a:32, for Tubetube).

People of the same clan are supposed to support each other in matters related to land, such as temporary *usufructus* and gardening, hamlet sites, burial grounds, and inheritance in case of the extinction of a matrilineage (*sumwamwasa*). It is for this reason that clan exogamy is encouraged, because affinal relations carry restrictions in terms of land use after the death of a spouse (see Chapter Eight). Clan members can emphasise their closeness by using matrilineal kinship terms, expressing a general feeling that 'they are the same' (*leleleya*). If such ideology is deployed, clan members accept the responsibility of mutual 'help' that is typical for matrilineal relatives. This support consists of occasional exchanges of 'small gifts' and help in gardening or fishing ('work', *paisewa*); it can be requested and is repaid when the opportunity arises under the principle of generalised reciprocity. The ethics of exchange allow considerable freedom of choice as to the degree of co-operation and networking at the clan level, but it is regarded as a personal fault to be entirely negligent of such links. Once established, personal networks between members of the same clan can be highly beneficial as they may lead to the use of garden land and even to adoption as a full member of another matrilineage. The Dobu expression 'work sets the rule' (*paisewa i loiloina*) points to this practice, to the option of detaching oneself from one's own matrilineage and becoming a member.
of another one of the same clan.\textsuperscript{11}

The clans are divided into two notional categories, a fact that was overlooked by Fortune (1932:30ff).\textsuperscript{12} This division is related to the nesting habit of the clan birds, that is, whether they build tree nests or dwell in holes. Relating to this difference is the idea that only people of corresponding clans should inhabit the same hamlet, because 'their ways' are the same (\textit{idi bubuna leleleya}). In fact, of all Dobu Island, only in the hamlet of Losina (where I lived), were two clans of opposite nesting habits co-residing, namely \textit{gewala} (parroquet) and \textit{magisubu} (sea eagle). As Fortune mentions only the \textit{gewala} clan as the 'owners' of Losina (1932:32), there is reason to suppose there was a late acquisition of land by members of \textit{magisubu} clan. In fact, when I mentioned the case of Losina, my informants said that it demonstrated the problems caused by 'different birds' (\textit{mali manua}) sharing the one hamlet. Conflicts between the totemic groups of Losina were frequent and often escalated into public court cases.

\textbf{Table 4: Clans on Dobu Island}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan (\textit{manua}) and type of nest</th>
<th>Second name</th>
<th>Name of clan members</th>
<th>English (Fortune 1932:32)</th>
<th>\textit{susu} on Dobu (total: 86)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textit{bunebune} - nest</td>
<td>malasi</td>
<td>yowana</td>
<td>White Pigeon</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{kaukau} - nest</td>
<td></td>
<td>bwaibwai</td>
<td>Crow</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{magisubu} - nest</td>
<td></td>
<td>magisubu</td>
<td>Brown Eagle</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{gewala} - hole</td>
<td></td>
<td>gegela</td>
<td>Parroquet</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{kanagala} - hole</td>
<td></td>
<td>waigali</td>
<td>Green Parrot</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{keyoi} - hole</td>
<td>koki\textsuperscript{13}</td>
<td>wada'eya</td>
<td>White Cockatoo</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Nest: n=52; Hole: n=34}

\textsuperscript{11} In this context, 'work' refers to participation in mortuary feasting (see Chapter Eight).

\textsuperscript{12} But see Thune (1980:143); Young (1993:9-10) for Normanby Island.

\textsuperscript{13} This seems to be a \textit{Tok Pisin} term.
Those who 'stand behind' (*muli*)

As I have shown so far, individuals have a range of options for creating relations of support with people from different matrilineages, enabling them to gain access to the resources of different hamlets. It is up to the individual to establish relationships that can be useful in the future. The term for all these supporters is *muli*, literally 'followers' or 'those who stand behind'. A person's *muli* can often secure the support of his or her fellow hamlet dwellers, too. It is the network of *muli* relationships, build on personal relationships of 'help', that enables a matrilineage (or hamlet) to undertake major mortuary feasts requiring an accumulation of wealth far beyond the limits of its own capacities, as each person (except for true siblings) has a different set of *muli* relations that combine to form a dense network of support. The diagram below summarises a person's options of creating such links realised through relationships of mutual 'help' as are manifested by the exchange of 'small gifts'.

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14 See also Bourdieu's distinction between "official" and "practical" kin (1977:34ff).
The intensity and reliability of muli relationships depends on individual capacities and aspirations. Today, the network of relationships can be further extended thanks to links that are based on individual friendships with 'strangers' (to'umala), formed through participation in Christian fellowships, sport teams, secondary schools or during a period of working abroad. Yet limits are clearly set by the amount of 'help' (lema) that a person can make available. If someone maintains only loose links with many different places, he or she is perceived as behaving suspiciously and may be scolded for wasting resources; they may be accused of having 'too many friends'.

ETHICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The ethics of 'respect' (amayaba), 'self-discipline' (alamai'ita), and generosity (oboboma) are the keys to appropriate behaviour in everyday exchanges. 'Respect'

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15 This censorious attitude put an emotional burden on my own field work.
16 For a similar perspective from Goodenough Bay see Kahn (1980:102ff).
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refers to the individual's position in terms of hierarchy. It is shown by expressing one's inferiority by means of body language, avoidance of names, and offering 'small gifts' whenever possible. In general, older persons and affines have to be shown 'respect' at all times. 'Respect' is also displayed by deference expressed in spatial terms when visiting someone's hamlet. A guest should decline to sit on the veranda of a house and rather ask for a coarse mat (*bubula*) to sit on in front of the veranda. He or she should avoid walking around within the hamlet compound, should ask for a guide to the toilet area and keep the visit as short as possible.

Personal names are rarely used to a person's face as a matter of respect because they are conceptualised as the property of a matrilineage and mentioning them in front of the true 'owners' is regarded as imposing, disrespectful and tantamount to stealing something. They are avoided by using kin terms, nicknames, the place of one's hamlet, or other terms of reference, such as 'my friend' (*gosiagu* or *peleni*), 'senior man' (*inapwana*), 'senior woman' (*kaiyale*), 'child' (*gwama*), 'white-skinned one' (*dimdim*) and so forth.

The ethic of 'self-discipline' (*alamai'ita*) enjoins that inner feelings are kept to oneself, no matter whether they are valued negatively, such as greed, lust, anger, pride, envy, shame, or positively, such as happiness, sympathy, or the feeling of being 'just right and filled up with nice food'. It is impolite in most situations to mention inner feelings. If reprimanded or scolded by someone with more prestige it is appropriate to 'just stay quiet' (*nigeya 'i da 'ona*). The correct attitude of respect requires masking one's feelings and simply following orders. The self-discipline

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17 There are three types of mats, *bubula* being the roughest. It is quickly woven out of a coconut leaf and also used to build shelters, like the enclosure for a widow or widower, the drummers at the *dugumalala* dance, and today for video displays. The other types of mats are woven from bleached pandanus leaves, *sita nanagara* for everyday use and *sita fiti* as a "fine mat". Visitors are usually seated on new *sita* mats if they do not want to sit on the veranda.

18 Children are usually given a name from their matrilineage that the father cannot mention. He gives them a second name which might be from his matrilineage and hence to be used only by him and his matrilineage. If the child has been given a name from his father's side he or she might become his replacement (*lo'epa'elu*) after his death. However, this option depends on the agreement of the two matrilineages concerned.

19 The Story of 'Amayaba and Gagasa' (see appendix 2) provides a good example. This ethic might have contributed to Fortune's impression of Dobuans as being "dour" (1932:250).
needed to show 'respect' is seen as a personal virtue and senior people often test youths' capacity to 'hold back' before considering them as their heirs.

Behaving correctly in everyday exchanges, it appears, is a difficult task. People have to decide how to share their limited resources in order to show 'respect' even if this requires self-sacrifice (alamai'ita). They are also required to follow the ethic of 'generosity' (oboboma) by freely offering others a share, phrasing the offer in a way that is inoffensive. A woman who offers cooked food to someone should do so by calling out: "Eh, u mai, amu masula gete!" (Eh, come here and get your food!). If she does this frequently, she will be praised as lobwau alena (her characteristic is calling others to receive a share'). Similarly, someone who has just harvested betelnuts and distributes a lot of them on his way home, or a man who lives at his wife's place and often provides his affines with betelnuts and tobacco, is praised as eguyai alena ('his characteristic is sharing'). The act is carried out by calling a child from the hamlet to come to the path (into neutral territory, that is) and to hand over the gift with the words: "U ta be 'inapwana 'u ebwa'ei aana magi" ('Go and give these betelnuts to the senior man').

The appropriate attitude of everyday exchanges is one of voluntary giving without any undertone of superiority or anger. It should be done in a friendly tone, with the head lowered, expressing sympathy and 'respect' towards the other, a humble gesture rather than a display of wealth which would be interpreted as 'showing-off' (gagasa). People who do not offer their betelnuts, quality food and tobacco acquire notoriety as being stingy (deba'ose).20 Those who are apt to pay visits when food is being cooked, betelnuts being harvested, or when other resources are to be divided amongst hamlet members (such as when a dugong has been speared or a group of men has fished with nets) become the subjects of gossip for being greedy (giepweula), even if they do not ask for a gift, as they force the ethic of generosity by their sheer presence.21 Everyday exchanges are typically performed as 'demand

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20 Roheim also discusses notions of stinginess and wealthiness in Duau (1950a:180).

21 See also Battaglia for a discussion of the notion of prospective shame on Sabarl in relation to demand sharing and as "working against the collapse of critical cultural distinctions" such as seniority (1990:136ff).
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sharing', a practice that requires strategies of asking for and denying gifts while remaining within the realm of 'respect'. When asked, Dobu informants often state that it is good to follow these rules because only then one can be 'happy' (gwauso'ala).

Happiness, in this sense, is the result of personal and social ease, a state that can only occur when the balance between giving and keeping is maintained and a person is comfortable in his or her relations of 'help', manifested in the exchange of 'small gifts'. The feeling of contentment, of relaxed happiness might best be described in terms of the simple pleasures of life: basking in the morning sun (eyala), a delightful way to shake off the coldness of the night, sitting in a slight breeze on a hot day (siwalowa), seeing a full moon lighting up the hamlet, a gentle rain after the planting of the yams, or a magnificent sunrise after a long night of feasting. In terms of social life, images of joyful family life come to mind, of parents or peers sitting and sharing food and betelnuts with their children, sending them on little missions to the neighbours or into the kitchen, watching the progress of their babies and telling stories about everyday incidents. In terms of negative definitions, happiness means the absence of tension and anxiety, bodily pain, interpersonal conflicts and threats. It also includes a notion of 'good conscience' (a-lotona bobo'a- in the sense of 'good behaviour', i- bubuna bobo'a-) or a 'good name' (i- ale bobo'a-). A happy person is healthy, has enough food and objects of wealth and a manageable number of reliable relatives, friends and exchange partners.

The word for happiness (gwauso'ala) is related to the spine (gwaau) that is strong and capable of bearing ('ala) the body upright. The spine is also used metaphorically in the word for laziness (gwaugu'toyase), literally 'my spine is stiff', and in the word for excitement (gwau'a'ala), literally 'the spine is keen to carry its weight'. A happy person is strong, stands straight in a dignified manner, and works hard with a smile on the face. No wonder that happiness (gwauso'ala) is a welcome

22 The latter part of the word, so'ala, has been translated as "fury" or "chaos" in connection with the word for anger, gamwaso'ala (Edoni 1989:37). But my Dobu informants denied this etymology.
character trait. In such cases people comment on the person as "tauna gwauso'ala alena" (he or she has a happy character), implying that he or she easily returns to a happy state after an upsetting event. Happiness and friendship can be expressed by a certain way of laughing that ends with an exclamation 'hai' in a higher pitch. This is called losaila (literally 'to tie it up' or 'to wind it up'). Happiness in women is associated with the sound of cheerful chatter with losaila exclamations; it is characteristic of youths on the beach at sunset, or of hamlet sisters on a shaded platform watching their toddlers play.

Happiness is recognised as an emotion, attitude, character trait and social skill, a telling sign that a person adheres to the principal ethics. A person who bears no grudges when asked for a small gift, who is willing to form friendships is praised as oboboma alena, a genuinely generous character. A happy person can suffer bodily pain and frustrations, share food and remain affable while hungry, all reasons to praise his or her alamai'ita (self-discipline). A young, happy person is in a better position to cultivate strong ties with senior people by giving them 'small gifts' with a happy face and an appropriately friendly and obedient demeanour when interacting with them. This kind of conduct shows 'respect'. When old, a happy man (esa'esa) or woman (alawata) is the living proof of success in life: his or her exchange network would have been built on ties created in a generous manner, in accord with the ethics of the exchange of 'small gifts'.

STRATEGIES OF SHARING AND HIDING

Early in the morning, the teenage daughter of my friend would come to my house and call through the sago walls: "Susanna, my mum asks if you have some sugar (cooking oil, tea leaf, flour, detergent) for her?" (Susanna, sinagu aene eisa ada sugar gidalina?) I used to give her some, but after a couple of weeks I asked her if she did not feel ashamed to come and ask for these things every day. She nodded but said she was asking on behalf of her mother hence only doing what she was told to do. The next morning she came over again, this time saying: "Susanna, the greedy one asks for some flour!" (Susanna, giepwe'ula nina aene eisa ada palaua gidalina?) We both laughed (field notes).

It is far more acceptable to exchange items of consumption, especially betel
ingredients, tobacco and food. I have elsewhere analysed the importance of betel as a symbolic tool of social interaction in Melanesia (Kuehling 1989). Giving a betelnut or a piece of tobacco to someone can have many different meanings on Dobu, depending on the social context. To give a few examples:

- A gift of friendship *(oboboma)*, causing the recipient to feel gratitude and pleasure, and the giver to feel good in spite of the material loss, through an investment in a future relationship.

- A gift out of anger *(ta'ona)*, to humiliate the recipient in front of others by emphasising an inequality of resources and thus intending to cause a reaction of shame and anger.

- An apologetic gift *(ta'ona)*, meant to indicate shame on the part of the giver, causing the recipient to feel superior and reducing his or her anger.

- A gift to demonstrate superiority *(gagasa)*, when the giver hands the tobacco over in public, so that the recipient has to share it with everybody and thus in fact receives very little. This makes the giver feel generous and proud, but the recipient feels frustration and even anger as he is forced into the role of distributor.

- A gift to express gratitude for previously given help *(lema, lokagutoki, loeyawasina, lo'epa'ala or maisa, ni'aula)*, releasing the burden of a debt on the giver's side and causing emotional reactions according to the recipient's expectations (depending on the sufficiency of the repayment).

- A gift to express sexual desire *(gwaune)*, either towards the recipient's daughter if given by an adolescent boy to her parents, or towards a woman when passed over in secret. In the latter case, the tobacco might contain some 'love magic' to enhance the effect that the gift is supposed to have on the recipient.

- A gift to ask for betrothal, given to the parents of a girl, to be distributed amongst all hamlet dwellers and chewed if they agree to allow the girl to marry the son of the givers. This gift of betelnuts is wrapped up and accordingly called *magi nugwa* (wrapped betelnut). If it is not opened and consumed but sent back to the boy's parents, there will be no marriage; but it is not an insult to refuse this gift.

Suspicion of adultery (or other clandestine acts) is likely to arise if cross-sex gifts of betelnuts or tobacco are made too frequently, or if a 'stranger' *(to'umala)* seems

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23 Battaglia describes elaborate strategies of Sabarl people to ask her for a share of tobacco (1990:75-6).
too keen to part with a betelnut. In fact, I was often told not to chew the betelnuts that I was given by certain women. I had to throw them away, and even in the season of 'betelnut famine' (magi ana ala'a'a) my companions did the same. The fear of being killed by poison or magic imbued in the betelnut was even greater than the desire to chew.

Asking for a share of food is a far more delicate issue. While it is gracious to offer a plate of cooked food as long as it contains some protein (fish or pork), it is equally appropriate to politely refuse such a gift: "O kagutoki, ni'atu ya 'ai. Gamwagu i paua." (Oh thank you, but I have eaten already. My stomach is full.) It can be insulting to offer food, especially when there is reason to interpret it as a way of referring to the recipient's inability to feed his or her family. While the exchange of large yams (bebai) forms an important part of feasting events, people talk derogatively about individuals who accept cooked food from anyone not matrilineally related. According to Fortune, the planet Venus is called the 'root of greed' because it rises early in the evening (when every household is preparing dinner) and peeps into people's cooking pots (1932:228). Although I did not hear this particular observation, it is certainly true that such behaviour would immediately stigmatise a person as greedy and rude, perhaps also as a poor gardener who lacks a network of supporters.

Edward Schieffelin stated that relationships are not only expressed but also validated and developed through food exchanges (1976:63); food is the appropriate medium for communicating personal sentiment because it is the basis of human life: "Food is closely bound up with conceptions of birth and death, personal strength, sexuality, illness, and the unseen" (1976:64). In Dobu, informal food exchanges take place as 'small gifts' of cooked food within the matrilineage only. They are in contrast to formalised exchanges of raw yams (bebai) that are mainly used to express relatedness and support (lema). These 'Big Gifts' will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Men often go fishing at night. If they catch a big fish they are expected to share it amongst fellow hamlet dwellers before any surplus is taken to the market. The
distribution follows an individual pattern according to previous help and gifts received. Stingy as well as greedy people's households are placed at the end of the distribution and receive only small shares or nothing at all. Sometimes a man is forced to go fishing so as to distribute his catch and avoid being stigmatised. Similarly, the meals that are provided for all helpers (ni'aula) after the preparation of a new garden have to be carefully balanced. Such meals should contain some rice and tinned fish or meat, tea with sugar should be served afterwards, and some tobacco and betelnuts also have to be distributed. The helpers will talk about stinginess if the meal was too meagre, bearing in mind the resources of the provisioning family, and in addition to gossip there might be fewer helpers during the next season. On the other hand, the host also has to avoid 'showing-off' too much wealth, as this would make it hard for the helpers to reciprocate when their gardens are prepared. It is necessary to find a balance which avoids stinginess (deba'ose), greed (giepwe'ula or dagegela) and arrogance (gagasa), and gives instead an impression of true generosity – oboboma.

The concept of demand sharing has most recently been discussed by Peterson (1995) based on his studies among the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land. He points out that altruistic giving rarely occurs among Yolngu because the notion of generosity is not valued as positively as in Western societies. Peterson relates the practice of demand sharing to an 'egalitarian logic' that puts the giver in a higher position than the receiver, thereby creating 'inequality by debt' that puts the debtor on his or her best behaviour (1995:867). In this sense, demand sharing can be understood as a 'social gift' that elevates the giver rather than as an act of generosity which satisfies the receiver through the goods he is given.

The ethics of demand sharing on Dobu are more complex than in Peterson's Aboriginal case. As individuals must behave according to the ethics of 'respect', 'self-discipline' and 'generosity' they often cannot refuse to share and are left with the vague promise of a return gift that might never be made. Such cases cause feelings of resentment that cannot be uttered as a matter of 'respect' and because it would show a lack of self-discipline and generosity. In myths, people who demand too much are doomed to die, as is nicely documented in stories about the stupid and
greedy giant Tolokeketa, a cannibal who is terrified of dogs. In all versions he dies in the end.24 This particular story is well known in Dobu and often told as a past-time in the evenings:

Two children went and collected sea food every day. They brought their yams and a clay pot with them and cooked their food on the beach. Tolokeketa smelled the food and approached the children. "Show me what you are cooking!" he demanded. He smelled the pot and said: "This food is not good!" Then he quickly ate it all by himself. The same thing happened every day and the children became very upset and hungry. It went on like this for some time until the children grew really tired of Tolokeketa. They took a small dog with them and when the giant approached them, demanding their food, the dog barked and Tolokeketa ran away in fright. The children followed him to his house, where he was hiding with his wife. They had collected a lot of a grass called *weniawynuna* that looks like a small dog's tail and fixed it all around the house. Tolokeketa and his wife wanted to leave after some time, but the grass was moving in the wind. They believed that their house was surrounded by dogs and did not dare to go outside. They could not go to the toilet nor could they get food and so they starved to death. When they were dead, the children came back and burned the house.

In an exaggerated way, this story sheds light on the etiquette of asking. Firstly, it is wrong to demand too much and too frequently. Secondly, children should not be obliged to share as they are not fully responsible for what they have and what they do. To a certain degree, they are allowed to be greedy and selfish, to keep what they have and to refuse to share amongst themselves. The children could not refuse Tolokeketa's demand for reasons of politeness towards older persons (*amayaba*) and they had to control (*alamai'ita*) their anger and hunger while watching him eat all their food. Eventually they took their apt revenge, not only getting rid of the uninvited guest at their meals, but punishing the ogre Tolokeketa and his wife by starving them to death.

The behaviour of the two children in cooking all their fish on the beach and attempting to eat it by themselves without sharing it with their households is not regarded as morally wrong, but when they were discovered by Tolokeketa they were forced to share. Bambi Schieffelin describes similar conduct among Kaluli:

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24 He is said to be originally from Sanaroa Island though his bones and fireplace can still be seen at a place on the South of Fergusson Island.
"Eating stealthily and alone is not social and is negatively evaluated, but it happens. What really matters is not getting caught doing it" (1990:164). I criticised our hamlet children's greedy behaviour during a feast, when they heaped as much food as they possibly could onto their plates only to take most of it back to their houses, so that those children who had smaller plates received less food and those who did not rush to grab the choicest pieces were left without pork. The response of the adults was uniform: "Yes, that is their cold food (kulaya) for later, what is wrong with that?" (O, nate adi kulaya be ma'etamo si e'ai. Nigeya wate bubuna to'umalina).

In line with this principle, children are often sent to do the shopping, to ask neighbours for betelnuts, sugar, tea and kerosene. For them it is less shameful to ask, even if they are already too old to be permitted to display greediness, because they do so in a parent's name ("Sorry, my mum asks for a little sugar for our tea tonight"). The derogatory terms for one who asks too much (sida alena, giepwe'ula, dagegela) are not used of children. To send a child is also a way of allowing room for a denial of the plea by telling a small lie ('Sorry, already finished!' Sori, ni'atu i gumwalal). Apart from these reasons, children are also sent because the adults are either too busy preparing the dinner or hosting guests, or simply too tired to go and ask around.

Objects of use value like canoes (waga), fishing nets (gomana), tools for gardening or woodwork, shoes and other clothes, bags and baskets, are normally owned by each household and are not shared on an everyday basis. When a need for such objects cannot be met by one's own household, it is appropriate to ask a member of one's matrilineage for it. If someone borrows a canoe, a favour called wagasaune, it is good manners to compensate the owner with a return gift called 'to wash the canoe' (loutui waga), consisting of a share of the fish that was caught, or the food that was transported when it was borrowed. Similarly, if someone borrows a fishing net (loutui gomana), the resulting gift is called gomanasaune. The owner of a canoe or fishing net normally worries about the good care of his possession when lending it out, because he cannot expect a replacement if something is broken. For the same
reason, modern tools, dinghies, clothes or shoes are preferably not lent out at all.\textsuperscript{25} When in the field I learned quickly that it is easy to learn how to give away but more difficult to keep things for oneself. The only way to keep desired objects is to avoid being asked for them. There are different strategies to avoid being asked to share without breaking the ethical requirement of generosity, because to refuse is a delicate matter and has to be done very subtly. Adults feel ashamed when they ask for something and the shame can grow into acute embarrassment if the request is rejected in an inappropriate way. This embarrassment will then almost certainly turn into anger (\textit{gamwaso'ala}), which cannot be displayed in front of the person (\textit{alamai'ita}), but will generate gossip (\textit{lomugimugi}) about stinginess (\textit{deba'ose}) and lack of respect (\textit{amayaba}). As a result one can expect revenge through witchcraft or sorcery.

When I stayed in Esa'ala to recuperate from an attack of malaria, the neighbours of the German volunteer constantly begged him for goods and betelnuts. One day I became really annoyed about this and used a very strong expression in reply to the neighbour's request for sugar: "\textit{O'ata o'ata} (I feel disturbed, I am sick of it)". I was surprised, but this word effectively stopped her from begging altogether. She must have realised that I was familiar with the propriety of everyday exchange and subsequently felt too ashamed to misbehave (field notes).

This example shows that there are limits to demand sharing and methods to avoid it, but I would not have risked uttering this rejection while on Dobu, fearing suppressed hostility and negative effects on my work due to the likely response that I was rejecting the person and not the demand. It would also have created the impression that I was a person who lacked the virtues of generosity and self-discipline, a greedy \textit{dimdim} without 'respect'. While on Dobu, I tried to adhere to the ethics and I learned practical methods of hiding wealth.

Shopping is preferably done after sunset when purchased goods can be concealed under a T-shirt. This is not a recent ploy, as women used to pack the more desirable garden crops at the bottom of their baskets, using smaller yams or a cover of banana

\textsuperscript{25} See Kulick for a similar observation in the Sepik area (1992:48).
leaves on top. Similarly, handbags normally have two small side pockets (called tana natuna, literally 'the child of the bag') that can be used to hide items like tobacco and betel ingredients. Hiding can also be practiced by putting a small amount into a second container which can then be shown to anyone asking: "Sorry but I only have this little bit and cannot share it!" (Sori sinabwana ta gidalina namo, u ita nate ana sinabwamol) As a further strategy, it can be claimed that the spare sugar, kerosene, tobacco has been given to a particular, respectable elder who had asked earlier.

Many times when I gave something nice to a friend, the watch, T-shirt, laplap or whatever, was hurriedly taken home and I never saw it used, although teenagers especially are very keen to possess shoes, fancy jackets, hair pins, jewellery, blue jeans, and black T-shirts. They actually did wear these things, but only at night for disco parties. At first I was amazed that Dobu youth put on so many clothes for a dance while I would prefer to undress to a certain extent because of the heat of the tropical night as well as for reasons of fashion. Later I understood that the occasion of a dance is the only legitimate one for them to display all their nice gear. To wear such clothes in daytime would be 'showing-off' (gagasa), an attitude which is morally acceptable only among small children. Toddlers are said to be 'gagasa aledi' (their habit is to show-off) when they proudly show their tricks. When a child reaches an age where she or he can talk, however, any such behaviour is stopped with a harsh voice: "Ya, gagasa tua!" ('Hey, stop showing off!')

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26 See Foster for a similar practice among the Tanga in New Ireland (1993:25); also Kahn (1986:42-44).
27 I admit this was my favourite line while in the field.
28 Laplap is the Tok Pisin term for loin cloth.
29 Lutz observed a similar attitude on Ifaluk: "The person who leaves valuable possessions out in view of visitors is to blame when someone becomes 'excited/jealous' (bosu) as an inevitable result. The host in such a case would be criticized by saying that he or she was 'showing off' (gabosu), or, literally, 'causing excitement/jealousy'" (1988:103).
30 One evening, as I walked on the beach of Losina I made some funny jumps out of a sudden joy of life. Landing on a sharp rock, I lost one of my toe nails. The pain as well as the overall reaction were sobering: "E'ina, gagasa manuna!" (That serves you right for showing off!).
The house is an almost perfect hiding place because it should never be entered by anyone but its inhabitants. A less safe place where goods are often hidden is the kitchen, usually a separate hut next to the house. Inside the kitchen, cutlery and cooking tools are stored as well as empty baskets (*kodo gaigai*) that were received at a mortuary exchange and have to be refilled and returned at some later stage as *maisa* or *aga* (return gift). Small objects, like tobacco, are preferably hidden underneath the layers of the sago roof in either house or kitchen. Another method of hiding is to claim that the desired object does not belong to oneself and hence cannot be shared. This tactic is commonly used for pigs if they are to be sold for money (*mani bawena*) instead of being exchanged with delayed reciprocity (*utua bawena*). A typical refusal to lend a pig for a feast is, therefore: "I am really sorry. This pig belongs to my brother/son/father, it is 'his market' (*ina maketi*) and I have to get this amount of money for it".

Since my departure I have received many letters from Dobu friends, almost all of them ending with a request to send some gifts, such as clothes, money, or a watch. Communication *per se* for the sake of keeping in touch and exchanging news is a foreign concept, just as most communications on Dobu begin with a mutual request for ingredients for betel chewing. One of my friends finally wrote that since I had met all his requests he would now stop writing to me, which he did. As I acted as a 'true sister' (*tasi ai'ailina*) to another friend, she wrote that she would not feel ashamed to ask me for things and that she would write letters to me "until the day I die" (*ana laba mwamwasa*). My generosity was proven through meeting many such requests. I am still not very skilled in hiding, but I know that my presents (*lema*) are remembered in order to be returned in different ways if I should ever pay another visit to Dobu.

**BEHIND THE FAÇADE - CONFLICT AND CONSOLIDATION**

Everyday life on Dobu tests a person's social skills in co-operating within the network of support. Required to be generous and self-disciplined, individuals constantly face the difficulty of obligatory sharing and the desire to keep for oneself. The way a person acts in everyday exchanges gives evidence of her or his
character, while at the same time such conduct is also used to express interpersonal
tensions that are caused by incidents only marginally related to exchanges. As it is
inappropriate to mention one's inner feelings (of sexual jealousy, for example),
exchange conduct is often used as a rhetorical way of criticising someone. In this
light, it is even more important to have an immaculate record of being helpful and
friendly, of having the stamina to suffer inconvenience without complaint. If a
person disrupts the peaceful façade of hamlet life by being openly aggressive
(gamwaso'ala), by gossiping (lomugimugi), by committing adultery (sogala), such
acts are usually interpreted as revealing a lack of self-discipline. They are openly
criticised in terms of bad conduct in exchanges: as greediness, stinginess, laziness,
or selfishness.\(^\text{31}\)

Sahlins identified the importance of 'diplomacy' in exchange: "In the absence of
external guarantees, as of a Sovereign Power, peace must be otherwise secured: ...
most significantly, by the terms of exchange itself. The economic ratio is a
diplomatic manoeuvre" (1972:302). As individuals are not equally skilled
diplomats, or fail in their attempts to gain benefit from an exchange event, the
concept of compensation remains as a way to solve a conflict. In regards to material
objects, compensation can be granted with a replacement of the loss. When personal
feelings have been hurt, a symbolic apology is needed as a compensation.

The apologetic gift on Dobu is called ta'ona (literally 'we speak'). The ta'ona gift
clarifies the positions of parties to a conflict and determines the person who has to
apologise. It puts an official end to a dispute or quarrel, and it is only when this
settlement does not take place, when silence and conspicuous friendliness are the
overt signs of conflict, that sorcery and witchcraft are expected to be employed for
retribution (see also Chapter Five). As such, the 'small gifts' of ta'ona can improve
social relationships and restore one's good reputation and peace of mind.

Fortune minted the image of 'the Dobuan' as "individualistic and quarrelsome"

\(^{31}\) A lazy woman can be referred to as to'abisida (literally, 'person-to-build-requests'), an
interesting term if compared to the word for an industrious woman, to'abi'uma (person-to-build-
yam-seeds); see also Bromilow (1910:472-3).
Yet, according to my observations, overt conflicts are rare, as is physical violence. Communal life, however, naturally generates and sustains a plethora of conflicts. As criticism is usually phrased in terms of exchange conduct, strategies of reconciliation also require gifts to be made as an appropriate form of apology. The most common way of apologising between people who are engaged in a relationship of mutual 'help' is by giving ta'ona. While its literal meaning suggests a process of speaking about a problem, talk usually remains at the edge of the underlying source of conflict, on the level of conduct in everyday exchanges. Ta'ona often succeeds, however, in defusing tension by satisfying an offended person with an apology and a gift.

Rather than freely discussing interpersonal problems, people use ta'ona gifts to express either anger or apology. As in Kiriwina, "objects are used to avoid 'hard words'" (Weiner 1984:172). The following account gives an example of the way such gifts are presented.

Moni had asked me for some tobacco, as she wanted to clear the air between herself and a senior affine (Kaibado). He seemed to be sulky for a few weeks after she had made some silly comments regarding his asking me for tobacco. She had made these comments when she was disappointed that I had given the last of my supply to him and not to her. But he had not reacted at all, merely signalled through his withdrawal that he was angry. I stood at some distance when she approached him on his veranda, and watched her very politely hand over the gift of tobacco and mutter a few phrases. Then she left him, knowing that his anger would cool when smoking the tobacco. He told me afterwards that Moni had said she was sorry for talking about him, and that she wished to (apologise) ta'ona with the gift of tobacco. Proudly he added that she was scared of his anger because he was a knowledgeable man (in terms of sorcery, as I understood) (field notes).

Gifts of ta'ona thereby enable individuals to consolidate relationships before a conflict escalates. These gifts vary in size and value, depending on the relative harm caused by the offender. A dog's bite should be compensated with a small gift, like 20 Toea, a few betelnuts, one stick of tobacco, and some words of apology (for example, "I hope that it will heal soon; this dog is bad; I should kill it; I am sorry for you"). In a similar way, people who have been affected by a disease-inflicting spell on property (tabu) can have the disease removed by means of a counter spell (loulasa). In such cases, the offender has to give a ta'ona gift and apologise for his
trespass in order to satisfy the owner of the \textit{tabu} spell. Fortune appears to refer to such incidents of \textit{ta'ona} when he describes a form of magic that he called \textit{putautaona}. The term does not exist in Dobu language and Fortune probably misunderstood the phrase "'u ta 'u ta'ona" (you go you \textit{ta'ona}):

\textit{Putautaona} is said to occur when one man coming on another man's property protected by the sign of the \textit{tabu} is not deterred thereby. He superimposes his own \textit{tabu} on the owner's \textit{tabu}.... I was told of definite cases of \textit{putautaona} and stealing from a \textit{tabu} protected tree; but they occurred in time of famine and drought when the poorer persons, who had few or no trees, were driven by urgent necessity, careless of risk. \textit{Putautaona} is, however, typical for the "try it out" competitive feeling about magic (1932:145).\footnote{To my knowledge, this practice would be most unusual. Some informants believed it to be impossible.}

\textbf{'SMALL GIFTS'}

Everyday exchanges of 'small gifts' are expressions of individual agency in creating and maintaining networks of support. Options for the 'paths' (\textit{eda}) of these gifts (to use a common Massim term) usually follow patterns of kinship, the matrilineage, totemic clan affiliation, paternal and affinal relations. The ethics of exchange determine the way these 'paths' are used. Although people appear to have a considerable amount of choice in the way they shape their networks, moral rules circumscribe the freedom of individuals as they sanction 'bad conduct' by blocking certain 'paths'.

From a Dobu perspective, these 'paths' exist quite literally because the ethic of 'staying at home and minding one's own business' (called \textit{miabaula}) prohibits spatial movement without proper reason. For this reason most people on Dobu have never climbed to the top of the volcano (Gulebubu) that dominates the island, nor have they visited the hot springs in the west. Land that belongs to other matrilineages or totemic clans must not be trespassed upon unless its owners have given explicit permission to do so. Hamlets must not be entered unless there is someone in particular to visit. In this light, the actual paths that individuals can use depend on their networks. Paths are only used with good reason (or excuse), and
people constantly justify their movements when passing close to other hamlets; for example "a ta be ima yakwala a ita" ('we [excl.] go and see our secondary garden'). The frequent exchange of 'small gifts' that is another typical element of any excursion gives legitimacy to movements in space as they demonstrate good intentions on both sides.

Seniority is an important factor in regard to a person's universe. With age, individuals gain additional options of networking, as their children, spouses and grandchildren all have their own 'paths' that may be used once relationships of 'help' have been established. Both men and women engage in the exchange of 'small gifts', and although their 'work' is different there is no gender bias. Men, however, typically spend more time moving between hamlets, the sea, gardens and the bush, as they have obligations towards their sister's children as well as to their own household that require them to go fishing, collecting firewood and building materials. Women, in contrast, typically spend most of their time in their hamlet of residence and the gardens. If they go fishing in the afternoon, they usually remain close to the shore. Their 'work' of caring for the children, not a lack of 'paths', restricts their movements.

As people attempt to live a life in peace, wealth and harmony, they choose particular 'paths' in their individual network by investing their 'work'. These paths depend on individual agency, constructed in terms of 'respect', self-discipline and generosity. They are maintained on an everyday basis through gifts of betel chewing ingredients, tobacco, fish, garden produce (except for yam seeds), and labour. As such gifts are of minimal value and occur frequently, it is difficult to memorise all one's debts and although there is no rule of exact reciprocity concerning 'small gifts', the notions of 'stinginess', 'laziness' and 'greediness' provide apt reasons to express dissatisfaction when feeling exploited. To avoid stigmatising comments, individuals are expected to give more 'small gifts' than they receive in order to be characterised as 'well mannered' (i-bubuna boboa-).

I am not convinced by Strathern's argument concerning relational 'states' or 'unities' of 'Melanesian persons': "Social life consist in a constant movement from one state
to another, from one type of sociality to another, from a unity (manifested collectively or singly) to that unity split or paired with respect to another" (1988:13). This perspective is also reflected in Battaglia's analysis of 'portable wealth' as a "social person's detachable, concretely projectable selves" (1990:84). Although positive relations are the desired effect of everyday exchanges, persons are far more concerned with their image in terms of ethics than with the actual bonding that results from the giving, keeping, receiving or rejecting of gifts. They act out 'respect' and generosity, often sacrificing their own desires and consciously masking their true thoughts and feelings, because a gift is only worth the material loss if it contributes to an assessment of being a 'good person'. I would argue that in this way individuals do not project or split their 'selves'. A person rather keeps his or her 'inside' hidden while giving away minor objects, 'small gifts'. Rather than changing their states, persons are motivated by intentions to generate more individual space ('paths').

Such 'paths' differ in quality depending on various factors. Although based on relations of kinship and prescribed behaviour for everyday exchanges, in practice notions of age ('respect'), co-residence ('being used to one another', *panaita*) and individual compatibility (character traits, *ale-*) emerge as the critical elements. Friendship is an important consideration when 'small gifts' are concerned, as persons choose among their options, establishing closer links with individuals they like.

Everyday exchanges, however, are typically informal and undependable. The 'paths' that a person wishes to use for political strategies need to be stabilised by formal exchanges on a higher level, consisting of wealth that symbolises a person's influence and success in networking as proof of his or her 'good' character. The following chapters will focus on these more elaborate forms of exchange, beginning with an analysis of the importance of large yams, *kula* shells and pigs.
Chapter Four

'BIG GIFTS' AND THE CLAIM TO FAME
Name of the gift: bebai (yams), 'une (pigs and shell valuables)

INTRODUCTION

The old man was close to death when he called his sister's son. "My nephew, what are the most important things in life?" The young man waited. "I tell you, the most important things ('big things', yage sinabwadi) are bebai and 'une. Don't forget my words!" (field notes).

The last chapter focused on everyday exchanges in relation to 'work', personal networking strategies, ethics, and emotions. Now my discussion shifts to another exchange category, to pigs, and kula shell valuables, called 'une and big yam tubers, bebai. The latter are an essential part of any presentation of 'une. These gifts carry a complex symbolic meaning; they are 'big things' (yage sinabwadi), a term that I translate as 'Big Gifts'. The 'work' (paisewa) of achieving them (by doing kula, mortuary feasting, gardening and caring), is built on the notion of being 'good' (bobo'a-) and 'strong' (waiwai-). 'Big Gifts' are symbols of this 'work': of a person's wealth, of being socially connected, of social skills, of secret knowledge, in short, of authority. Clearly, the complexity of social and personal life in the process of the exchange of 'Big Gifts' is more than just the "love of exchange" (Fortune 1932:193,205,206).

Distinguished from the material wealth of everyday use that people often attempt to hide, 'une are publicly inspected (ei'eiya), and often praised (tupu). Unlike the usual way of packing baskets (with the best things at the bottom), when mwali and bagi are carried the larger ones are packed on top and the smaller ones underneath. Similarly, the biggest tubers of bebai are placed on top of the basket. In spite of the fear of 'envy' (e'ipi'ipi), 'Big Gifts' need to be publicly displayed to have the desired

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1 Secrecy is only an issue in connection with the storage of yams and yam seeds ('uma).
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effect. By circulating, bebai and ‘une personify their managers and reflect on the history of the many givers and receivers and the links between them.

Bourdieu uses the metaphor of ‘social alchemy’,\(^2\) based on the Maussian notion of the gift as a symbol for the investment of time, care, material wealth, and labour.

For Bourdieu, the process of gift giving transforms overt domination into legitimate authority, the ‘gift’ into emotions, and economic capital into symbolic capital:

> Wastage of money, energy, time, and ingenuity is the very essence of the social alchemy through which an interested relationship is transmuted into a disinterested, gratuitous relationship, overt domination into misrecognized, ‘socially recognized’ domination, in other words, legitimate authority. The active principle is the labour, time, care, attention, and savoir-faire which must be squandered to produce a personal gift irreducible to its equivalent in money, a present in which what counts is not so much what you give as the way you give it... (1977:192).

The value of this ‘personal gift’, as Bourdieu calls it, is created through labour and performance (‘the way you give it’), a transformation of relations through the symbolism of giving and receiving. For Bourdieu, fundamental emotions like shame and pride can be translated into a concept of honour that operates on the basis of shame (1990:100-101). In fact, honour might be the driving force for exchange in many societies (as it is in Kabyle). This concept of honour does not ring true in the Melanesian context, however, where shame and pride appear to be core emotions with regard to exchanges of ‘Big Gifts’: “in the dynamic and highly individualistic world of New Guinea, where a man is encouraged to be combative and self-assertive, shame is clearly coupled with pride” (Epstein 1984:49). From a Massim perspective, motives for exchanging ‘Big Gifts’ are linked to the concept of fame. As Weiner stresses for Trobriand *kula* exchange:

> ... the difference between one player and another is inscribed in a meaningful framework recognized as “fame”. The authentication of fame legitimates a person’s right to win over others’ losses and to be ranked as a winner in a coterie of equals – with the highest honor, ranking in the coterie of those who traffic with chiefs (1992:145).

On Tubetube, an expression links fame to ‘thunder’ (Macintyre 1995:39), while in

\(^2\) Analytically, the metaphor of ‘social alchemy’ suggests inappropriate means, because there has been no successful alchemy so far. This metaphor does not seem justified in the light of Massim studies.
Dobu the word for fame, (ale) is synonymous with 'name', or 'report', but also with 'base', 'source', or 'cause' (Dixon n.d.:11). In its adverbial form, ale-, it refers to notions of character and personality, as I have shown in Chapter Two. In this light, 'Big Gifts' build up a person's personality or 'name' by creating a 'report' of fame. This fame translates itself into notions of domination and leadership, as shown in Young's analysis of competitive exchanges (abutu) on Goodenough (1971:257ff) and it is interesting to note that the term abutu is a compound of a (food) and butu (fame, literally 'noise'). 'Big Gifts' are manifestations of relations of obligation and indebtedness among the persons who negotiate the process of managing them while at the same time creating links between those who publicly exchange them.

'Big Gifts' are symbols of fame, strategically employed by big men (esa'esa) and women (alawata). Not only the process of giving and taking, but also the accumulation, production, and management of 'Big Gifts' are related to the notion of fame. In an example from Sabarl (Louisiades), Battaglia describes how a married couple in need of extra yams for an unexpected feast avoids the shame of asking for food by undertaking a trip to the husband's overseas exchange partner to 'look for a pig' while simultaneously bartering for yams. In this manner, the shameful subsistence journey is transformed into a journey 'in search of fame' and wealth (Battaglia 1990:141).

The exchange of 'Big gifts' is accompanied by strong emotions that depend on the value of the gift, the manner of presentation, and the relational context. In individual relationships, bebai and 'une may be used as 'signs of love' or given as expressions of gratitude (oboboma) to a very close friend, muli, paternal or affinal relative. In contrast, they can also express or evoke powerful feelings of anger, shame, and resentment. Weiner's observation in Kiriwina, that objects are used to avoid 'hard words', and that "anger may always be expressed in yams" (1984:172), has to be qualified from a Dobu perspective, where the presentation of a 'Big Gift' is the only legitimate opportunity to be aggressive in public speeches, the only context in which 'hard words' can be deployed as a social weapon.

In his essay on the experience of shame in Melanesia, Epstein distinguishes
between the psychoanalytical dimension of shame (as a "response to the exposure of one's inadequacies in measuring up to the self-imposed standards of the ego-ideal") and social aspects of shame as an affective dimension of the transmission of cultural values (1984:49). Shame is a mechanism of negative feedback that works both on the individual and on an inter-subjective level, intertwining self-reflection and consciousness of others' views of oneself. Gift giving as a shaming technique builds upon general cultural values. It makes the recipient aware of his or her difficulties in returning the gift, thereby undermining self esteem. It also obliges the recipient to budget for the return gift. More than once I observed the stress a person feels if he or she is expected to give 'Big Gifts' without immediate access to them. It is a clear sign of incompetence if one cannot organise a 'Big Gift', a shameful experience that is internalised by everybody as a personal flaw. 'Big Gifts' change people's feelings: Dobu people say that a gift can pierce like a spear (gita) and 'put shame' on the receiver (omeiameta i sa'usa'u).

Self-deprivation is clearly a positive attitude in Dobu, practiced on an everyday basis as the ethic of alamai'ita, a proof of a person's strong character and respect for the rules of interaction. In terms of gender, women are regarded as the masters of alamai'ita due to their silent 'work' during childbirth. The 'Big Gift' for a new mother (loduwaduwa) acknowledges her 'work' of giving birth. It is associated with her pain and self-control and gives the woman a feeling of pride (gwauso'ala) in her 'good work'. I have translated the term for 'pride', gwauso'ala, as 'happiness' in Chapter Three. It is significant that for Dobu people there is a distinction to be made between legitimate happiness and pride, gwauso'ala, and boasting, arrogance and pride, gagasa.

As in other societies of the southern Massim, women are intensely involved in the exchange of 'Big Gifts'. Yams are under the total control of women, an important factor in gender equality, if not female domination. Being a woman is no handicap in terms of personal decision making. Lepowsky states for Vanatinai that "women participate fully and equally in the same exchange system as men" (1994:210). This is not entirely the case on Dobu, where women have exclusive rights over the distribution of yams but often leave the oratory of gift exchange to senior men. The
'Big Gift' needs to be 'decorated' (ana weiyala) with bunches of banana and betelnuts, and under certain conditions it has to be accompanied by at least one clay pot full of mona pudding, made from flour (or banana) dumplings in coconut cream. These gifts are provided and prepared by men. Cooked yams with some meat or fish (buyo) is another important gift made exclusively by women.

Dobu women's participation in the kula exchange, a fact that was denied by Fortune (1932:214), depends on the same qualifications as men's: in the first instance, selection as the proper heir due to 'good' character traits and conduct. Most women would rather stand aside and let their male elders speak on their behalf. If a woman is a 'talkative' person by character ('ona alena) or the senior person (toloina) of the hamlet, or if special circumstances make her wish to present a case by herself she is fully entitled to do so, but most women claim that they would feel 'too shy' (ometameia) to speak publicly. In Keane's sense, women share the 'agency' of gift exchange yet often do not appear as 'speakers' (1997:139f).

'Working' for wealth

Control over valuables is regarded as a result of 'work' (paisewa). Not only are 'Big Gifts' acquired through 'work', but the process of giving them is also regarded as 'work', as an examination of semantics reveals. The term 'une for armshells (mwali), necklaces (bagi), and pigs (bawe) also refers directly to the ceremonial distribution of pork and yams from a platform during mortuary feasting (bwabwale, dugumalala and sagali). 'Une encompasses the exchange objects as well as the act of exchange. Thune, in his translation of kune (the Duau version of 'une) as "formally distributed or exchanged goods" (1980:201), ignores the aspect of presentation, while Macintyre uses kune ('une) as an untranslated verb (1983c:374).

Inheritance of 'une depends on personal characteristics and general conduct. Among all those young men and women who are entitled to be heirs, a big man or woman choses the one who has been a friendly and obedient helper in the past. The quality of obedience is particularly important: to 'listen properly' (nono ai'aila) to the elder's words, to follow orders promptly and to keep one's own comments ('ona
limana) to oneself. Only if both attitude and physical work accomplished are satisfactory, will the youth be praised as 'hardworking' (paisewa alena). It follows that kula valuables are tokens of authority earned by 'work', no matter whether they transmitted within the matrilineage or from father to child. The heir to a person's main valuables is seen as his or her 'replacement' (lo'epa'elu) and assumes all the obligations, debts and credits of the deceased, in affinal affairs as well as in kula.³

The production of 'Big Gifts' is also referred to as 'work' (paisewa). Raising pigs, harvesting and managing large yams, 'decorating' kula valuables with beads and shells – all are considered to be 'work' that requires positive recognition if performed for someone else:

Kaibado told me to get some flour, sugar, tobacco, and betelnuts. He cooked mona pudding, his daughter and I prepared a clay pot of cooked yams (bebai) and fish, and we walked up to see Lakatani. He had finished the improvement of the decorations of my bagi (named Diamani) and Kaibado's mwali (named Asayesi). We sent Wendy (aged 7) to run and tell Lakatani that we were on our way. When we arrived, we put the gifts of cooked food on the ground and Lakatani's wife, Ruth, took them inside the kitchen. Lakatani was sitting on his veranda, the bagi and mwali in a bag next to him. Kaibado handed the tobacco and betel over and formally thanked him for the work of improving the kula valuables. He passed them over to Kaibado, who had a quick look at them and thanked again. We smoked and chewed quickly and went back at dusk (field notes, 20.11.1993).

On the level of exchange practice, 'work' (paisewa) is used as a general term for the entire activity of exchanging 'Big Gifts', in mortuary feasting as well as in the kula and (formerly) in marriage exchanges. The reason for this equation is founded on the hardships, the self-discipline of preparing, assembling, transporting, delivering, and subsequently parting from it for the time being. This 'work', however, creates the emotional environment of the exchange. The givers are physically tired, sad at parting with the precious yams and their 'une, feeling inhibited and strange in a foreign hamlet. But they do not show these feelings; they practice alamai'ita (self-control) and pretend to be relaxed and unconcerned. Only the speaker of the

³ See also Munn (1986:109) for the importance of 'listening' and the concept of 'replacement' on Gawa; and Foster (1990).
delegation expresses emotions, displays strength and superiority. In this regard, 'Big Gifts' always convey some degree of antagonism, and always cause some feeling of shame. It depends on the actual context, the individual relationships involved, the type of 'Big Gift', and the exchange event itself, how the transaction is shaped. I will return to this point after discussing the different valuables that are used as 'Big Gifts'.

YAM - THE ROOT OF WOMEN'S POWER

Yam production is aimed at a balance between food for consumption (masula) and large tubers (bebai) for presentations. Women are the sovereign owners of their yam houses, where they store the yams for up to ten months (July - April), until the new harvest. The yam houses of a hamlet are grouped together in a peripheral space between the hamlet and the bush. They form 'the hamlet of the yams' (bebai idi asa), related to the idea of yams being 'people' (tomota) mentioned in Chapter Two. In Dobu language, yam houses are called 'food houses' (anua masula), as yam is perceived as the ultimate vegetable food. This second term underplays the fact that yam houses also contain a powerful tool for symbolic interaction: the stored bebai tubers, deployed as 'baskets of yams' (kodo) on all occasions of formal exchange. Without these 'baskets', no exchange can take place, and it has reputedly happened that women halted the preparations for a feast by denying the supply of bebai – either cooked for guests as buyo, or raw in baskets (kodo) of between eight and twelve tubers.

Women classify and sort the harvest product, making piles of different categories, with different ownership, and for different purposes. The senior owner of a yam house (to'abi'uma) decides on how to use the harvested crop. Her daughters will have their own yam houses when they start individual households. Men have no yam houses of their own, but keep special piles of yams in the yam houses of their mother, sister, wife, daughter, or other favoured female relative. Men's access to their piles of yams is dependent on the agreement of the owner of the yam house.

The knowledge of growing yams is complex, and both men and women acquire a lifetime of experience in their respective tasks. Men are expected to do the heavy
work of clearing and burning the bush (*owo*i) and the organisation and shaping of the actual garden (*bagula*), when branches and sticks are laid out to form single garden plots (*laba*), separated by vertical borders (*lopopo*). Women also assist in these tasks, but leave it to the men to climb trees and cut off branches. Gardening plots (*tanoa*) are distributed between the households of those hamlet members who wish to share the use of this particular garden. New gardens are prepared between October and December. Men and women hold communal work meetings (*gesoa*), and while some of the landowner's female relatives stay behind and cook food for the helpers (*ni’aula*), the men dig the planting holes (*bao*) and the women plant the yam seeds (*ewana*). The senior woman of the matrilineage treats the seeds with a secret liquid (*siwalolo* - 'to sprinkle') and decides which seed is to be planted in which hole by throwing (*pe*a*) them onto the mounds of loose soil.

Once the yam vines reach a certain length, sometime in December, each shoot is led onto a small stick (*sakwala*). Four to eight plants are directed to grow onto one sturdy stick (*ebudi*) in the middle of each plot. As a rule an equal number of plants of each type of yam (*kwateya* and *siyakutu* or *sogege*) are planted. The women weed the garden, while men take care of banana plants that grow at its edge. By March, the *ebudi* stick is overgrown with vines and the women remove the old withered seed from the planting hole. The gardener gains an initial impression of the prospective yield of the new harvest and can adjust her management policies accordingly. The two varieties of yam (*Dioscorea alata* and *D. esculenta*) have some distinctive features, as indicated in the table below. Generally speaking, *kwateya* is regarded as tastier, easier to harvest and peel, and its typically large tubers are valued more highly than *siyakutu*.4

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4 From a Dobu perspective, Duau (Normanby) people only plant *kwateya* and Bwaiowa (Fergusson) people only *siyakutu*. Dobu is better off because both types support each other as their vines creep up the *ebudi* in different directions. Also, pests and bad weather are less likely to affect the entire harvest.
Table 5: Perceived features of *siyakutu* and *kwateya* yam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Siyakutu (Dioscorea esculenta)</em></th>
<th><em>Kwateya (Dioscorea alata)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>roots have thorns</td>
<td>thornless roots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yam has rough skin</td>
<td>yam has smooth skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vines grow clockwise</td>
<td>vines grow anticlockwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardy plant</td>
<td>plant attracts lightning, needs more care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a single plant yields many yams of different sizes: <em>bebai</em> (the largest ones), <em>ewana</em> (seeds), and <em>kitu</em> (small ones)</td>
<td>a single plant grows about three large yams (<em>bebai</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yam gardening is regarded as women's work in terms of weeding, constant supervision, and harvest. Married men are expected to join their wives' daily trip to the garden, looking for firewood and clearing the space around the garden. Some men even plant yams, but only the long shaped subvarieties of *kwateya*. The previous year's gardens, called *yakwala* ('year') supply households with manioc, plantain bananas, *pitpit*, and other crops of more recent introduction like maize, snake beans, pumpkin, and pineapples.

My data on specific aspects of gardening are not as detailed as other accounts of the area (see Digim'Rina 1995:82ff), as it was rarely possible for me to assist in gardening activities. Fortune complained of a similar problem during his field work (1932:104). However, my principal interest in gardening in this thesis relates to the symbolic importance of yams (*bebai*) as a medium of exchange. Men and women ideally work together for subsistence, joining forces for the sake of household consumption and individual prestige. Yet in everyday practice, women are much more industrious, kept busy by household demands, children's needs, and care for the yams. Women carry the burden of responsibility for the yam seeds (*ewana*), for keeping the 'lineage' of their yam cultivars ('uma) alive through the years and trying to increase the seeds in order to share them with their children when they grow up.

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5 See appendix 4 for a list of 'uma used in Dobu.

6 See Hide et. al. for further details of Dobu as an agricultural system (1994:87-8); also Hide, Bourke and Allan (1994).
The close connection of yam with matrilineality is manifested in this concept of 'uma. The word for seeds, ewana, also applies to the pregnancy of women and animals that give susu (breast milk) to their offspring, like mammals and marsupials. Like those of people (tomota), yam lineages are spread all over the island, each named type of 'uma representing memberships of specific matrilineages and their lines of physical inheritance. As the same 'uma are also used in other hamlets, a model of 'clan' (manua) comes to mind. At least, 'uma belong to two groups of yams, like the different totemic nesting patterns. A symbolic relationship of the earth as woman's belly and yams as woman's children has been drawn in the literature since Malinowski (see also Brindley 1984:81; Battaglia 1990:94; Mallett 1996:202ff), and although I did not hear my Dobu informants make this equation, the overall picture is of women as "life-givers, nurturing children and yams", as Lepowsky observed of Vanatinai (1994:302).

My 1993 data revealed respectively 17 and 22 different names for 'uma of each variety (siyakutu and kwateya), with some slight regional differences within Dobu Island. The yams of each cultivar can be described in terms of taste, colour, shape, skin texture, and structure of the flesh. Formerly, each household had no choice but to plant those 'uma that were inherited by both partners, so that husband's and wife's 'uma produced food and wealth for the household. Since yams are sold in local markets these days, many people plant preferably those 'uma that suit their taste, but it is still regarded as shameful for a woman to lose her inherited seeds.

I suggest that the power of women over yams is related to this principle of 'uma as the matrilineage of the yams. Not only is the planting and gardening work significant, but the also subsequent managing process that keeps people and yams

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7 Fortune's account of the inheritance and division of yam seeds (1932:69-72,118) differs considerably from my data. Seeds are passed to another matrilineage during marriage exchanges, people can change seeds according to a preference in taste, and in case of shortage, muli, like paternal relatives, can help out. There are many different kinds of yam (see also Dixon n. d.:101,164). There are no links to clan boundaries these days, although Fortune suggests that garden magic and seeds are related in a "dogmatic" way (1932:70,71). None of my informants confirmed his statements.

8 All other seeds are called suwana (see also Dixon n. d.:60,173).

9 See also Gudeman (1986:189ff).
alive for another year to come. This involves maintaining a careful balance between keeping and sharing. There is no stigma attached to the woman who keeps her seeds with caution and refuses to share them, one who prefers to go through a period of relative hunger rather than to display generosity in the wrong quarter. The yam house is a place of hiding and yam is probably the only valuable that can be successfully hidden from the public eye. A full yam house speaks of empty bellies (see Young 1971:Ch.7), but not in derogatory terms; it is a tribute to the woman as to'abi’uma (literally: 'person-to build-yam-lineage'), to her self-control (alamai'ita) even in times of famine, and to her authority over the household.

A woman's strength is displayed and executed by her total control over her yam house. While new yams grow in the soil, the woman shuts the door of the yam house (so'aliboda) and removes only small numbers of yams from the 'low quality' heap for evening meals. This time of the year is called 'Famine' (botana), referring to the feeling of insufficient nutrition that one experiences when the diet consists of manioc, plantain banana, seasonal fruits and seeds, and occasional protein. Botana as a time of famine is measurable in the diet, but rice and sweet potatoes have reduced the threat of starvation during this time of year. A plague of snails on Normanby Island in 1993 provoked many discussions about botana, and the snail was referred to by this name. There are certainly cases of individuals who have insufficient food, but this is seen as related to inter hamlet tensions and neither party involved is keen to mention it.

Knowing how to manage her yams is vital for a woman's status. A poor harvest can be ignored once in a while, but if she wastes her seeds, fails to give bebai yams to affines, or feeds small yams to guests, she will never be alawata, a rich woman. In addition to agricultural skills and the stamina needed to keep the garden in good condition.

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10 In times of serious drought, people expect to receive aids from the 'urban branches' of their matrilineages as well as from national and international organisations.

11 Young analysed historical cases of drought and famine (loka) (1971:173ff) and the concept of hunger (1986) in Kalauna. According to my informants, Dobu Island is blessed with better soil and climate than Goodenough, but serious droughts and food scarcity might have been reasons for increased raiding activities at the end of the last century.
shape, a woman needs to know about the different types of yam seeds, special requirements for their growth and storage, and *obwala* (garden magic). Some *obwala* is performed by men also, so if her husband has more powerful spells she would leave it to him. Today, *obwala* seems to be regarded as less significant by many people of the younger generation, who also have little knowledge of the different types of yam.

![Diagram 6: Storage in a yam house (anua masula)](image)

Managing yams is regarded as 'work' (*paisewa*), hence the owner of a yam house is working to 'build the seeds' (*abi'uma*). When the large yams are counted in preparation for a feast, a senior woman climbs into each yam house of a hamlet and packs the *bebai* tubers into baskets, counts the baskets, and leaves them for the owner to unpack the yams afterwards. These yams are earmarked for the particular feast and must not be touched for any other purpose. This woman is working in her role of *tolobwagila* (person-making-bundles).

The power of women over yams - and yams as objects of power - is founded on the relationship of the woman and the individual tubers. By planting, pampering, harvesting, cleaning, packing, carrying, sorting, rearranging, dusting, carefully observing and reordering her yam store, she knows her tubers intimately. Like individual persons, the yams have unique features, innate characteristics and genetic
ties, and the large ones, *bebai*, are looked after with special pride and consideration. Her authority lies in her relationship to *bebai*, her acknowledged capacity for making 'new persons'.

**Bebai - the Big Yams**

Lissi was wailing this morning because of Tino (her son who died at 20 months of age). Her mother had put a few things into her house: a pair of Tino's long pants, tied onto a long yam, and the diapers that she had used to clean up his last vomiting. When Lissi saw the things, she started to wail and cry (field notes, 18.9.1993).

Big yams are objects that can embody memories (*weiweiyala*); they can stand for dead persons, as in the example above, or for the marriage of a matrilineal relative. Other objects used as *weiweiyala* are photos, tomb stones, tattoos, personal belongings, and *kula* valuables. A large roasted yam (*egoi*) is used as a symbolic key to the hamlet during marriage festivities, when bride and groom are 'made to bite' (*egoi*) the yam thereby breaking the prohibition of eating in front of affines.

In addition to these special instances in which single *bebai* are used, they are usually packed together as 'Big Gifts', counted several times during the transaction and finally received by another woman who has to return them at some stage, if the gift is not already a repayment (*lotau, aga,* or *maisa*, depending on the context). About eight to twelve *bebai* fit into a standard basket (*kodo*), a few more into a slightly larger basket called *kodogaigai*, literally 'black basket', because it is kept in the woman's kitchen as a reminder of the debt and turns black in the sooty air. As a golden rule, a woman should always keep at least five baskets of *bebai* for any sudden death or special visitors, like *kula* partners or affines. When lots of *bebai* are needed at a feast, they are piled up in heaps (*siwa*) of about two hundred tubers, and large feasts can display up to four *siwa*, as in the celebration of 100 years of Christianity, held in June 1991.

The cultural ideal of a wealthy woman (*alawata*, see also Table 1 in Chapter Two) is based on her special relationship with yams as seeds, food and, especially, as gifts. 'Her cooking fire never goes out' (*ina kaiwe nigeya i da kwe'u*) is the
expression that I was always given in English. She invites her affines and is a perfect host to *kula* partners (literally 'eyes' at the visitor, *tomata'owaga'owaga*). In short, she has enough *bebai* to fulfil all the exchange demands of herself, her husband, and the elders of her matrilineage. She makes the right choices when planting yams (*dauna*) and is praised as *todauna* (a person who is a very good planter), she builds up the stock of yam seeds (*to'abi'uma*), looks after her children well, and can afford to invite people for a share of cooked food. Her positive attitude gives her renown as *tolobwau* (person-call out) and *to'ebway'ebwaya* (person-giving out). The virtue of *alamai'ita* is reflected in the cultural ideal of women giving birth under the house without making a noise. Yet this self-discipline is rewarded by an acknowledgment of the woman as politically influential (though she may go hungry herself while cooking *bebai* for her guests), an influence that is based on her success in the overall management of her yams.

**'UNE - AT THE HEART OF EXCHANGE**

While yams are in the managerial hands of women, the other items for 'Big Gifts', are held by both men and women. In fact, as men do not have access to fame through gardening (in contrast to, for example, Kiriwina), the production, accumulation, and management of *'une* provides the sole avenue for men who want to gain a 'big name' (*ale sinabwana*), or at least, to prove their potency as adults.

As I have stated, *'une* is a noun and a verb, referring to the objects as well as to the process of transaction. Within Dobu local exchanges, pigs and *kula* valuables are regarded as interchangeable items, so that a valuable *bagi* or *mwali* is worth a big pig which could be purchased for about three to five hundred Kina. *'Une* are given as an assemblage of gifts. In a line, men and women approach the hamlet, the women carrying the heavy baskets of yam on their heads and often toddlers on their hips. Pigs are slung onto poles, each carried by two men, while children carry bundles of betelnuts. Often, one or two clay pots of *mona* pudding are also carried by women on their heads, and if *mwali* or *bagi* shells form part of the gift, some senior man or woman takes care of them (see also Chapter Eight). In some cases, store goods like sugar or balloons and even small notes of cash are added to the gift
as decoration just before its presentation. Upon arrival, the gifts are placed on the ground, betelnuts are put on top of the yams, the pig squeals and tries to escape, and a senior member of the group begins a short speech that explains the context of the gift.

Pigs – the beloved protein

Unlike in many parts of Melanesia, pigs are not allowed to roam freely in Dobu hamlets. Occasional exceptions, like a sow with her litter, or a young piglet, are likely to cause trouble with their tendency to destroy decorative flowers and delapidated kitchens – not to mention those cases when pigs raid gardens and are speared by the angry owner, thereby causing quarrels. These are the reasons why there is consensus on Dobu Island that it is easier to fence the pigs than the gardens. They are usually kept in small pens and have to be fed by their personal owners or an appointed carer, often an older child. Pigs have names; they often come when called and follow basic commands, such as to lie down or to move. In this respect, they are far better trained than most dogs who populate the hamlets. According to my 1993 census, 153 pigs were being raised on Dobu. The following table relates the number of pigs to the number of households in the hamlet clusters of the island.

Table 6: Ratio of pigs to households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of hamlet cluster</th>
<th>Number of houses</th>
<th>Number of pigs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balabala</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edugaula</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egadoi</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enaia</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanomwanona</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailele</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabuna</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>284</strong></td>
<td><strong>153</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratio: 0.53 pigs per household

The number of pigs per household is relatively low by Melanesian standards, but they reflect what Young observed in Goodenough Island (Nidula):
By comparison with those pig-infatuated peoples of Vanuatu and the New Guinea Highlands, the Nidula case is one of warm but not excessive affection, secular rather than sacrificial killing (though the commandment 'Thou shalt not eat thine own pig' is heeded) and a fairly low pig:people ratio.... Their value as wealth and their uses in exchange as notional 'substitutes for human beings' also resembles the situation on Tubetube and other islands of the Massim (1984:124).

Macintyre reports a higher ratio of about two pigs per person for Tubetube Island (1984:109-10), but also mentions fluctuations due to climate conditions and feasts. The ratio for Dobu, however, does not include those pigs that are grown by muli exchange partners on Normanby, Fergusson, and Sanaroa Islands to pay back pigs that were given to them as credit (utua bawena) by Dobu partners. Pigs are the the largest mammals in the local environment (only dugongs are larger), they are loved as beings and their physical similarity to humans was stressed by many informants. In fact, formerly a human victim might replace the gift of a pig, as reflected in the beliefs concerning the supernatural Taumudumudulele:

If this 'white man' (tai dimdim) is called (by magic) to improve the yam garden, he has to be paid after the harvest: one heap (siwa) of bebai and a pig. If no pig is available, a human relative from the same matrilineage can be offered instead and Taumudumudulele is known for calling the victim (by magic) and killing him or her in the bush. He does not eat the body but leaves it to his female friends, the witches, to devour the corpse (field notes).

If a pig falls sick, it can be healed with the same medicinal plants and magic procedures as humans, and at sagali mortuary feasts a large pig is often decorated with relics of the dead person and set on fire (while singeing it) to put an end to the memory of the deceased. Pigs used to be a part of marriage exchanges, their size being commemorated by a string (etopwapwa) kept for the purpose of returning a pig of matching girth. My friend Judith told me about her marriage exchanges:

When I got married eleven years ago, my husband's people brought a pig so fat that it couldn't walk any more. This gift has not been returned by my people, because we have not been able to find a pig of a matching size. Maybe one day we can finish this debt, but it is truly hard to find such a fat pig! (J.P.)

A pig that has been fenced close to a cemetery must not be eaten by anyone whose mother, father, father's mother, or father's father is buried there. As a gesture of respect (amayaba), the spouse and children must refrain from eating it as well.
Proximity to the corpses symbolically penetrates the pork, just as the connection with mortuary exchange (bwabwale) renders pork inedible for everyone except those who can 'eat the dead body' (to'ebwabwale), that is, the heirs of the deceased.

The impact of this principle became obvious when I bought a pig for my friend's farewell party. Its owner was keen to sell it and no one objected, but when the pig was cooked, it turned out that more than half of Losina's residents could not eat its meat. It had been raised next to the cemetery of Gaula hamlet, where a senior woman had been buried not long ago. Her son was married to Losina, so were two of her brothers. The matrilineages of these families did not eat any pork, and it was not until later that I realised that I should not have touched it either, as the deceased woman had been my namesake (field notes, 10.8. 1993).

As in many other parts of Melanesia, pigs are not raised for one's own consumption. They have to be exchanged in order to become socially edible, either on a credit basis (utuwa bawena) with balanced reciprocity, or against mwali or bagi (lagwa), or bought with money (mani bawena). When a hamlet kills many pigs for a feast, the families exchange pigs of the same size (etogelasa) in order to be able to eat those pieces that will not be distributed. Pigs are either exchanged alive, in butchered pieces, or as a part of feasting food (buyo). Pork was the favourite food of almost everybody I asked, but it is rarely eaten outside the context of major exchange events. A pig belongs to the person who cares for it, feeds it, enhances its growth with magic and herbal treatments, and loves it. But when the time comes for it to be exchanged, the idyllic life of a pampered pet ends dramatically. Others have reported the often slow process of killing, the death in agony.12 The care giver of the pig, if it is a woman, often stands close to the scene of slaughtering and wails a lament until the last scream has faded away.

In spite of their 'belonging' to care givers, the management decisions concerning pigs are made through consensus within the matrilineage. An elder might have plans for a feast, or is obliged to meet a debt (utuwa bawena), or the death of a kinsperson suddenly requires the pig as a gift ('une), or an exchange partner asks for the pig as a loan (utuwa bawena), or somebody in urgent need of a pig offers money (mani bawena). As the pig-person ratio is low on Dobu, there are never

12 See, for example, Schlesier (1983:223).
enough pigs available to meet demand. I often saw people searching for pigs, patrolling the coastlines of Fergusson and Normanby, visiting friends in Sanaroa Island, and usually returning empty handed. Pigs are a rare commodity, to be managed with tact and experience. In this respect, they resemble the other articles that are called 'une, the shell artefacts of the kula exchange, the bagi necklace and the mwali armshell.

**Bagi and mwali - shells of the kula ring**

*Bagi* are necklaces made out of tiny red disks from *Chama* shell (J. Leach 1983a:23), either with or without decorations. Some are worn everyday as personal ornaments ('*alumoi, talamaga* or *magamaga*); others are hidden in the house and only worn by women at 'une distributions. On Dobu, the parts are named as shown in the illustration below.

A crescent-shaped *kaila* shell (pearl shell) is the decoration at the bottom end of many *bagi*. It often serves as a means of identification for the *bagi*, especially when
the name of the *bagi* – and of previous transactors – is written or scratched on it. The outer side of the crescent is decorated with cowrie shells and glass beads,\(^{13}\) banana seeds (*botoboto*) and larger shell disks (*sapisapi*). The pointed ends of the crescent should be decorated with a bigger cowrie shell (*bunidoga*) on both sides, together with some strings of glass beads with pieces of *mwalikwakwakwa* shell at their ends (*dauyoyo*). These dangling decorations are affixed to the *kaila* as well as on the other end of the *bagi* and the *sulasula* (*Ovula ovum*) shell. They create a distinctive tinkling sound when the *bagi* is handled.

White shell disks (*bole*) are set in the middle of the string as a decoration and, at in precious *bagi*, as a marker for its length. Some *bagi* have a finer cut (*upwa* and *isi*) on the end next to the *kaila* shell. This part is called *mudu* (pubic area, see also Schlesier 1983:113 n.12), and the end of the *bagi* close to the *kaila* shell is called *bagi muduna* (the pubic area of the necklace). The opposite end of the *bagi* string, closer to the *sulasula* shell (also called *bwaliwana* or *dunali*), is called *bagi tetena*, the 'bridge of the necklace'.\(^{14}\) The decoration of the *bagi* can give evidence of its value. If three to four *sulasula* shells are fixed at the 'head' end (*bagi debana*), this is a sign of a 'second class' *dagula bagi*. A funnel shaped bottom end of a conch shell (*yoguli siasiana*) marks a *bagi* as 'third class', *bulubulu*.\(^{15}\) If compared with Campbell's account of the named parts of *bagi* from a Vakuta perspective, the Dobu *bagi* seems to be analogous to the body from a different angle. While for Vakutans, the *sulasula* shell can be called 'testicles', it is for Dobu speakers the 'head'. In addition, the end of the *bagi* that is close to the *kaila* shell is called 'pubic area' in Dobu, but 'ear' or 'top' in Vakuta (see Campbell 1983b:235).

\(^{13}\) In the past, seeds and fruits (e.g. bright red *kalakalapopola* fruits or grey *keninitu* seeds) were used instead of glass beads. Today, many modern materials are used to decorate *mwali* and *bagi*: plastic disks (called *baketi*, as they are cut from red buckets) instead of *sapisapi* disks, rubber pieces instead of *botoboto* seeds, and metal or rubber instead of pearl shell for the *kaila* shell.

\(^{14}\) Dixon n. d.:181: "tetena - ridge, i.e. of the mountain." I would rather translate it as 'bridge', as it bridges the *bagi* and the *sula* shell.

\(^{15}\) *Bulubulu* means 'head' or 'skull'. According to Macintyre and Young (1982:212), homicide payments of highly ranked *bagi* or *mwali* (*pwaouli*) were used in precolonial Tubetube society to redeem the skulls of their warriors from the enemy.
Mwali are rings made from Conus shell (J. Leach 1983a:23, Campbell 1983b:233). They are decorated with sulasula shells that are covered with a fine plaited net of glass beads, and with strings of beads hanging down each sulasula shell (Ovula ovum). At the end of each string there are hollow guawa nutshells. These dangling decorations are also called dauyoyo, and, similarly to the shell pieces on the dauyoyo of the bagi, they make a distinctive sound when the mwali is handled. Munn reports that in Gawa dream analysis the sound of the dauyoyo, or their appearance, are regarded as symbolising the kula shell (1990:6, 15 n.10). Bigger cowrie shells (bunidoga) are often set on both lower corners of the decorated sulasula shells, so that they frame a semicircle of small cowrie shells similar to the decoration of the bagi (kaila shell). The decorative part of a mwali is sometimes called mwali ana dobe ('the women's skirt of the armshell').

Criteria of value

A person who has the social standing of a manager of 'une needs to have specific knowledge. The key to successful exchange is an understanding of the value of
particular 'une. While pigs are relatively easy to estimate by measures of the height, girth, and size of the teeth, shell valuables require much more subtle criteria of evaluation. The value of bagi varies considerably depending on the smoothness, length, colour, and thickness of the disks, as the following table on classification terms for bagi shows.

Table 7: The value of bagi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of origin (ebe)</th>
<th>Size of bagi disks (upwa)</th>
<th>Smoothness of the bagi string (isi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolowai made in Suau, not shining</td>
<td>bagi yelu or yalayalau very fine and old, highest value</td>
<td>nonokwaikwai smooth surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panapanaeiti made in the Rossell area, bright red, highest value</td>
<td>bagi samu or bagi doa fine cut of disks, very high value</td>
<td>dakadaka rough surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totomuluwa or Wagela made in Muruwa, light red</td>
<td>'alumoi small bagi, often used as a necklace (talamaga or magamaga)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon whitish, shining (new in the kula exchange, little value)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, the colour, size and shape of component disks, and the smoothness of the whole string of beads determines the value of a bagi. The relative length of the string (etopwapwa) is less important, as old bagi might be short but very fine in terms of size (upwa) and smoothness (isi). Bagi without renown are measured nevertheless, by holding the sulasula shell in the hand and stretching the bagi up the arm.

The value of mwali is more difficult to assess, and according to Alfred even kula traders sometimes miscalculate. The terms in the table below show that basic criteria for evaluation are not mentioned. Generally speaking, a mwali shell should be wide enough to fit on the upper arm of a man, the wider the circumference of the shell (sanasa) the better. The number of sulasula shells is an indication of the value of a mwali: if more than eight of them fit onto the lower side of the mwali, it has a large width (deba) and is usually valued as very precious. However, there are wide variations in the value of mwali that are due to invisible factors, namely their

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16 Alfred Lazarus ('Alipi') is a famous kula trader in Kwanuala (Duau).
history and renown. A beige colouring with brownish lines (laulau) indicates a long history as an exchange valuable, 'wading from shore to shore' as it is said. The edge of the shell (sopa) is another indication of its value. If it is thin the value is higher as it means that the mwali is old, because the rope (‘a’aka) has worn and polished the mwali when it was being carried around. The following table lists the terms used to describe and assess mwali:

Table 8: Criteria to judge a mwali

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appearance of mwali</th>
<th>Place of origin (ebe)</th>
<th>Quality of the mwali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deba: width of the shell</td>
<td>bwagise: mwali from Muruwa (wide sopa, short deba)</td>
<td>gaiosakowasi or gaiogaiolau: very old and precious mwali (dagula)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sopa: edge of the shell</td>
<td>kuyawa: mwali from Kuyava (Trobriland Islands) with a long deba</td>
<td>gaio’enuana or mwali’au: high value (bulubulu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sulasula: six to eight shells form the finery (dobe) of a mwali of high value</td>
<td>aisepolu: medium value</td>
<td>mwali nawanawa: normal sized mwali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tupona: small mwali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The value of bagi and mwali is based on quality markers that are interrelated, for their appearance reflects on their history. A new bagi or mwali is 'scaled' (eyaiye) in the first transaction, either locally, as against a pig, or during a kula expedition (at tanaleleya, see Chapter Six), as against other bagi or mwali. The absolute criteria are provided by those bagi or mwali that are famous in the whole kula area.

The highest valuable, the 'crown of all the mwali' (waniai) is called Manuatasopi. Two bagi are classified as waniai, namely Tokanubwararana and the bagi Asanaibe’ube’u. Below these, there are only a few mwali and bagi of the second class (dagula) in the kula ring. Dagula means 'feather' when used as a head decoration; it is a metaphor for height, as the feather makes the person who wears it

17 Gaiogai or gaiosakowasi, the verb gaio means 'to wade at the beach', gaiosakowasi means 'to wade at different places'.
18 Currently held by Alexander Meleodi.
19 The latter was held by Ruth Lakatani until November 1993 and given to Josepa of Mataudowai in Bwaiowa.
physically higher and more attractive, and hence projects authority. The names of waniai and dagula shells are powerfully evocative and they are known by all who are interested in kula. Their movements and sojourns are avidly discussed when kula traders meet. These mwali and bagi create intense emotions (greed, pride, excitement, anger, joy, envy, and fear) as they slowly circulate through the Massim. They are the objects of many conversations, plots, and dreams. These are the mwali Tukawa, Kebulubulu, Atuidamana-old,\textsuperscript{20} Tomanibwadi Tamanboi, Waleya ana du'u, Tukawa,\textsuperscript{21} Lalabwatoulaiya,\textsuperscript{22} Maikala. The names of the most famous dagula bagi are Dilimeyana, Lepoyata, Telefoni,\textsuperscript{23} Kabwaku Senibeta, Dokanikani, Tausibwegai, Praiasiamugadiwe, Tamagwali, Likudomdom, Tokanubwarara.\textsuperscript{24}

In the past, these dagula are said to have formed 'married couples' (ai), but the practice of pairing them was given up after the resumption of kula following its suspension during 1942-45 (J. Leach 1983a:15). Some other valuables are likely to gain the status of dagula in the future.\textsuperscript{25} If size and quality are right, they might become accepted in exchange for an established dagula. Through this 'marriage', they increase in value as long as general opinion agrees with the match and there is a willingness to exchange it against dagula at least one more time. In this way, the relatively new mwali Maikala became ranked as dagula, because it had been exchanged with the bagi Likudomdom three times. Within Dobu Island, it does not matter whether a bagi is exchanged against a mwali or against another bagi. This leads to a consideration of two concepts, gender and ownership.

\textsuperscript{20} This was held by Mwalubeyai (of Koyagaugau), who received it from Ruth Lakatani in late 1993. The name distinguishes this mwali from a new one of lower value that was called Atuidamana-new. The re-use of famous names is called esabalana ('to pass the name on').

\textsuperscript{21} See also Munn (1990).

\textsuperscript{22} Recently held by Manukalai (Dobu).

\textsuperscript{23} Recently held by Ruth Lakatani in Mwemweyala (Dobu)

\textsuperscript{24} This list is not complete, but none of my friends and informants could remember any more names. Not even Mwalubeyai, the late 'king of the kula' could tell me more.

\textsuperscript{25} An example is the bagi Waria Bwagaoya, still seen as a bulubulu bagi, but with a good chance of finding 'a matching partner' from the elite class of dagula mwali.
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The 'gender' of valuables

Much has been written about the gender of mwali and bagi. Since Malinowski, the idea of 'marriage' between bagi and mwali has inspired exchange theorists (Mauss 1990:26, Strathern 1988:199ff, Damon 1990:96, Munn 1986:157ff). According to Munn, Damon, and Campbell (see Scoditti and Leach 1983:271), bagi are seen as female, and mwali as male. Malinowski was given the opposite impression: "The arm shells are conceived as a female principle, and the necklaces as the male" (1922:356). Macintyre confirms Malinowski's information for Tubetube (1983c:373) in the southern Massim. In spite of repeated efforts to find one, however, I am unable to state a definite correlation from a Dobu perspective. Although bagi and mwali are interchangeable in local exchanges and belong to the same category of gifts as pigs ('une), there are inherent differences that are beyond the analytical frame of gender dichotomies and that complicate any attempt at symbolic interpretation based on binary opposition. Typical answers to my questions about the 'marriage' of kula shells were remarks such as the following:

Yes, they might be gendered, as they are said to 'marry' each other. Oh yes, one of them must then be male and the other female, so let us see... Oh yes, the mwali is female, because it has a skirt (dobe), the bagi is male, sure, because it is long (and red). Yes, this sounds good and hence might be the truth (H.P.).

Reasons for the opposite conclusion were found just as easily: "The bagi might be female, because it comes from the left side, the weak side. Accordingly, the mwali is male, right?" Once a statement like this had been made, the suggestion of the opposite gendering was rejected as false. "Who said so? No, that is wrong."27

Although I was searching for, and hoping to find, some hidden gender issues in the symbolism of exchange on Dobu, I am not able to present any of them in the context of kula exchange. The metaphor of 'marriage' simply appears to relate to the kind of relationship, as ideally connecting two persons of matching 'value' (age,

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26 One wonders why a part of the bagi is then called 'testicles' (Campbell 1983b:234).
27 Similarly contradictory statements have been reported from Kiriwina (Digim'Rina, pers. comm.)
renown, degree of beauty) in a relation of mutual obligation rather than to a specifically gendered pairing of one male and one female subject. In addition, the gendering of valuables seems to be a typical strategy for explaining things to anthropologists. Weiner quotes a Trobriand informant who compares a _kula_ shell to a woman: "Remember, a _kula_ shell is like a young girl; she looks over every man until she decides which one she likes best. One man is chosen and the others are sent away" (1976:218).

However, the metaphorical use of gender does not necessarily imply that the valuables have to be seen in the light of gender only. In fact, I was mostly taught about the _kula_ through the use of other metaphors:

> I went to Lakatani and we sat down on his veranda. He had promised to explain the _kula_ to me and I wondered why he stretched out, lifted a part of the sago leaves of the roof, and took a pack of playing cards from their hiding place. He went through them, sorting out the high cards and putting them into hierarchical order. He explained that the relative value of the cards was the important trick. "Ace with ace, king with king, queen with queen, jack with jack, that is how we do _kula._" (field notes, 18.9.1993)

In her analysis of Sabarí objects of wealth, Battaglia deduces a different classification of gender, one in terms of quality and durability:

> However, what emerges when we look at food and object wealth together is a cultural predisposition to label as 'masculine' the production and procurement of things that are more durable and individually valued (unit-value objects, pigs, and sago) and as 'feminine' production and procurement of things that are more ephemeral and collectively valued (yams and bulk wealth) (1990:87).

Again, these qualifications were not brought to my attention in Dobu. I have already mentioned that yams are regarded as persons, but again, no clear gendering seems to be present within the types of yam. In general, the long variety of _kwateya_ is equated with maleness, but this is understood as referring to the fact that men plant these seeds and harvest these yams as an exception to the normal division of labour. It can be assumed that pigs are gendered according to their actual sex, while _mona_ pudding, large fish, and bunches of bananas are gifts that are provided exclusively by men and thus appeared to be 'male' rather than 'female' to one Dobu informant. According to Lepowsky, maleness in Vanatinai is seen in terms of
potency and femaleness in terms of fertility, but big men and women have both attributes and are therefore constructed as dually gendered (1994:279).

The notion of 'gendered exchange' has been explored by Strathern with regard to mediated versus unmediated exchange (1988:191ff), but although she uses Massim data from Woodlark Island, she seems to employ a different set of metaphors than those used on Dobu, rendering direct comparison difficult. As an example, she distinguishes between local transactions and kula exchange on the basis of gendered relationships (cross-sex and same-sex):

Kitoum stand for unmediated cross-sex relations, externally created in the contrast between husband and wife/brother and sister, and internally between the differently gendered parts of a man’s multiple activities. Separate efforts are combined in the product. Mwal/veigun, by contrast, conceived of as a pair of male and female valuables, are brought together by the efforts of one of the partners - the coercive recipient who extracts one of them. This effort distinguishes his interest and thus metaphorizes the partnership as though it too were predicated on an asymmetric, cross sex relation (as though all mwal/veigun were somebody’s kitoum). But this activation is only possible because the men are in prior terms of the same sex: it is merely the relation between them which separates (Strathern 1988:198-99).

The concept of gender assumes the opposition of two categories of different qualities within the given class of objects. It seems as if kula shells are not typically perceived as being gendered as 'male' and 'female' but rather as two variables out of three ('une), a perspective that is based on local exchanges, where pigs, bagi and mwali are literally interchangeable as gifts that mediate social conflict (ta'ona, gai poteya) and patrilateral relatedness (talo, pegita).28 As I will argue in Chapter Seven, sexual references are commonly used in conversations about kula as a form of rhetoric rather than in a strictly metaphorical sense. For these reasons, it seems more relevant to seek out for those metaphors that are used to distinguish bagi and mwali in a qualitative sense.

From a linguistic point of view, it appears that different possessive forms (deictic stems) are used for bagi and mwali. While bagi shell necklaces carry the deictic stem i-, as in igu bagi (my bagi that I control), the deictic stem used for mwali arm

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28 See Chapter Eight for a detailed discussion of these gifts.
shells is \textit{a-}, as in \textit{agu mwali} (my \textit{mwali} that is very close to me).\footnote{For a more detailed discussion of possessives see Chapter Two.} Nobody could explain convincingly why \textit{bagi} are connected with \textit{i-} and \textit{mwali} with \textit{a-}. One would say: '\textit{Gete igu bagi be gote agu mwali}.' (This is my \textit{bagi}, and that is my \textit{mwali}).

When we sat and speculated over this question people realised for the first time that there was no simple explanation for this shift. It only 'sounded very wrong' (\textit{ana nono to'umalina}) to them if someone said \textit{igu mwali} or \textit{agu bagi}. The only guess came from Henry Poate, who pointed out that the \textit{mwali} was a shell that could be eaten (hence \textit{a-}, or even \textit{aa-}) while \textit{bagi} were produced far away outside the \textit{kula} ring: "Maybe nobody knew that the disks for \textit{bagi} are made out of shell. Before, we Dobu people did not go to Rossell Island, so maybe we did not know where the \textit{bagi} came from and what it was made of. We thought that it was not edible and so we say '\textit{igu bagi}'."

This explanation does not reveal any gender symbolism, but refers to the distinction between food and non-food, closeness and relative distance, direct ownership and possession. Apart from this difference, two more categories of distinction can be found. Firstly, the particular features of \textit{bagi} string versus \textit{mwali} shell with all the different connotations of value, and the distinct sounds made by the decorative shells (\textit{dauyoyo}) or nutshells (\textit{gwawa}); secondly, that access to them is in opposite directions, as \textit{bagi} 'come down' from Duau (\textit{dolo}) and \textit{mwali} 'come up' from Bwaiowa (\textit{laga}), an issue that will be taken up in Chapter Seven. My suggestion that Bwaiowa is closer to Dobu than to Duau and accordingly that \textit{mwali} are 'closer' than \textit{bagi}, was neither confirmed nor rejected: "Yes, maybe..."
From a Dobu point of view, personally owned *bagi* or *mwali*, called *kitomwa*, are essential for local exchange. This is similar to other *kula* areas (see Weiner 1984:148,160; Macintyre 1983c:373 ff; Thune 1980:248 ff), but different to Woodlark (Damon 1990:92-3). In Dobu there is no general notion that every *bagi* or *mwali* must be somebody’s *kitomwa*.

This leads to more general issues of ownership, as from a Dobu perspective *'une* are treated equally as one category of valuables, so my account of the concept of *kitomwa* includes pigs, *bagi*, and *mwali*. It has been shown above that yams are under the control of women until they are brought out of the yam house and packed into baskets. Women carry these baskets on their heads, but often refrain from the display of superiority. Although there are a few explicitly ‘talkative’ women keen to speak in public, women usually assume an inferior posture and stay quiet. However, it is a matter of common knowledge that women are the true custodians of the yam and therefore have no need to ‘show off’ (*gagasa*) and risk public censure for it.

In the afternoon, ‘our fathers’ brought their gifts for the *sagali* feast. They put a live pig, some baskets of yams, a bunch of bananas and some bunches of betelnuts that were placed on top of the yams. John gave a short speech and told us the reason for this gift (support – *lema* – for the *sagali*), then Jamie also raised her voice and added that they loved us like ‘fathers’ and that we could count on their support forever. Later, she told me that she was admonished by one of the members of the party for speaking up. She was upset about it, because it was not right: "Who gives something big has a right to speak, man or woman. That’s our real custom" (field notes, December 1992).

For the Dobu context it is useful to extend to pigs Macintyre’s definition of *kitomwa* as ‘personal kula-shell free of extant obligation to other traders’ (1983c:373). Pigs are regarded as the property of an individual, to be used for matters concerning the matrilineage if needed. Yet it cannot be claimed to be a *kitomwa* if it is received as a loan (*buki*) or destined to reach a partner further around the circle as a begging gift (*po’ala*), or a repayment (*maisa* or *sugu*) in the case of a pig *utuwa bawena*. As long as there is no local need for it, the owner can use the *kitomwa* for overseas exchange or for his or her own interests, like ‘renting’ of gardening land (*bwa’a manuna*) or exchange against another *'une* (*lagwa*). In this sense, *'une* can be seen as alienable, a fact that is demonstrated by the practice of selling them for cash, or
by exchanging two or three high valued 'une against one dagula mwali or bagi. As with all 'Big Gifts', decisions concerning their use depend on the actual situation within the matrilineage. Persons with high status are expected to know how to use their wealth wisely, but others will be advised by their elders about the appropriate move. In this area of management, women and men have a say according to notions of respect (amayaba), and a junior man is not entirely free to use his inherited kitomwa the way he likes. If his 'mothers' disagree he cannot ignore their arguments without risking their censure.

THE USE OF 'UNE AND BEBAI

As the old man whom I have quoted at the beginning of this chapter has put it, bebai and 'une are 'the most important things'. In fact, each matrilineage needs to have access to bebai and 'une in order to fulfil social obligations and defend social space. The symbolism of the 'Big Gift' depends on the actual context of the exchange process. It can be understood as expressing domination, as an accusation, an insult, a display of pride, or as expressing subordination as an apology, a return gift, a symbol of solidarity and love. I was told that even a death could be 'paid for' with 'une, the gift being called pwaoli.30 There are normative prescriptions for each type of gift, making its reason clear and giving instructions for the appropriate reaction of the receiver(s). Here, I will only give an overview of the different types of 'Big Gifts', classified according to the emotional background and reason for their presentation. It appears that they are used to consolidate relations between people who otherwise cannot mention personal feelings due to the notions of respect (amayaba) and self-control (alamai'ita). As the restrictions between affines are most severe in these terms, kitomwa are often used, a point that Thune also makes for Duau society: "In a real way, the central area for kitoma valuables is the local, affinally-defined sphere, for it is in service to local needs and ambitions that they are traded in the kula" (1983:357).

Local exchange is facilitated by 'une in matters of land for gardening. After the land

30 See also Macintyre (1983c:375-376).
of a father's matrilineage or a befriended matrilineage has been used, a gift of gratitude is expected. The period of use might be long before some compensating 'gift' should be given to the landowners; it depends on the individual agreement and current state of affairs. The longer it is overdue the more valuable it should be, consisting of a pig if possible, as well as mwali or bagi. This gift (bwa'a manuna - for the land) is handed over partly as compensation, partly as a token of friendship and gratitude (oboboma). Compensation and gratitude might also have been the motives behind the gift of bagi or mwali in the context of a new overseas canoe (epoi) – a complex process with many prescribed elements of exchange that is about to be forgotten these days due to the availability of dinghies and diesel-engine boats. After the large canoe had been built and used for the first time, its owner (toniwaga) should give a valuable called wau ana oli (canoe-its-oiling), to his crew to express gratitude for their help in building and performing at the ceremony of the first trip (egayo), as well as to ensure their future help and solidarity.

As Jamie in the example cited above stated, "Only someone who gives something big has a right to speak openly (awagwae)". This is the rule that allows quarrels to be brought into the open in spite of the ethical value of self-control (alamai'ita) that is so characteristic of Dobu interaction. Big men (sometimes women) represent their matrilineage when they rise in front of baskets of yams and a pig, take a shell valuable from their bag, and throw it (ule) at the feet of their opponents with an expression of disgust. Those who are accused, or feel ashamed and angry, have to remain quiet and accept the insults. They will try to return the gift as soon as possible, so that they are entitled to make a counter speech and acquit themselves of the shame (see Chapter Eight). Affines, who are expected to display politeness and friendship, can express their true feelings only when they hand over such a 'Big Gift'. The context for these ta'ona gifts can be on a personal level or as a reaction to some delict against one's matrilineage. The giving of 'Big Gifts' can also be a strategy of 'hiding' wealth. Often, it is more desirable to have material wealth 'stored away' in the form of credit that can be activated when needed, than to have it attracting the attention of those who could become 'envious' (e'ipi'ipi).

As Kaibado put it: "A pig that is penned in my hamlet needs food and
maintenance, but if my friend owes me a pig, I have it without having to feed it, my mothers and sisters will not ask me for it, my neighbour will not be angry about its depredating, and no 'old lady' becomes envious" (field notes).

The 'Big Gift' is located 'at the heart of exchange'. Its symbolic power lies in its convertability into personal qualities (fame/name, 'work' and 'love'). As valuables are publicly passed on, they carry a message about their donor's personal qualities, such as knowledge and the capacity for acquiring and managing wealth. They indicate a person's record as a member of a social group and the 'work' that was required to solicit them. Thirdly, a Big Gift carries a message about personal feelings like 'anger' (gamwaso'ala) in a gift of ta'ona, or 'love' (oboboma) as in gifts between 'fathers' and 'children' (loduwaduwa, talo, pegita). These aspects give 'Big Gifts' their symbolic capacity to balance social debts that were created by a person's 'work' (paisewa) for the donor. Such symbolism makes it possible to use 'Big Gifts' as compensation, for the use of gardening land or even for homicide (pwaoli). As a social tool, 'Big Gifts' can be used to mend relationships in times of conflict, or as a social weapon they can be used to destroy an enemy's name.

Unless a 'Big Gift' is compensatory, the recipient is obliged to give an equal return in the form of 'une' or an equivalent amount of 'work' (this includes the old practice of using humans as gifts, see Macintyre 1983a: 233) or land rights. Failure to balance debts of 'Big Gifts' is perceived as a sign of personal incompetence and a lack of social support. The public gaze is particularly focussed on such cases, shaming those persons who cannot meet their exchange obligations by informal gossip about his or her 'bad' character (to'umali-). While it is a matter of pride to give 'Big Gifts', it is not only shameful to be unable to reciprocate such gifts but also dangerous. People in Dobu acknowledge this when stating that 'people have died for 'une' (tomota si mwamwasa 'une manudi). If consolidation is not achieved through gifts, if debts are not returned within the scheduled period, and if the management of bebai and 'une is disturbed because of failure to reach consensus,

31 See Chapter Two for a discussion of 'good' (boboa-) and 'bad' (to'umali-).
32 See also Munn (1990:15 n.5, 7).
everybody expects further sanctions in the form of sickness or death within the matrilineage. These sanctions are said to be executed through magical techniques of either witchcraft or sorcery.
Chapter Five

THE GIFT THAT KILLS - WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY
Name of the gift: bolausa (poison)

INTRODUCTION
In the previous chapters, gifts have been discussed as strategies of social interaction to formalise, redefine, or end relationships. In this interactional context, gifts are used to express and create feelings and thoughts in an informal manner on an everyday basis, and sometimes in formalised, 'staged', presentations in connection with 'Big Gifts'. A person's interactive options often also involve sorcery or witchcraft. Strategically, attempts are made to 'pay back', to win someone's blind trust and admiration, or to induce sickness or death. The range of 'gifts that kill' (to use Mauss' term [1990:255]) is wide and not confined to specialists. In this chapter, I will link beliefs in sorcery and witchcraft to a person's social conduct, gender, and the notion of self-consciousness.

Interesting in this context is the double meaning of 'work' (paisewa) as a synonym for exchange and as a personal characteristic and virtue of individuals. As gift exchange is 'work', a 'hardworking' person should participate in exchanges, and gain authority in the internal sphere of management of wealth. This 'work' reflects on positive character traits, increases the chances of inheritance of 'une, and eventually creates a halo of fame that in turn strongly influences future exchanges. The frequency of exchanges depends on the nature of the exchanged objects. While it is common to give and take small gifts (lema, oboboma) on an everyday basis, the exchange of 'Big Gifts' is far less frequent. Accordingly, a person can show responsibility, virtue, and good moral standing by clever participation in everyday exchanges while 'working' on his or her fame/name ('ale) for future involvement in the management of 'Big Gifts'.
Gender ideology properly regards women as the reproducing sex and supports their 'work' as managers of yams, giving adult women full responsibility for their perpetuation and the fame for her success. Men are more likely to be 'speakers' and publicly 'stage' exchange events, including the kula gift exchange, typically announcing the 'name of the gift' and its reason in short orations. For both men and women ideal behaviour is based on the same principles of 'respect' (amayaba), 'self-control' (alamai'ita) and 'generosity' (oboboma). In this sense, a person's 'good conduct' (bubuna bobo'ana) is subject to the constant evaluation of others. As 'conduct' can be translated into 'work' (paisewa), a 'hardworking' person of either gender can expect to be given wealth, fame, and a set of spells and techniques as aides to retain this fame. On the other hand, a 'lazy' person can expect quite the contrary, and in extreme cases even sickness and death, interpreted as induced by either sorcery or witchcraft. Of course, this system cannot 'keep everyone happy'. Conflicts invariably arise, which Dobu people generally attribute to the personal failure and 'bad conduct' of individuals. In many such cases, shaming gifts (like ta'ona) serve as a coercive social tool, especially if they consist of yams and 'une.

Fellow hamlet residents, a spouse and his or her matrilineage, strangers, people with little material wealth, and kula competitors, however, are for different reasons not always vulnerable to shaming gifts. The common reaction in such cases is to secretly perform 'magical mischief' on an opponent, so that sickness, accidents, and death are usually interpreted in terms of sorcery and witchcraft.

Fortune (1932, 1954a [1932], 1954b [1932], 1960) branded 'Dobuans' as cruel and antisocial individuals for their concern with sorcery and witchcraft, but he also acknowledges a functional aspect to the phenomenon as a means of self assertion, status levelling and economic competition:

To sum up, the black art is used not only for collecting bad debts and enforcing economic obligation, in vendetta to avenge one's own sickness or one's kinsman's death, to wipe out any serious insult offered to one, and for the sake of 'trying it out' to see

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1 Stephen states that "death is specifically linked with punishment in Melanesia" (1987:289).
2 See also Munn for a Massim example for this kind of interpretation (1990:6).
how it works. It is also used generally 'to cast down the mighty from their seat' (1932:175-6).

In fact, the egalitarian ethic is a resistant foil to individuals who attempt to 'show-off' (gagasa) at the expense of others. When a person is said to 'show-off', this statement implies his or her lack of 'respect' (amayaba) and 'friendliness' or 'generosity' (oboboma). It applies to anyone who makes a point of working harder than others, boasting about his or her own achievements and exploiting them without either sharing or exercising polite restraint. The metaphor of vertical movement is used in Dobu: witchcraft and sorcery are the means to 'bring down' (sa'u mwauta) individuals who are too ambitiously motivated (nuatue, literally 'the mind climbs up'). Only a senior person's striving for fame is socially respected; it is accepted under the presumption that his or her secret power must have prevented previous attacks and will probably do so in the future as well.

It has often been argued that the fear of witchcraft and sorcery is a basic element of Melanesian society, enforcing morals and keeping personal conflicts within a frame of covert revenge. An analysis of this belief system in relation to the concept of the person gives further insights. Macintyre points to the value of such an approach:

Stories about witches and spirit beings of various sorts provided far richer material on Tubetube ideas of embodiment, social and individual morality, and personhood than did the abstraction and symbolisation of objects in mortuary ceremonies (1995:40).

In Dobu, witchcraft and sorcery are not conceptualised as absolutely exclusive domains of men and women. The distinction is not as clear as in other societies in Melanesia or Africa. Both are incorporated in the sphere of exchange through their ability to mediate emotions and relationships. As I will show in this chapter, gifts of 'poison' (bolausa) are integrated in the belief system as 'reply' (e'isa) or 'repayment' (maisa): a retributive measure responding to the victim's 'bad conduct' (bubuna to'umalina) that can be characterised as 'negative exchange'. My focus of interest is the impact of witchcraft and sorcery on the mind. From a phenomenological

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perspective, the mind is subject to 'magical seduction' (to use Weiner's term [1984]). At a more analytical level, I argue that this belief system has a compelling effect on people's minds. It induces a strongly developed sense of self-consciousness founded on the belief of constant social control through surveillance: the eternal gaze.

THE GENDER OF 'MAGICIANS'

On Dobu, sorcery is regarded as a set of predominantly male techniques that are often acquired from Duau, 'where the real sorcerers come from'. Witchcraft is a female practice that has 'always been with Dobu women'. These gender roles are flexible, though with a female bias: while most women know minor sorcery and healing techniques, men can only occasionally become witches (Roheim 1948-49:305). In talk about both matters, a stereotypical gendering is assumed by Dobu informants, but in concrete cases it is not so simple. As in Tubetube, where according to Macintyre "the powers of witches and sorcerers are in fact viewed as overlapping rather than distinct", men and women can be both sorcerers and witches, using "similar spells for the same ends" (1987:222). According to Dixon, the term for "a woman unacquainted with witchcraft" is *sinetai* — *sine* means woman, *tai* means man, so that *sinetai* refers to a woman who is more like a man because she is not a witch (Dixon n. d.:166). The following table compares distinctive attributes of witches and sorcerers stipulated by informants in Dobu:
Table 9: Characteristics of witchcraft and sorcery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Witchcraft (<em>welabana</em>)</th>
<th>Sorcery (<em>balau</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>knowledge ('fire') received as child</td>
<td>knowledge (spells etc.) received as adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intrinsic power</td>
<td>extrinsic power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all women</td>
<td>only people with prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always denies being a witch</td>
<td>is proud of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eats corpses</td>
<td>strict diet to stay 'hot'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operates as part of a coven</td>
<td>operates alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typical 'Dobu feature'</td>
<td>mainly imported from Duau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarded as 'cold'</td>
<td>regarded as 'hot'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burns when taking Holy communion</td>
<td>can take Holy communion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is 'envious' (<em>e'ipi'i</em>pi*) and evil</td>
<td>is 'angry' (<em>gamwaso</em>ala*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that there is a clear dichotomous attribution to the roles of *welabana* and *balau*. According to Stephen, however, distinctions between 'sorcerer' and 'witch' begin to blur when comparing belief systems in Melanesia (1987:286). For the Dobu situation, she proposes the term 'female sorcery' instead of 'witchcraft':

[The Dobu witch] is associated with the devouring mother and other images of destructive female powers, the Dobuan sorceress deliberately conjures such images, using them to intimidate and control others.... Dobuan and Trobriand female sorcery can be seen as a reflection of the high status women have in these societies, since women are able to turn fears of their powers into a means of intimidating others (Stephen 1987:287).

In Stephen's comparative perspective, the Massim witch shows little resemblance to, for example, the Highlands witch, being more legitimately established in a matrilineal regime that does not discriminate against women as the 'weaker' sex. In this regard, *welabana* indeed have more in common with Melanesian sorcerers in their way of mediating 'supernatural' power (see Stephen 1987, diagram p.277). Stephen explains the power of Massim 'sorceresses' in terms of their ideology of

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4 Patterson outlines the fundamental differences between Melanesia and Africa, the focal ethnographic area in former discussions of these issues (1974:132).
matrilineal descent, giving more social responsibility to women and thereby approximating the image of the sorcerer as the 'punitive father figure' who wields political power (1987:265, 291ff). Although her argument is convincing in a comparative view of witchcraft, I retain the classic terminology for practical reasons. By restricting my argument to the Dobu perspective of welabana (witches) and balau (sorcerers), I use the English terms for the reader's convenience, without assuming that they provide an adequate translation.

Contrasting witchcraft and sorcery with other aspects of gender in Dobu, one finds interesting similarities to the management of 'Big Gifts'. As I pointed out in Chapter Four, women exercise absolute and exclusive control over yams, while both sexes compete for 'une' (pigs and shell valuables). In the same way, women receive supernatural knowledge unconditionally as children, while both sexes have to compete for sorcery spells. Like yams, witchcraft is passed on within the matrilineage, while the acquisition of sorcery spells requires an adept's 'work' and 'help' (lemma) for the mentor as well as a 'payment' (maisa). Sorcery is therefore seen as extrinsic, as 'expensive knowledge', while witchcraft is more like an intrinsic talent – or a curse. Macintyre has observed a matrilineal bias in Tubetube society on similar grounds (1987:221-2).

This ideology is directly related to notions of power and social conduct, explaining Roheim's view that "the barau is always an esa'esa, the witch rarely an arawata" (1948-49:292). As witches are believed to transmit their power to their daughters at an early age, no consideration of the daughter's social skills can precede initiation and hence some witches end up with more power than they can use wisely. Sorcerers, by contrast, have proven their social skills before they are given secret spells in an ongoing process of evaluation by elders. Senior women, however, are always treated with the utmost friendliness and respect for fear of their supposed

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5 Obviously, the term 'supernatural' refers to powers that are unacknowledged by Western understanding. Dobu people accept 'supernaturals' as natural elements of their world.

6 Glick (1973) suggests the utility of a distinction between 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' in relation to sorcery and witchcraft in Melanesia (as quoted by Patterson 1974:140).
retributive capacities as witches. Macintyre argues that the concept of witchcraft bolstered the authority of women in Tubetube:

Indeed, people believed that if a senior woman was insulted or offended she would vindictively destroy garden crops or kill her own grandchildren. Witchcraft was a mighty sanction available only to women and women with such powers at their disposal were not to be trifled with (1987:217).

Witches are believed to cooperate in their activities, dance in the bush at night, alter their appearance, and have a 'fire' (kaia-) in their vaginas (perceived as a body part, as the possessive suffix <-gu> indicates). In contrast, sorcerers are expected to act in secret as single persons, invisible rather than altered, and without special body substances. In spite of their 'fire', witches are regarded as 'cold' in contrast to sorcerers, who need to be 'hot' for their activities (Roheim 1948-49:300). The symbolic significance of 'cold' (gogai) and 'hot' (yaiyai) has been discussed in Chapter Two in relation to other bodily states. The fundamental differences between them are also reflected in the missionaries' declaration that became common belief that witches die (burned by their internal fire, kaia-) when taking Holy communion, while sorcerers do not.

The skills and desires of witches (also discussed by Bromilow 1910:473, 1912:418-9) have been briefly outlined in Chapter Two. Dobu people believe that the most potent sorcery techniques were brought to Dobu from Duau while witchcraft is believed to have evolved locally. For this reason, witches of Dobu Island and Bwaiowa (south Fergusson Island) are particularly dangerous, while other Massim areas, even Kiriwina, are said to be free of witchcraft. Although said to be more

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7 See also Bromilow (1910:483ff, 1912:425); Lithgow (1975); Roheim (1948-49:279ff, 1950a:213) for details and interpretations of kaia-; see also Chapter Two, above.

8 In her account of Tubetube witchcraft Macintyre mentions a white substance, like ambergris, that is located somewhere close to the kidneys of witches (1995:40). I did not hear about this in Dobu.

9 In contrast, Macintyre states that witchcraft in Tubetube is regarded more like a force from outside (1995:42).

10 Malinowski, however, describes similar features of Kiriwina witches, including the belief that they have sexual relationships with a spirit named Tauva'u (1929:41-2). Munn spells the name Tawuvaw for Gawa (1986:219). He is probably identical with Tauhau, a notable Milne Bay culture hero (see Kaniku 1975). Cecil Abel called Tau-Hau an "ancient and mystical lord" (1967:3).
powerful, the witches of Dobu share general features with those of Duau (Roheim 1948-49, 1950a:202ff; Thune 1980:96ff; Schlesier 1983:125) and Tubetube (Macintyre 1987, 1995). Witches are occasional lovers of the powerful bush-spirit Taumudumudulele, who is believed to be the genitor of all children with ginger-coloured hair and light skin. Witches are believed to crave human flesh and to kill for the purpose of eating their victims' bodies after burial. Sometimes, being about to kill, a witch would begin a nocturnal wailing called dopelapela (literally 'crying-throwing'). People's accounts of encounters with witches always mention the changed features of the witch in contrast to her normal face: the eyes become big and round, the nose grows much longer, the ears become large, the tongue hangs out of the mouth. These terrifying features reflect the witches' enhanced capacities to see, smell and hear, and to be greedy for food. All the witnesses who spoke to me about these matters reported their terrible fear, described as a feeling of coldness inside the body, of a contraction of the stomach, and of cold sweat. A woman who had lived most of her life in urban settlements told me that she used not to believe in witchcraft, until one night she had a feeling of panic and felt sure she could sense the presence of a witch. With prayers, she concluded, she made the witch go away, but she felt very uneasy about staying on Dobu and planned to return to town.

Witches are thought to kill more frequently than sorcerers. The most dangerous witches are the women who live in the same hamlet as oneself. Some women are

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11 The witches of Milne Bay, I was told many times, own a huge ship and have travelled on it as far as Japan and Australia.

12 According to Schlesier, in Me'udana (Normanby Island) Taumudumudulele is believed to be 'the boss' of the inhabitants of the underground, menumu or gelaboi (1983:113). In Tubetube, his name literally means 'He-who-tatoos-female-pudenda', referring to a former practice of female initiation (Macintyre 1987:215) also mentioned in Kaniku's version. As in Dobu, he is a culture-hero who sleeps with the witches. In Misima, he is the evil leader of all witches (Macintyre 1990:84).

13 Endo-cannibalism is regarded as disgusting but viewed with less horror than in other regions of Papua New Guinea (cf. Strathern 1982). It is impossible to prove any connection with the exo-cannibalism of precolonial times, although there are some interesting differences and similarities.

14 The verb pela also refers to pushing a canoe into the sea, throwing yam seeds on the mounds when planting, and passing on a kula shell.

15 Digim'Rina has pointed out to me that from an economic perspective it is 'cheaper' to kill one's
said to be worse than others, 'champions' through inheritance from their mothers who had also been 'champions'. Self control (alamai'ita) is an important capability for a witch; she has to pretend to be a good woman, always friendly and helpful, generous and warm hearted – oboboma alena. But in her witch guise she lets it all go; she is greedy and evil, dangerous and super-powerful, envious and full of hatred.\textsuperscript{16} Although the secret organisation of the witches is said to be structured around hamlets, villages or localities, their meetings are irregular. Dances take place on moonless nights and if there has been no death for a long period, hunger for meat forces the welabana to take action.\textsuperscript{17} Witches are also individually active and love to roam at night on sinister private business. In this regard they resemble sorcerers, who generally act as individuals in the dark. As individuals, their power depends on their 'name' and their status, both the results of their 'work' in the past. In these terms, a person's power is not judged on principles of gender but on a level of personal interaction based on intimate knowledge of one another's behaviour. As on Tubetube Island, an individual's potency is assessed on personal grounds and almost regardless of gender. In relation to a case of public sorcery accusation Macintyre states:

\begin{quote}
In their evaluation of sorcery and witchcraft speakers stressed that neither was the greater form of magical power but that variations occurred on the basis of individual knowledge. The relative potency of specific spells could only be assessed in terms of actual cases (1987:226).
\end{quote}

own hamlet fellow than to kill an affine, as the mortuary feasting requires less outlay for a hamlet member (pers. com. December 1997).

\textsuperscript{16} During my research, I was warned many times to stay away from certain individuals, and I know that some people were very worried about my safety. I was told that my surviving field work in spite of my material wealth, occasional breaking of etiquette, chewing of 'suspicious' betelnuts, and general ignorance of 'protective magic', left quite a few people wondering whether I might be a witch myself.

\textsuperscript{17} The connection between eating meat (pork) and death is obvious to everyone on Dobu. Only feasts provide meat, and bwabwale is the most frequent occasion. As Edgar, my teenaged 'brother' put it: "People shall die so that we can eat pork!" (Tomota si da mawasa be ta da ai aada bawe!).
NEGATIVE EXCHANGE

Witchcraft and sorcery exist as causal interpretations of sickness and death. As such, they are elements of everyday interactive discourse and exchanges. The punitive reaction of a sorcerer or witch is interpreted as a reply (e'isa) or 'payback' (maisa). It seems reasonable to assume that from a Dobu point of view witchcraft and sorcery are part and parcel of the same system of exchange. From an economic perspective they belong to the sphere of 'negative exchange', a term employed by Sahlins (after Gouldner 1960), since they are valued as 'negative' in a moral sense, like 'self-interested seizure' and 'forceful appropriation' (Sahlins 1972:191). Not only do the actions of sorcerers and witches cause negative emotions such as pain and grief, but they are also understood to be antisocial ways of dealing with one's own negative emotions of 'anger' and 'envy'. Furthermore, in the context of kula exchange, sorcery and witchcraft are typical sanctions between rivals or competitors; in this respect they might be considered to be part of 'negative exchange' as Munn employs the concept with reference to Gawa witchcraft in her analysis of the symbolic transformation of values. For Gawans, the witch represents pure selfishness, the antisocial attitude par excellence (1990:5). "Even though the witch's victim may be guilty of a moral fault, the witch is clearly regarded by Gawans as not simply wrong but evil" (1986:227). Munn concludes that witchcraft may well constitute a type of exchange:

Acts of "exchange" and "witchcraft" (and the characteristic structuring of the relevant practices) are then related within the terms of the model as parts of a unitary dialectical symbolism of self and societal construction (1986:267).

In her analysis, Munn points out that her Gawan informants describe a greedy and selfish person (the archetypical attributes of a witch) as "one who eats" (1986:220). In this light, the consumption of a corpse can be interpreted as a witch's gift to herself and her companions to satisfy their 'greed', disregarding the

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18 See also Lepowsky (1994:285) and Macintyre (1995:41) for similar observations.
19 See also Macintyre (1995:41). For a further discussion of the notion of 'eating' see Chapter Eight.
communal 'work' that the mortuary feasting demands of all their relatives who 'do not eat'. Similarly, a witch who sacrifices her children to Taumudumudulele in exchange for a better yam harvest acts selfishly because the whole hamlet has to contribute wealth for mortuary feasting while she alone benefits from her extra vegetable wealth. Greed and selfishness (which in Dobu terms represent a lack of self-discipline and 'respect') are typical of witches and form an aspect of Dobu life that is expected to exist forever.

The diagram below draws on the moral distinction of 'negative' and 'positive' in showing the effects of conduct (or 'work') on a person's physical appearance and social standing. Exchanges on this level are conceptualised as being caused by the supernatural powers of individual agents, whether witches or sorcerers.

If a dichotomy of 'negative' and 'positive' exchange is accepted, most of the contemporary 'negative exchanges' are performed by either sorcery or witchcraft. Since raiding has been outlawed for more than a century, overt violence has become a matter of 'bad conduct' that is supposedly punished by jail sentences rather than sanctioned as a legitimate form of masculine power. Such cases are deliberated by the magistrate in Esa'ala, while minor thefts, cases of adultery, insult
and gossip are sometimes brought before the public in the weekly village council meetings. Individuals are generally very restricted in their opportunities for open confrontation, so the secret infliction of retribution by 'magical' means remains the most powerful option. From a Western perspective, typically sceptical of all 'magic', this type of negative exchange is one-sided, since in most cases the revenge takes place only in the mind of the victim or the perpetrator.20

Emotions of retribution

While it is difficult to draw a clear line between witchcraft and sorcery as distinct complexes of belief, the interpretation of actual events in these realms is fairly consistently based on a gendered use of emotion words. The problem of the translation of 'emotion words' has been discussed in recent contributions to a broader anthropological discussion of 'emotions' (e.g. Lutz 1988; Schieffelin 1985:168ff). The motive for a witch's action is generally said to be 'jealousy' or a 'jealous heart' (e'ipi'i'ipi).21 This feeling typically derives (it is thought) from attitudes of stinginess (deba'ose), greediness (sida alena), and arrogance (gagasa). Other reasons for killing (exchange obligations with other witches or with Taumudumudulele) are never explicitly mentioned in general statements, although they are often referred to in specific cases. In contrast, the feeling of anger (gamwaso'ala) is offered as a typical reason for a sorcerer's killing. Such anger may be caused by insult (ena pa'ala), gossip (ona besobeso), or the annoying behaviour of those who are always angry (gamwaso'ala alena), lazy (eno alena), complaining (lomugimugi alena), stubborn (opa'ala alena), arrogant (gagasa), roaming around (adadana besobeso alena), or frequent adultery (sogala alena). All such attitudes and behaviour would be classified as 'disrespectful' to the point of making a sorcerer 'angry', or as 'showing-off' (gagasa) to the point of making witches

20 A similar argument is made by Stephen (1987:250).
21 See also Munn (1990:16 n.10).
'jealous'. The problem of translating 'emotion words' is obvious in the case of *gamwaso'ala* and *e'ipi'ipi* ('anger' and 'envy'), as the English terms do not convey the dark implication of life-threatening punishment through sorcery or witchcraft. The terms *gamwaso'ala* and *e'ipi'ipi* refer not only to mere feelings; they are used as rhetorical devices to talk about actual cases of sickness and death without explicitly referring to sorcery ('anger') or witchcraft (envy').

In discourse, 'envy' can serve as an appropriate explanation for someone's 'anger', a way of phrasing that makes it possible to speak about witchcraft and sorcery without direct reference to them. While 'anger' can be caused by many kinds of 'bad conduct', 'envy' is directly linked to material concerns. The transcript of a narrative given below describes a (then) recent case of death that the narrator, a middle-aged woman who was herself a typical target, saw as directly linked to conflict over land. She gives only a hint that witches were believed to be responsible by using the word *e'ipi'ipi*.

There is the case of a man who died recently, last year. He went and worked in town for a longer time and when he came back they were jealous (*e'ipi'ipi*) of him because of quarrels about land rights. The people from his village in Waluma [Fergusson Island] behaved as if it were their land and that they had all the land rights and he himself had none. So one morning he told his wife that she should buy things on the market and then go and see her people. And as the wife went to see her people, he went for a walk by himself, came back, laid down [head pointing inland] and he died (recorded interview L.M., 17.12.1993).

'One something' - the realm of 'magic'

In general, witches and sorcerers do not kill without good reason (*geya'abo si da unui daidaisi*). This reason is not always obvious to others, because sorcerers and witches are believed to have access to methods that strengthen their physical and mental powers, enabling them to perform supernatural movements, to assume animal forms, to take prophylactic measures (like invisibility), to kill and to heal, to succeed beyond imagination in yam gardening and pig tending, and to influence

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22 The emotions of Gawa witches are described along similar lines (Munn 1986:221).
others' minds. They are able to use the narrow underground tunnel, believed to connect the north and south coast of Dobu Island, visible as two holes that are far too small for normal persons to enter. In addition to these skills, sorcerers and witches are believed to be able to call upon support from ancestors and other spirit beings.

Roheim is the only anthropologist who managed to collect and publish the secret spells of witches from this area (1948-49). Sorcery practices, however, are rather more accessible to investigation. I learned about them on the basis of friendship and gratitude for the 'work' and 'help' I gave to informants. Another method of finding out about these personal secrets is forceful persuasion, as was successfully demonstrated by Fortune. In line with my general method of following distinctions inherent in the Dobu language, I will give an overview of the different types of sorcery. In everyday discourse, particular techniques are concealed by referring to them as 'one something' (*ebwe'u yage*), or 'a plant' (*ebwe'u kaiwe*).

*Nabwasuwa* is the general term for sorcery but it refers more specifically to the sorcery of magical killing, known by very few people. The practice of fasting and meditating before trapping, hypnotising, and cutting open the victim with a lime spatula (*bibi*) as described by Fortune and others is still known by some men on Dobu. I cannot claim to have gained as much information as Fortune because of the secrecy surrounding *nabwasuwa*. Only two senior men claimed success in killing witches by using *nabwasuwa* but they refused to go into detail. There seems to be a range of techniques, such as symbolic killing by thrusting a knife into a banana stem after certain preparations, and entrapment of a victim through contact with a bespelled object. As in many parts of the world, personal leavings (*sumwana*) are vulnerable to sorcery. As noted, *nabwasuwa* can also mean 'sorcery' in general, and in Christian rhetoric especially it appears in conjunction with *welabana*. Fighting magic is also classed as *nabwasuwa* and is still in use among some men. An ex-boxer told me some methods, spells and plants one can use against attackers, claiming that their effects were amazing. In soccer, too, players can increase their strength and skill with magical techniques, enabling them to shoot the ball 'so that it
flies like a bullet'.

*Bwayawe* is the term for healing techniques, women's medicine and anti-witch-medicine. Some spells, diets and applications of medicinal plants are known by most people, and some individuals have secret exercise books in which they have written the spells. These spells are also called *nabwasuwa* and people remark that 'in the olden days' they were believed to function on their own provided the sorcerer's body was 'hot'. Today, however, *nabwasuwa* are expected to work only in combination with material substances, such as roots and leaves. Sometimes a spirit being that lives in a certain plant is called upon to help the healing process, and usually the healer (*to'oba*) eats or drinks the same medicine as the patient to demonstrate that there is no intention of poisoning. A few *to'oba*, for instance the famous Paua from Bwaiowa, are known for their skill of extraction magic.

Women are knowledgeable in ethnomedicine, and use the same techniques as men. In this category of magical practices, the spirits of certain places or plants are sometimes invoked for their help.

One day, I stepped against a sharp stick and cut my foot. It bled profusely and I began to worry. If it became infected it could confine me to my house for a week, but I wanted to join a *kula* expedition in just a few days! My friend, hearing of the accident, promised to help. He went into the bush behind the hamlet and collected some leaves of a tree he called *Lalanuma* (blood-drink). We went into a kitchen hut and he heated the leaves on the fire one by one, then held them in the palm of his hand close to his mouth and whispered a spell. The prepared leaves were placed on the wound one by one, wrapped around my toe and tied with a string. My friend explained afterwards that his spell summoned the female spirit of the *Lalanuma* tree: "Your son is bleeding! Come and lick the wound!" I was told to keep the bandage dry, which was a problem, because at high tide the toilet could not be used without getting wet feet. I managed to follow his advice, however, and the wound healed well (field notes, 20.9.1993).

*Tabu* is a more commonly known method of inflicting sickness or death. It is the

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23 This kind of magic is said to have been the reason for the past notoriety of the 'Dobuans' as fierce warriors.

24 As Stephen remarks from a comparative perspective, in Melanesia sorcery and healing are often done by the same person, dealing with 'everyday concerns' of health as well as with sorcery practices (1987:267).

25 See also Fortune 1960.
magical protection of property, such as fruit trees, and is widely practiced on Dobu. Most men and women know only a few different spells, and could only confirm that those on Fortune’s list (1932:144) are likely *tabu* that might indeed be possessed by certain people. Common *tabu* are boils (*lalawa*) and sores (*bonu*), skin deseases (*sipoma*), tooth loss, and fevers. Each *tabu* spell has its counter-spell, *loulasa*, which enables its owner to remove an affliction from a thief once he or she has given an apologetic *ta’ona* gift and begged for pardon.

*Awasa’usa’u* (mouth-to-be-putting) are methods of attraction, so-called love-magic. The most important purpose is to attract a *kula* partner and the strongest formula is used exclusively for this purpose. Weaker ones can be used for any other ends, especially fishing, hunting, and sex. As a general principle, these ‘somethings’ operate by altering a victim’s perceptions and feelings: a fish feels drawn towards the hook and wants to bite; a wild boar feels an urge to run towards the net; a person sees the user of the ‘something’ as the most beautiful human on earth and his or her emotions are transformed into uncontrollable desire. There are presumably hundreds of recipes, some of them containing water from Mount Bwebweso or coconut oil (*bunama*) with additional ingredients; others are based on manipulated betel, cigarette butts, personal leavings; or special ink for writing letters; certain leaves are used in a plethora of spells for the same purpose. Women have access to this type of magic, too; in fact everybody has some more or less potent ‘somethings’, and from adolescence onwards individuals attempt to learn ‘stronger’ ones. Although most people would not be specific about techniques, I heard stories of success from women and men of all ages, though it was older men who claimed truly fantastic results. For example, an ex-member of the national parliament told me that he used *awasa’usa’u* methods for his campaign and observed that the audience was remarkably more attentive when he chewed certain seeds with his betel. On the other hand, older women are known to use their

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26 Fortune ‘tried it out’ with good results when he went to Basima (1932:141).

27 See also Battaglia for an example of Sabarl (Louisiade) ‘love and *kula* magic’ (1990:108-9).
'somethings' to attract the adolescent boys who roam around the hamlets at night.

As a friend explained to me confidentially:

Look at X. She is an old lady, look at her. Her breasts are only skin, her face is ugly. Her hair is falling out. No teeth. But she has many lovers, young and strong ones, handsome ones. Almost every night when her husband goes fishing, a boy climbs up to her house. You know why? She is using that 'something' that I told you about, so now you can tell how powerful it is.

More than once when feeling lonely I was comforted by female friends with their visions of my marriage:

You wait, and when we have transport to Fergusson, we go and I will show you one plant ('kaiwe'). We take some leaves, and you keep them. When you are back in Germany, and you find the right one, maski if he doesn't like you. You have the leaves, so you'll show him the powers of Dobu. Just throw them upstream when you wash in the river, or in the surf if there is no river, like we do here. You wash and rub your body with some leaves, and when you see him afterwards... he will want you straight away and that's it (M.T.).

On the other hand, the possibility that I myself might become the victim of awasa'usa'u could not be ruled out, and close friends cautioned me constantly. I was not to accept gifts of betel nut or written messages from adolescent boys or married men. My 'aunt' explained:

Be careful and if a boy gives you a piece of paper do not read it! Because they all know different 'something' and if you read it or chew his betel nut... Already!! You think only about that man, you really, really want him. You pack up and go to his place. If he rejects you, you cry and cry until he accepts you for his wife. That's the way we do it, so be careful otherwise you will stay for good and never go back to your hamlet.28

THE VULNERABILITY OF THE MIND (NUA-)

From the Dobu perspective, sorcery and witchcraft have a two-fold power on minds. This can be fully understood only by reference to the Dobu concept of the person as an individual with an 'inner' and an 'outer' sphere. As I have argued in Chapter Two, the 'inner sphere' (sola-), comprising the 'mind' (nuu-), 'feelings'

28 It was Kaibado who promised help: "Ah, if that happens I can give you 'something' to wash with and you will be free again. Don't worry about it, just finish your work."
'character traits' (ale-), 'spirit' (yaluyaluwa-) and 'shadow' (ma'amayau) is individually constituted in a person. The 'outer sphere' (etana) is formed by kin relations, the blood (lala-), breast milk (susu-), and hand-palm lines (a- manua) constituting the individual as belonging to a set of relatives (i- boda). Social conduct of a person determines the skin condition (bwala-), the body shape (a-tubua), relative beauty (a- ita) and strength (a- waiwai). In acts of self-discipline (alamai'ita), individuals guard their 'inner sphere' from others by suppressing negative feelings and maintaining the friendly surface interaction that informs everyday life. It is difficult to access the 'true' feelings of mourners, who believe they know who killed their loved one but nevertheless have to control their feelings of grief and anger in accord with the ethic of alamai'ita: that is, by foregoing open blame and resorting instead to secret methods of retribution.\(^\text{29}\)

In this image, personal space hardly exists. As I stated in Chapter Three, no personal object is safe from being 'borrowed' for good, there is no privacy in the house, and a person's freedom to walk around is also very limited. In the light of witchcraft and sorcery beliefs, privacy becomes almost unthinkable, as thoughts and feelings are subject to 'magical' seduction and subversion, giving an individual the illusion of acting according to his or her free will. From a Dobu perspective, the mind is never safe, a feeling that has also been noted in other Massim societies.

Munn refers to Gawa islanders' "powers of persuasion and consent" (1990:14). Weiner observed that in Kiriwina, "the protection of 'one's mind' is a constant concern, for one's own space is always in danger of being seduced" (1984:165). Macintyre gives an account of this form of seduction from Tubetube:

> Seduction is the art of persuasion and agreement, not conquest and surrender. Love magic, like all forms of magic aimed at influencing others, is meant to obviate conflict or opposition by making the person believe that he or she desires the enchanter (1987:213).

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\(^{29}\) See also Munn (1986:68) for the Gawan concept of "intrinsic hiddenness of another person's views or intentions" and "signs" to uncover intentions or hide them behind "pretense and deception".
When I asked about the agency behind deaths, it was mostly located within the hamlet and in some cases clearly attributed to particular persons (witches); at other times it was only generally attributed to 'some woman'. I heard of no actual cases of killing by sorcery, but many accounts of the seduction of minds and the affliction of sickness through sorcery. My data do not support Fortune's view that the hamlet is a safe place (1932:137) that led Young to infer that "the Dobuan can feel comparatively secure in the bosom of his susu, which forms his residential base. The Kalauna individual is denied even this" (1971:134). As in Kalauna, there is no place to hide in Dobu. Safety derives from 'good conduct', especially by 'working' for senior relatives. After all, a helpful neighbour is of no use when dead.

The most common way to penetrate someone's mind and body is to give a 'gift that kills', such as a betelnut that has been charmed or 'poisoned'. Betelnuts that carry a potent charm can influence the receiver's mind (nua-) as well as physical body. In both cases the Dobu term would be 'poison' (bolausa), even if one of them is so-called 'love magic' that is known by numerous people of both sexes, and the other the deadly poison of a hateful sorcerer or a greedy witch, designed to kill.30 In this sense, 'magical seduction' can be seen as violent rather than as 'persuasion and consent', a form of conquest or reprisal, a 'gift that kills'.

In Dobu, a constant awareness of one's situation in relation to witches and sorcerers is vital for survival. They are the neighbours who gaze at one's everyday activities with magically enhanced senses, having access to intimate information and forcing their will upon one's mind. Their capacity to kill by magic is feared, though it is more common to use gossip, 'words that kill', as an initial measure to express their discontent about a person's 'bad conduct'. The similarity of both strategies of social control is reflected in the frequently heard maxim that 'gossip and witchcraft will

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30 Patterson argues that 'poison' is actually a misnomer due to the questionable efficacy of the 'poisons' used (1974:146); but from a Dobu perspective 'poison' is used metaphorically as a means to conquer someone's mind as well as in the strict sense, in which, for example, tua (Derris root) is a fish poison (iyana adi bolausa) also capable of killing humans.
never stop'.\(^{31}\)

In yet another attempt to make my life miserable, my 'sister' told her mother that I had complained to Philip (an affine from another matrilineage) about her matrilineage's constant begging for food. As a result, all my 'mothers' approached me and demanded that I stop telling lies. Desperate to ease the situation, I asked Philip to assure them that I had never done so, but when he went and asked them to be spared from their gossiping, the conflict became even more acute. "How dare you involve outsiders in our problems!" my 'mother' yelled at me. I realised that I could not win against gossip (field notes, 4.11.1993).

**The perpetuation of fear *(matauta)*

Fear can be seen as an important mechanism of social control. From this functional perspective, the infliction of pain (or grief over the death of a loved one) is a legitimate punishment that has a major impact on social life. People assume that the fear of pain or grief induces or sanctions good behavior, and in the eyes of Dobu elders, the younger generation's lack of 'respect' *(amayaba)* is a result of a weakening of this pre-Christian ethic. In Chapter Two, I mentioned the ideal relationship between beauty, health and social status. Within this paradigm, 'bad', 'ugly', 'ignorant', 'powerless' people *(to'umali-)* are victims of the corporal punishment of disease infliction, while 'healthy', 'handsome', 'wise' and 'knowledgeable' people *(bobo'a-)* are either spared punishment or able to cure themselves.\(^{32}\)

It is in line with my argument that wrong behaviour, unwelcome character traits, and personal flaws are seen as the 'roots' *(ale-)* of trouble. Within this scheme, pity cannot be highly valued for it is understood as an interference with someone's revenge rather than as a positive emotion of empathy. Accordingly, comments on a person's accident, sickness, or disease usually stress that there is a reason behind it: *e'ina*! (serves you right!), *ni'atu u lotoi*! (now you feel it!); alternatively, comment

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\(^{31}\) See also Brison 1992.

\(^{32}\) See also Fortune (1932:176-7) for a discussion of the terms *tai bobo'ana* and *tokumali* *(sic)*.
is spared altogether. The reason may also lie in general conditions: "When the yalasi wind blows we get a cold"; "When the mango trees bear flowers, we get a running nose and headache". Or it can be due to stupid behaviour: "No wonder he has got a fever, why did he go swimming in the sea every day? Sea water is very strong. If we drink it we get sick after some days." "The children are all sick with a sore throat. Too many mangoes! It is the same every year". These causal links are also often suggested in 'hidden talk', when no-one wants to mention the suspicion of sickness or death being caused by serious 'bad conduct'. The following episode made it clear to me that attempts of medical help from an outsider (like me) were not always welcome and even seen as undermining the established (though constantly negotiated) modes of social control.

I stayed for a week in another village that was preparing for a huge feast and felt disgust as well as pity for one of the women who had a big infected sore on her leg. An owner of that hamlet, she looked after a small child while helping with the preparations for the exchange celebrations and I asked her about the kind of treatment she had already tried to heal the ulcer. She replied that neither antibiotic injections nor dressing of the wound had improved it and said that it seemed as if she just had to live with it. Her answer puzzled me and I followed the story up, to find out that everyone saw the ulcer as a just punishment for her absence from the hamlet at some earlier stage of the preparations. "We worked here and she stayed in her garden hut with her husband. She did not help us. So now she can feel it and we don't help her, too". One woman showed me her big scar and explained that she had an ulcer similar to the other women's but it was treated by a male member of the hamlet and healed within three days. "This ulcer cannot be treated with Western medicine (konin), it's a 'Dobu sore' that she contracted by walking past a plant enchanted with a tabu spell. This means that it can only be removed by the owner of the spell and if he wants to punish her he can. And she will feel it" (field notes).

The threat of physical pain is a common method of disciplining children, as I often observed. When curious children wanted to enter my house, their care giver

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33 Abo'ama bada a paisewa be tauna i ta be mamwanena i lugu bagulaya be tuta maibo'ana nada si miami. Geya'abo i lememaya ga gete tugai ana e'isa i loboloba manuna abo'ama wate geya'abo a lemalema bonuna ana giebobo'ana enega. (K.)

34 Bonu nina nigeya tuga bonu, gete Dobu bonuna be nigeya sawesawenaya be dimdim idi koniniega i bobo'ana. I lobenaya ebwe'u tabu enega be tai lowa tabu nina i sau'na tauna eguma ana loulasa i gibubui iabe i gumwagumwala. Ga eguma geyanuana manuna i gamwaso'ala kapekape'ana be atua ana e'isa mabonuna i miamia be ana lotona i lotoi. (K.) All Western medicine is called konin which etymologically stems from Quinine.
immediately called them back with hasty, hissing exclamations: "Don't go inside, there are witches (or snakes)!" (*Geya'aabo lugulugu, welabana [mwata]!*). This fear, instilled in early childhood, is perpetuated throughout life. Personal faults and risky behaviour (like accepting food or betelnuts from certain people) are strongly discouraged by the parents, who argue that the child can get hurt (*esilae*) as a result of 'bad' conduct. At the same time, the presence of witches and sorcerers is often pointed out to the child, usually as animals that are known to be adopted by witches as disguises. As a result children are very scared of fireflies (*kwanakwana*), especially at certain times of the night, when it is assumed that the insect must be a witch. This fear is reinforced by a genre of 'true stories' about incidents of corporal punishment, interpreted as caused by a witch or sorcerer. The stories underline the same ethical principles of respect, modesty, generosity, and self-control by reminding the audience of the physical harm that often follows 'bad conduct'. The genre also includes stories about knowledgeable ('good') men who use methods of sorcery to detect and evade the threat. They support my observations that the fear of witchcraft is not so prominent in older people who often claim to have secret knowledge to protect themselves.

The combination of a general fear of physical punishment and the awareness of a punisher's powerful capacity to penetrate one's mind leads, as I will argue, to an expanded and intensified self-consciousness with respect to both one's inner states and one's social standing. I believe that Fortune and others are wrong to interpret this state as 'paranoia' and argue instead that fear is less a pathological state in Dobu than a social tool, deploying 'real stories' (*ona ai'aila*) of painful punishments administered by sorcerers and witches. This genre of narratives about *welabana* typically requires a certain setting. The tales are usually told in a low voice with a conspiratorial tone. As the usual time for story telling is after the evening meal, signs of the presence of witches are constantly monitored. Fireflies, certain other insects and birds, perhaps witches in disguise, often interrupt, sometimes even terminate the narratives. The stories evoke both terror and assurance of one's own security for the time being. Two typical examples of night-time tales about witches
that I was told may serve as illustrations here:

My teacher had a brother who was married into Dobu. One night he woke up, missed his wife and secretly followed her. She was in the bush, sitting by a new grave in a cemetery with some other women. All were witches, as he could tell from the way they looked. He was scared but stayed for a while, observing the exhumation and the subsequent cutting of the body into pieces that were given to individual women. With terror the secret observer noticed that the head was given to his own wife. This meant that she had to contribute the next victim for a feast. So the man knew that he would be the next one to die. He left his wife the very next morning (M.B.).

A friend of mine from Goodenough whom I worked with had been married to a woman from Misima. While living in her village he woke up one night and realised that his wife was not next to him. So he got up and made 'one something' to be invisible. He had got this 'something' from his father and it worked very well. So he went looking for his wife, went and went and went until he reached the beach where he saw some women sitting together. Coming closer he recognised them as his wife with her sisters and mothers. He stayed close by and listened to their conversation. Soon he understood that they were actually plotting to kill him. He heard his wife saying: "So, tomorrow I will 'trick' him and ask him to go up this hill." He could not stand the joy of expectation glowing on the women's faces and returned to the house. Early the next morning he got up, packed his things and left her for good (M.B.).

Men's fear of witchcraft in affinal hamlets has been emphasised by Fortune (e.g. 1954a [1932]). Only a few male friends told me that they felt threatened by their wives and her female matrilineal relatives, and only then during confidential, intimate discussions about hopes, fears, regrets and life in general. They served to explain my friends' pessimistic outlook – or their intentions of leaving Dobu Island and living elsewhere (perhaps in Germany?).

I had an enlarged spleen and pain in my lower stomach and went to the hospital. I was lucky that a Rossell man was working there as a medical. He told me straight away that it was the fire (kaiyana) of my wife that was making me sick. He said that if I continued to sleep with her, I would be dead in 8-10 years. And really, when I returned home and stopped sleeping with her my pain stopped. That is why we don't have any children, because I never sleep with her. I treat her as my sister. But then her mothers were cross and I got cerebral malaria. I fell into coma for five days and when my brothers brought me to hospital in Salamo they thought I was already dead. After five days I woke up again and I was really shocked when they told me that I had been dead for five days. What saved me was my 'uncle', an old man who had put 'something' on the door of the ward to keep away the witches. So when my wife and her mothers came

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35 My informant preferred to tell these stories in English, perhaps as a measure of secrecy. In retrospect, I believe that this was more often the case than I realised during field work.
to see me (and to kill me) they did not enter the ward. This 'something' kept them outside. Since then I have been wearing this armband that the old man gave me and I am recovering. But I don't expect to reach old age, because one day they will get me (G.H.).

Some women are known to be 'champion witches' and there are many stories told to prove it. A concrete accusation of this (its basis the hearsay deemed improper within the matrilineage) was made for my benefit by a truly close friend who (like so many others) was worried about my frequent contact with a particular woman:

You know, when she lived in her husband's place [adjacent to the narrator's hamlet] one morning she got up very early to fetch water at the well. The other women were still sweeping the place but she went with her small son. When they were at the well her face changed into the way witches look. Her eyes and ears became large and her mouth very big. She started to dance. Maybe she got carried away by some evil thoughts, we don't know. But we saw her son, who was very frightened (matauta) and ran back to the village. The little boy did not know, he only told us what he had seen. Since then, we all know. Of course, we would never talk about it with her (B.P.).

Women and men also told me about their own hamlet mates killing for consumption or as repayment. I was often admonished to take precautions against potential witchcraft, especially when visiting other hamlets.

She once used the help of Taumudumudulele for a good harvest. That was for a sagali, and she had very good yams, kwateya and siakutu.\(^{36}\) Shortly afterwards her son died. You know why? She did not pay back Taumudumudulele with a pig but with her own son instead. Some women do that. She sent him to the bush and there Taumudumudulele killed him. She is a witch, that's why (K.J.).\(^{37}\)

You must not eat these betelnuts that this old lady gave you. I know that she is a champion witch. She has killed many people. She and her sisters. Have you noticed that there is only one man living here and that's their brother? The husbands all left, but it is not as if they are ugly or always fighting. No, they are witches and if you chew this betelnut you might die. They put poison in it or some other 'something'. They want to kill you (si bolausiyo) because they are jealous (M.M.).

Don't put the lamp low during the night because we have someone who is close to death in our village. The witches can smell this and it makes them happy and greedy. They stay close to the village and wait until the death. If it takes too long they might take the

\(^{36}\) This was mentioned because often one variety yields a better harvest.

\(^{37}\) See also Schlesier for similar reasoning in Me'udana (1983:124); also Digim'Rina for Basima (1995:101n.).
initiative or even kill somebody else. So take care, don't go out at night and leave the lamp on full (D.E.).

You never know... the loophole

In connection with the fear of witches, the concept of 'tricking' (kabo) is of importance. I was told many times, and in elaborate detail, how 'smart' people can 'trick' a witch, bribe her with gifts to change her into a 'guardian angel' (tolema), and even make her 'forget everything' (nuapupula mailbo'ana) forcing her to turn into a normal woman. According to my informants, it is not difficult to see a witch by using the 'native video' (as English-speaking Dobu Islanders would have it), eno'matamata'ita'ita, literally 'asleep-the-eyes-are-watching' (see also Chapter Two).\(^\text{38}\) It needs a 'trick' to influence someone's mind for one's own benefit, and only smart people are qualified to use lies and tricks (kabo) in this way. As long as nobody finds out, the practice attracts no moral stigma. Only those who have suffered a loss through somebody's kabo would complain afterwards, by reporting the case to the Dobu village councillor for example. However, according to general opinion kabo is a legitimate way of achieving a goal, proof of intellectual strength indeed. 'Ya kabokabo!' (I have tricked you!) is the happy exclamation of a child who has successfully pulled somebody's leg. Instead of the word 'lie', the word 'trick' or 'tricking' is used in every context when speaking English.

This point is important with regards to the efficiency of sorcery and witchcraft. Firstly, when valuable information, such as secret spells, is given away under pressure it is likely that the informant will be 'tricking' in some detail, thereby rendering the magic powerless. Fortune's data are surely correct in a general sense, as his informants did not remodel the general procedures or ingredients of sorcery methods. I was reminded by Dobu friends that it is very common to specify the 'wrong' plant, spell, or procedure if one is 'tired of being asked for it again and again' (sida limalimana be ni'atu a lo'ame'ame), just as one 'tricks' in material

\(^{38}\) Unfortunately, circumstances did not permit me to try this technique myself.
matters when demands become unreasonable. Fortune's data on sorcery are therefore useless in the eyes of Dobu people who believe that he must have been 'tricked' by his Tewara sorcerers with incomplete spells or incorrect ingredients.

Secondly, as an important element of homicide by either witches or sorcerers, 'tricking' emerges as a means of domination. People are 'tricked' into the illusion of safety; they trust the wrong man or woman, give an opportunity to the sorcerer or witch, and are then killed in secret. The successful killer, male or female, cannot rely on physical strength, as open violence is despised (and criminal these days). Those who are 'tricked' and get sick or die are also social 'losers' because they were not able to defend themselves with counter spells, the support of a knowledgeable elder, or intelligence (nuanua) and 'gut feeling' (loto).

It is understandable that the possibility of 'tricking' creates an atmosphere of insecurity for the individual. Events that are not comprehensible in terms of the ideology I have described can be traced to someone's 'tricking'. Sickness, for example, can be caused by one's 'best friend', who was 'only tricking' (kabo) when acting like a friend, but had buried inside his or her 'heart' (ate-) 'anger' or 'envy', only waiting for the time to inflict punishment. Both sorcery and witchcraft fundamentally depend on 'tricking', luring a prospective victim with the illusion of friendship in order to cast a final spell, pass a poisoned betelnut, or organise a meeting that has a fatal outcome for the naïve.39 The convention of having to 'try out' sorcery for the first time within one's own matrilineage leads to fear and suspicion within the group. Its equivalent for witches is the rule that the supernatural Taumudumudulele must be given a pig or a child in exchange for his efforts to secure them a good harvest. Dobu people believe that mothers 'trick' their children, husbands their wives, and neighbours each other, if they choose to, into accepting a 'gift that kills'.

The 'gift that kills' is a form of punishment, an 'answer' or a 'repayment' (e'isa or

39 Fortune refers to kabō in the context of exchanges. He calls it wabuwabu however (1932:193, 217-8).
*Maisa* to those who upset the delicate balance between sharing and hiding, by either not sharing (being stingy) or not hiding (being arrogant, showing off). Witches and sorcerers are taken for granted on Dobu as 'natural' forces with secret, inherited power and even moral legitimation for their activities.40 It is unfortunate that Fortune's account has created an image of a purely destructive and selfish use of sorcery (Patterson 1974:214). As far as I know, open accusations and divinations as described by Fortune (1932:156-6) are not made on Dobu, where it is regarded as very offensive to publicly identify someone a witch (*awawelabana*).41

With reference to the Dobu person, I have argued that sorcery and witchcraft beliefs function primarily to induce self-discipline by posing the threat of surveillance and punishment. For Western observers who do not share this belief system, the profound fear it causes is hard to understand. For this reason, perhaps, academic discourse has often glossed the fear as 'paranoia', a pathological mental state.42 As such, its roots would have to be located within the person, as a mental condition or temporary psychosis that can be cured in therapy. The notion of 'paranoia' has been further developed by Schwartz (1973), who argues that a 'paranoid ethos' is typical of Melanesian societies. 'Dobu' became a major case study in anthropological theory, an example of a society built upon antisocial principles. In *Sorcerers*, Fortune places much emphasis on the theme of conflict, and although his account is more balanced than Benedict's travesty, the impression he gives of Dobu life is one of pervasive, indeed constitutive antagonism:

> Underneath the surface of native life there is a constant silent war, a small circle of close kindred alone placing trust in each other... [T]reachurous poisoning is a common enough custom (1932:137).

As I stated in Chapter One, Fortune's perspective was adopted by Benedict, who

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40 See also Stephen (1987:271): "Though the sorcerer trafficks with powers beyond society and human morality, he nevertheless uses them *within* the moral order."

41 See also Fortune: "*kawawerebana* is 'the thing that is never done'" (1932:45). Stephen notes that open accusations are rare in Melanesia (1987:252).

42 Stephen remarks that in the same way some altered states of consciousness are often referred to as 'hysteria', a pathological disturbance (1979:4).
had access to his unpublished field notes. Fortune's impression of Dobu was indeed so negative that Benedict felt compelled to wonder about it in a letter to him:

I enjoyed the Dobuan material immensely. After I'd read a couple of hours I'd feel they'd all been sold to the devil. How did you stand it? Did they have any sets of subterfuges for eluding the fear they were always institutionalizing? And how did it affect personal relations - at the family hearth did they persist in their picture of an enemy alliance? (January 10, 1929, quoted in Mead 1966:311)

Fortune, at the time on field work in the Admiralty Islands, replied some months later and reiterated his previous points:

No, there were no sets of subterfuges for eluding the institutionalized fear. They always inferred lack of faith in others (for fear of poison). Maropa, my sorcerer lad, seemed to have a fish with a poisonous gall always to hand concealed in the bush to put in food if necessary (he had one when I was there anyway). At the family cook pot the man and wife did not eat together ever that I saw.... Fear of the night never lessened - as also fear of neighbours; in bodily form more in the day, in spiritual form more in the night, though that is no thorough going distinction (May 3, 1929, quoted in Mead 1966:312-3).

In *Patterns of Culture*, Benedict accordingly describes Dobu as a violent society without any system of social control, as "lawless and treacherous" (1934:131). This characterisation remoulds Fortune's Dobu into a bizarre society that bears no resemblance to 'my' Dobu. In contrast to the established image of 'Dobuan paranoia', I posit a fear that is in effect an experience constitutive of self-awareness and a sense of social situation.43 I suggest it is more appropriate to interpret this fear (*matauta*) as a logical consequence of belief in punitive 'supernatural' powers. The fear of being caught and punished for 'wrong' behaviour compels Dobu people to conduct themselves well on the whole and gives rise to the bad conscience of having done something 'wrong' at some time. If the term 'paranoia' must be used at all, it seems to fit rather in the sense of Strathern's description of Hageners' reactions of panic to a new 'supernatural' power beyond their control and comprehension (1982).44

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43 For a critical comment of the concept of Melanesian 'paranoia' see also Patterson (1974:134).
44 Strathern's report of a recent incident of 'witchcraft-paranoia' in the Highlands is based on narratives that bear strong resemblance in form and content to the 'true stories' about Dobu
To my understanding of the Dobu perspective, the most frightening aspects of sorcery and witchcraft are their established and generally accepted capacities of surveillance and of control over a person's mind. The Dobu experience of fear is understandable when related to the symbolic system outlined in this chapter. It is self-conscious fear, not pathological paranoia, that 'automatically' restricts movement in space, circumscribes interaction with people, and encourages personal secrecy in general. This fear urges a person to act according to accepted ethics to achieve a reputation as 'good' (bobo'ana).

Exchange of the gaze: a panoptic perspective

To clarify my argument further, I shall employ the model of the Panopticon, developed by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and used by Foucault to demonstrate mechanisms of social power (1977:200ff). In both a Dobu hamlet and in a Panopticon, the individual's awareness of being under surveillance results in acute self-consciousness regardless of whether the surveillance is actually continuous. The Panopticon was constructed as a model prison, with a round structure containing the cells for the prisoners and a surveillance tower in the centre. Windows allowed a supervising warder, positioned in the central tower, to observe any prisoner at any time without the prisoner's knowledge. The architecture of the Panopticon made use of optical laws; during daytime the warder could observe the prisoners easily as they were silhouetted against the light that entered through windows in the outer wall of the building, while the prisoners were unable to tell whether the tower was manned or not, because the lookout was located higher than the cells and appeared to them as a dark structure against a bright sky. As a result, a prisoner was always in doubt about being observed. The chances were that any form of misbehaviour would be immediately noticed – and subsequently punished.

witchcraft (1982:116-7). I would not be surprised if urban versions from Milne Bay, heard by workers in Port Moresby or Lae, had been the raw material for this contemporary hysteria.
Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.... In view of this, Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so (Foucault 1977:201).

Applied to Dobu society, the Panopticon is physically manifested in the roughly circular structure of the hamlet with house verandahs facing inwards to its centre. Although lacking a central tower, acts of surveillance are carried out by fellow neighbours who register every sound, sight, and smell that escapes a house or kitchen hut. Such close observation discourages individuals from retreating into their houses for reasons other than to sleep at night lest they be suspected of having something to hide. But even inside the house, in the private space of a garden, in a canoe on the sea, on a lonely sea shore, or in the bush, a person knows that he or she might be under observation.

The mechanical principle of light effects in combination with a central tower, used
in the Panopticon as a device for secret surveillance, can be compared with the ideology of witchcraft and sorcery in Dobu. The supernatural skills of sorcerers and witches are based on the notion of secrecy and knowledge. Like a warder in his tower, a Dobu 'magician' can observe without being seen: in the body of an animal or fully invisible, coming and going like lightning, moving easily through water, in the air, and over land. The Dobu person can never be entirely safe from intruders in the private sphere, neither in the house nor in the mind. The personal consciousness of surveillance is similar to the effect produced in the Panopticon and it is this feeling of being continually watched that has been misinterpreted as 'paranoia' (by Fortune, Benedict, Lepowsky 1994:203, Schwartz 1973).

Foucault describes the Panopticon as a "marvellous machine which produces homogenous effects of power" (1977:202). In this connection, too, an analogy with the structure of a Dobu hamlet is illuminating. In an egalitarian society there are neither cells nor walls to separate people. The senior inhabitants, however, have more authority, because they are assumed to be the most powerful witches and sorcerers. In-married junior men are in the weakest position because they are assumed to have only a limited knowledge of sorcery spells (nabwasuwa). The image of an invisible 'magical surveillance tower' that overshadows the hamlet is supported by the former custom of primary burial in the centre of the hamlet (bolu). The spirits of the ancestors (yaluyaluwa) are believed to inhabit the centre area of a hamlet, minutely observe its inhabitants' behavior (bubuna) and participate in social activities. The 'gaze of the ancestors' is metaphorically similar to the Panopticon's tower. In symbolic terms, the tower is visible to Dobu persons; in every discourse on cases of sickness and death its presence is re-established and reconfirmed.
CHRISTIANITY AND THE GAZE OF GOD

This issue leads directly to the question of the impact of missionaries on the ideology and practice of witchcraft and sorcery. The metaphors of 'light' and 'darkness' were used by missionaries who applied the dichotomy in the construction of 'Christianity' in their battle against witchcraft and sorcery (see also Young 1980). This opposition suggests the existence of two separate belief systems, though Lawrence convincingly showed that witchcraft and sorcery and Christianity can also be conceptualised as forming a single belief system that is subject to constant adjustments and ultimately syncretised (1987:20-1).

In contemporary Dobu society, Christianity (tapwalolo) and Western education (sikulu) have decisively changed the traditional belief system. This process has been accelerated in Edugaula, the hamlet cluster around the mission station, the

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45 Kahn argues that adaptation to Christianity was selective in Goodenough Bay (1983).
area where I lived during field work. The people of Edugaula appear at first sight to adhere fully to the Methodist doctrine of a God who demands the Sabbath to be 'kept' exclusively for Himself (exceptions are made for women who need to cook and do their laundry). Former beliefs are partly forgotten, partly diluted and not regarded as important any longer.\textsuperscript{46} To my understanding, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have become integrated into the belief system and comprise a sort of higher institution. The 'hamlet' (asa) of God and the angels (anelose) in the sky has replaced the dwelling of the former inhabitants, the 'sky people' (togalewa). This substitution seems to be only gradual, because informants still elaborate on the idea that 'God' is only another name for 'Yabowaine'. The 'sky people' and their leader Yabowaine (who is still invoked at the beginning of formal gift distributions from a platform), persist as vague ideas. "It is our custom, but we do not know it anymore" (Gete ima bubuna kadekadelina ta nigeya wate a mwalamwalatoni).\textsuperscript{47}

\textit{Dimdim magic}

To my knowledge, the impact of Christianity did not change the number of witches on Dobu. Unlike in Molima, where witches increased after colonial contact (Chowning 1987:174), the Dobu maxim that 'every woman is a witch' remains in force. In order to 'show respect to God', people make attempts to give up sorcery, burn the notebooks containing spells, and involve themselves in church activities. They fail to realise, however, that they continue to operate within the same parameters of belief, perpetuating the fear of witches and sorcerers by praying to be spared by them. Macintyre reports that on Tubetube there was only one man, who was also an atheist, who did not believe in witchcraft. She stresses the voluntary

\textsuperscript{46} However, see Schlesier for a comprehensive account of the cosmology of Me'udana people in Duau (1983:107ff). Edoni attempts to reconstruct the pre-Christian belief system through semantic analysis (1989).

\textsuperscript{47} See Macintyre's remark that Yabowaine can also be a respectful term of address for female ancestors (Ebote\'u Waine - One Woman) (1983d:24). This statement seems persuasive but in contemporary Dobu Yabowaine is rather seen as a god, and hence, as male gendered (as in Abel's account of Suau cosmology [1967]), a pre-Christian concept of God the father.
character of the participation in witchcraft: "For Christians, witchcraft was as much a way of behaving, a set of practices, as a way of being, and as such it could be abandoned (or embraced) at will" (1995:42). From a Dobu perspective, a woman who wants to give up witchcraft is expected to come under pressure from her fellow witches as well as from her lover, Taumudumudulele. Only "if her will is very strong she can change into a normal woman", a woman who is like a man (sinetai). To my surprise, very few women and men were prepared to take Holy Communion on baptism day. Apparently it has been interpreted as an occasion for God's punishment of sinners, and they fear being consumed by an internal flame. In this sense, the 'body of Jesus' can be a 'gift that kills'.

The surveillance and judgement of God, feared by every Christian sinner worldwide, are believed in Dobu to result in a final verdict (paradise or hell), but are feared less intensely, perhaps, due to the existing parallel belief in a local afterlife on Mount Bwebweso. One might say that God 'in heaven' (galewaya) is expected to do the final summing-up of sins, while witches and sorcerers 'on the ground' (baleuya) respond to single sins by punishing sub-totals, so to speak. The Dobu perspective on Christianity appears panoptic in essence, as God is conceptualised as a senior male who invisibly reigns above the clouds, taking account of people's sins and only occasionally confirming His presence by doing miracles. This perspective includes the notion of a punishing God who even killed his own son in retribution for our sins. Although it would be angrily denied by Dobu Christians, this idea aligns with the pre-Christian view of negative exchange as a payback (e'isa) for misconduct in terms of witchcraft and sorcery, the 'gifts that kill'.

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48 Eguma nuana i waiwaina sawesawanaya be i sa'ugelasa be i wesinetai.
49 Hau'ofa's report of the first Mekeo bishop who jokingly called himself the 'sorcerer of God' indicates that this belief is widespread (1981:286ff).
50 The late S.I.L. Missionary David Lithgow reported such miracles; for example, a multiplication of his antibiotic tablets that enabled him to complete a treatment.
51 For more detailed accounts of Christian belief in the Massim see Macintyre's article on Misima syncretism and Thune's analysis of a Church service in Duau (both in Barker 1990:101-125).
Chapter Six

GIFTS OF CASH FOR GOD AND GOODS
Name of the gift: *ebwaea daita* (free gift, offering), *lowaga* (credit)

**TAPWALOLO: HOW TO GIVE TO THE LORD**

In the previous chapter, Christianity was identified as an important element of the contemporary belief system of Dobu. As such, it has an impact on social relations by providing a range of strategic options for those who seek to improve their social status. To be an active Christian (*totapwalolo*, literally 'person-church-service') is positively valued, for the individual's 'work' for God is believed to assist in the universal 'fight against Satan'. The United Church seeks the support of its members in different ways, but most prominently in the annual offering competition called *ebwaea daita* (free gift).\(^1\) It may seem surprising that these 'free gifts to God' were introduced without difficulty, as the concept of a gift without any obligation to return it does not exist in Dobu. How do Dobu people interpret this 'free gift' in terms of their understanding of exchange? Since Mauss' critique of Malinowski's concept of 'free gifts' in Trobriand marriage, it has been accepted that all gifts are elements of 'total exchange' (Mauss 1990:73). Certainly, some form of return is invariably conceptualised.

It is not merely that there are no free gifts in a particular place, Melanesia or Chicago for instance; it is that the whole idea of a free gift is based on a misunderstanding. There should not be any free gifts. What is wrong with the so-called free gift is the donor's intention to be exempt from return gifts coming from the recipient (Douglas in Mauss 1990:vii).

Gifts of labour and money for the Church are interpreted as gifts for God — and as such they are not 'free' but tokens of a mutually supportive relationship. As Syme

\(^1\) *Ebwaea* means 'giving', *daita* refers to 'without reason', 'free', or groundless, as in 'deep sea': *bwagabwaga daita*. 
(1985) has convincingly argued, Bromilow's founding missionary party immediately established exchange relations with Dobu people that could be interpreted in local terms. Gifts like 'help' (lema), 'love' (oboboma) and 'work' (paisewa) were readily understood as symbolising personal relationships with the missionaries and with God. And while it is impossible to assess the degree of belief in the idea that ebwaea daita is also a kind of insurance policy for a ticket to paradise, traces of this concept certainly exist. As in Hymn no. 333 of the Dobu Buki Tapwaroro ('To the work', translation by the Rev. Lawson), God demands 'work' from His people: "Eaubada 'i bwaubwau! Omi wa paisewa!" (God is shouting! You all go and work!). Missionary sources record that in fact massive amounts of kula valuables were handed over to the missionaries as the earliest form of ebwaea daita (see also Macintyre 1983a:282).²

Today, people start to raise funds well ahead of the day of ebwaea daita, which usually falls towards the end of the year. Each hamlet decides what amount has to be contributed by each household and those who are unable to pay are admonished (shamed) by the active Church members of the hamlet. In 1997, it was decided that Losina inhabitants should give ten Kina per household, a huge sum for those families whose only source of cash is sales in local markets and who also have to find their children's school fees. The money was collected at a Sunday service after my departure, but the minister reassured me that, 'as usual', senior representatives of each hamlet would offer it after slowly processing to the altar accompanied by the singing of the congregation.³ The hymn that is sung during the collection of ebwaea daita provides an explanation for this offering, identifying it as a 'gift of praise' (tupu-, also used in other contexts, where it requires a countergift, a 'payment for praise', see Chapter Seven). In the hymn, Jesus is related to 'the olden days' (lowaenei) as linking Jerusalem with Papua. He deserves to be praised with a gift

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² According to Young, the annual offering of shells not only served as auxiliary funding but could also be read as a missionary strategy to "cream off native wealth" in the attempt to gain control over Dobu society (1989:120).
³ During field work, I was made aware of every forthcoming ebwaea daita collection by friends who were worried about their contribution and asked me for 'help'.

for He had given His life for 'us' (here the hymnist chose the rhetorically persuasive 'inclusive' form of 'us', -da).

It is not unlikely that this latter metaphor was one reason for the success of the early establishment of ebwaedaita. If reinterpreted from a Dobu perspective, the gift requested by the missionaries might have been identified as pwaoli, a 'homicide payment' of 'une and yam (see Chapter Four). In the following lines, the hymn prescribes money as the item of offering and induces guilt (shame, omeiameia) for not giving enough. By offering all the 'little' (giyokuna) that is available, and promising to seek more, the gift is presented as a symbol of submission and commitment (tagwala) to Jesus.

**Hymn no. 394**

1. *Gogama me Papua*  
   Children of Papua  
   'Enada, gogama, 'enada,  
   Si nono Yesu ta tupuna  
   O Osana, ta inana  
   Yesu 'ena ta wari.  
   Sipwa:  
   Chorus:
   Our voices, children,  
   They hear, Jesus we praise  
   O Hosanna, we shout,  
   We sing for Jesus.

2. *Yesu ta da tupuna*  
   You shall praise Jesus  
   As in olden days  
   In Jerusalem.  
   3.

3. *Nadigega lowaenei*  
   'Asa Yerusalema.  
   4.

4. *Oboboma ai'a ila*  
   True love  
   'Ima money sinabwana  
   'Enaya 'igumwara  
   'Aebwaedaita  
   5.

5. *Yesu i ebwaedada*  
   Is what Jesus gave us  
   Store 'enaya 'igumwara  
   Ta gete giyokuna  
   'Aebwaedaita  
   Tuta gete 'a sa'u.  
   'Atema 'atagwara,  
   Yesu 'uda loina.  
   6.

Chorus:  
Our big money  
In the store is finished  
Only this small amount  
We offer to you.

After the money has been counted, announcements are made about the sums collected from the individual hamlets, hamlet clusters, and the total contribution from the Dobu Island community. In 1993, for example, the hamlet clusters

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*Buki Tapwaroro* (1963:210). This hymn was written by Salamo Sunday School Teachers (my translation).
Edugaula and Mwanomwanona raised 2381 Kina. This sum was donated by the inhabitants of twenty-five hamlets, totalling 151 houses or about 350 adults (a ratio of almost seven Kina per adult). What is the reason for such eager parting with money that is also needed for other purposes, such as school and hospital fees, and essential consumer goods?

If missionary strategies of conversion were to be successful their teachings had to be understood in terms familiar to their audience. As Eves points out, the missionaries on Dobu attempted to change 'the visible form of bodies' and their work performance as a strategy of changing morals (1996:89,109,119). That was successful, I believe, because it was commensurate with the pre-Christian concept of the person (see Chapter Two). The correlation of a person's physical appearance and his or her 'work' for God formed a trope that could easily be understood by the Dobu congregation. Even if the equation of ebwaea daita with the 'homicide payment' pwaoli did not persist (today no one I asked interpreted it that way), the notions of 'good persons' (here totapwalolo) 'working' (paisewa, or stronger, gwumua) for God by gift giving harmonizes with the basic ideology of self-discipline (alamai'ita) in parting with money as a sign of 'respect' (amayaba) and 'love' or 'generosity' (oboboma).

The first missionaries used the 'sinful' people of Dobu to legitimate their own work, raising funds at home with exaggerated reports of the conversion process (see Young 1980). In contemporary Dobu I never witnessed any open resistance to, or defiance against, the Church, and a majority acknowledged the United Church as a strong link to the rest of the world. People know that their offering is used to pay pastors and ministers, but some would wonder about the remainder. Often it was stated that the rest of the money is used to help spread the mission to less 'developed' areas, an idea that is consistent with the enhanced self-esteem of Dobu people, based on their belief that Dobu was 'chosen by God' to host the first Wesleyan mission station.

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5 See Young 1989 for an earlier analysis along similar lines.
On contemporary Dobu Island, local ministers and pastors are in charge of all Church activities. They conduct Sunday services, give funeral speeches, celebrate annual baptisms and sometimes marriage feasts. As professional confidants they also provide counselling and support in personal problems and sickness. As leaders of the Church on Dobu, the minister and pastors call for Church meetings, represent Dobu in the Circuit, and provide many hours of Bible study. A group of adults attends *ektelesia* (Ecclesia) meetings after Sunday service; most women celebrate 'Women's fellowship' each Wednesday, and most adolescents enjoy 'Youth fellowship' as a heaven-sent opportunity to escape from hamlet surveillance and to get to know members of the opposite sex. Almost all children are sent to Sunday school, and those who attend Dobu Primary School have access to further Bible studies.

In general, involvement in Church activities is encouraged by most adults and serves as a means of acquiring prestige. Even my friend J., a senior man in his sixties who declared himself an active sorcerer and killer of witches, did not reject the idea of Church facilities. Like many other men, he preferred not to attend Sunday services ("Matagu i 'eno'eno! Boring!"). Nor did he approve of the 'Women's Fellowship' ("Tuta ana mudala! Ona besobeso manuna tuga! Waste of time! Only for the gossip!"). Not least, he made derogatory comments on the hypocrisy of Church activists, who did not do what they preached ("Gagasa tuga! They are only showing off!"). In principle, however, he had a positive opinion about the presence of the Church on Dobu:

> When we are fine, why waste time singing hymns? Better to go and do your work. As for me, I don't like going to Church, but it's good that we are Christians now. For when we get sick and die, that's when the Church is good. We can say sorry (*ta'ona*) to God and go to heaven" (J.K.).

In this light, the gift of *ebwaea daita* signifies the acceptance of the United Church,

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6 See Thune 1990 for a detailed analysis of Loboda (Normanby Island) Church services.

7 *Eguma bobo'ada, to'ase ana wali daidaita? U da ta be imu paisewa u da guinue. Yabweya, nigeya ya da tapwalolo be wate bobo'ana tapwalolo 'ena ni'atu ta luguma. Alena eguma ta le'oal'e'oasa, eguma mwamwasa eeh nate tapwalolo ana tuta bobo'ana. Ta da ta'ona Eaubada 'enaya ta ta tutue ideni be ta miami.*
the conduit to a powerful and punishing God who is permanently engaged in
fighting Satan, supported by His Son and the Holy Spirit. The Church offering can
be interpreted as a compensatory gift for Jesus, who has given His life for 'us', or as
a 'helping gift' (*lema*) for the Church where it is needed to 'fight Satan' on earth and
to 'help' people. God is thought to be in favour of those who conduct themselves
well, sacrificing the little money that is at their avail as a form of self-discipline
(*alamai'ita*). In addition to this line of doctrinal reasoning, the annual collection of
*ebwaea daita* is seriously competitive, and therefore a matter of group pressure,
applied by those neighbours who are active Church members.

Competitiveness is familiar to Dobu people as *kula* expeditions (*alau*) are based on
this principle (see Chapter Seven). As in the raiding expeditions of pre-colonial
days, the *alau* trip is led by a 'standard bearer' (*toni doe*) who holds the pandanus
streamer or flag (*doe*), sets the goal for the trip, feeds the crew, and is responsible
for the lives of his or her followers. The *doe* itself was also a receptacle of magic
designed to stun the enemy in fighting or to persuade the *kula* exchange partner
(*muli*).

During my 1997 field trip I learned the powerful spell of the mythical *kula* hero
Kasabwaibwaileta, that allegedly made his *alau* successful. The spell is called
'Kasabwaibwailetas *doe'* and has to be whispered onto a pandanus streamer that
is hung up on a house post to flutter in the breeze. As this magically imbued *doe*
moves in the wind, it spreads its message to the *kula* partner: "Your partner will
visit you, give him anything he wants!" (field notes).

At the end of a *kula* trip, it is publicly evaluated whether the *toni doe* has 'taken' (*i
ewena*) the goal (*ana doe*) or whether he has 'fallen' (*i be'u*) instead. The *doe* as a
symbol of competitiveness and leadership (not, however, as a receptacle of magic)
was seized upon by Bromilow, who made it the emblem of the first Youth
Fellowship, the White Standard Society (see Young 1989:115). The metaphor of
'Jesus, the standard bearer' found its way into Dobu rhetoric, as, for example, in one
of the most popular hymns, *Tonidoe wa ita'ita*. The text of this hymn creates a
visual image of Jesus with his pandanus standard fighting the evil enemy, Satan,
and announcing His wish that all be joined in the fight.
Hymn no. 87

*Tonidoe wa 'it'ita,*  
See the standard bearer,

*Yesus nate nai?*  
Could this be Jesus?

*Taraawara gote yaita?*  
Who is the enemy?

*To'umalina sa'i.*  
It is the evil one.

*Sipwa:*  
Chorus:

*Wa ewaiwai, 'agu doe!*  
You shall enforce my standard (group)!

*Yesus 'i bwaubwau,*  
Jesus is calling out,

*Yesus 'ida Tonidoe,*  
Jesus is our (incl.) standard bearer,

*Yaita 'i mwaumwau.*  
Who is staying behind?

The key terms in the rhetorical justification of 'free gifts' are 'respect' (*amayaba*) for God and 'good conduct' (*bubuna bobo'a*) by following His word. In this context, the donation of money is a sign of 'respect' (*amayaba*) and a token of 'self-discipline' (*alamai'ita*). By claiming the ethics of 'respect' and 'good conduct' for its own purposes, the Church appears as an institution that is offering strategies for individual prestige through 'work' for God (*paisewa*).

This opportunity is embraced by a particular stratum of contemporary Dobu Islanders whose matrilineages historically provided the first and second generation of local converts and missionaries who were subsequently able to put their children through a 'Western style' education system. Since the fourth generation of Christians has now reached adulthood, the matrilineages of early converts (from hamlets such as Piesiya, Mulisi'iya, Mwemweyala, Losina, Nemunemu and Doeluya) have branched into urban settings. Those who return to Dobu after decades of life in town often find it difficult to retain the prestige associated with that lifestyle. Lacking the stamina, self discipline, and practical knowledge to be successful in subsistence activities, to establish extended exchange networks and gain 'a big name' (*ale sinabwana*), these returned migrants often realise they can only maintain their social standing by what they do best, 'working' for God. They

8 Buki Tapwaroro 'Hold the Fort' (1963:66, translated by W.E. Bromilow), first verse and chorus only; my translation

9 Compare with the difficulty of storing anything of value, as mentioned in Chapter Three.
have been brought up with daily prayers, family devotions, and strict rules for the Sabbath. They are accustomed to improvising lengthy prayers (tapwalolo) for any purpose, adept at interpreting texts from the Bible (guguya), skilled at organising and catering for meetings, and able to remember the words of hundreds of hymns.

Within this social stratum, men and women are represented about equally because married couples tend to pursue the same degree of Christian observance for the benefit of their children. The women's engagement in Church activities, however, is generally much greater, expressed in their weekly involvement in 'Women's Fellowship'. Every Wednesday, from fifty to a hundred women come together at the missionary stations (Buduagula and Enaia) for church service and a 'recreational program', comprising games and exercises. A small market is also held, where women sell betelnuts and prepared foods (scones, doughnuts, buns) and local snacks: strings of almonds (saïdo), nuts cooked in coconut cream (iki), and seafood treats (igoda). Church activists organise fund raising events to finance their occasional retreats, crusades, workshops, conventions, and camps. In 1997, these fund raisings were organised in a style that I had not seen previously, whereby after the Sunday service the children were made to exchange decorated baskets and bags, containing small treats and a two-Kina note. The money was removed from each basket by the Fellowship president while the children enjoyed the other contents of the baskets. The name for this exchange, lokodokodo, means literally 'to make-basket-for-basket'.

Both the women's and the youth fellowships are organised in the standard ('dimdim') style with a president, a vice president, a treasurer and a secretary, a service leader and a prayer leader. Activists in a fellowship group eventually receive a title ('our president') that serves as a 'big name' and advertises the prestige of a (Church) leader. Being a member of the Dobu Women's Fellowship myself, I had plenty of opportunity to observe their attitudes and to learn about individual motivations and expectations. For many women, Fellowship is a matter of spiritual ('work for the Lord') as well as social obligation resulting from group pressure. Although in peak times of gardening many women complain about this additional demand on their work schedules, most enjoy it as a chance to rest from physical
labour and engage in conversation. For this reason, men sometimes jokingly refer to the Women's Fellowship as 'Gossip-ship', a point related to the widespread male perception that those women who become Church activists are typically 'bossy', 'talkative', 'get angry too quickly' and 'don't even keep peace within their own families'. I observed that those women who are believed to be 'champion witches' also often involve themselves in Church activities. This is consonant with the view that 'work for the Lord' is an alternative route to fame for those who otherwise have little access to prestige as an alawata due to their limited knowledge of gardening, management of yams, and inadequate social skills.

It appears that women dominate in Church activism. Often they are the driving force behind their family's Church attendance; they send the children to Sunday school and attempt to persuade their husbands to lead the family to Sunday service. The regular meetings of the Women's and Youth Fellowships create new ties between individuals and are structured along different lines than kinship. Junior women who have recently returned to Dobu from working in town achieve status as Church 'workers', and adolescent men and women, often profiting from their High School education, act as moral and social guides in the Youth Fellowship and as Sunday School teachers. From the perspective of a university graduate in economics, a man in his early thirties who is a sharp and cynical analyst of the present situation, the Church profits from the opportunity to gain higher status through activism: "This bible thing is getting to be a big industry nowadays. A major industry of of the underprivileged I should say" (recorded interview D.B.).

The impact of Youth Fellowship on cross-sex relationships is a source of constant complaint among the elders, who perceive it as a decay of morals that indicates that a new order (bubuna dimdim) is about to take over and change the Dobu way of life (bubuna Dobu). In fact, by joining young men and women legitimately into self-organised 'Fellowship' groups, the Church legitimises new levels of mutual acquaintanceship that offer space for more personal friendships between the sexes than were ever possible before. But this causes disquiet. The following

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10 The coeducational school system is also blamed for the same reason, more so since Dobu
transcription is from a long interview with a ninety-two-year-old man, Robert Galiaune\textsuperscript{11} of Nemunemu hamlet and his wife, L.:

\textbf{Dobu (recorded version, 9.10.1992)}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{L.}: Batua dumadumana. Atua tai be waine si tautauya. Be gomagwaine be tubuau si tautauya. & \textbf{English (my translation)}\
\textbf{L.}: Today [it is] different. As if man and woman walk around together. And the young girls and unmarried boys also walk around together. \\
\textbf{S.K.}: Yuti [Youth's Fellowship] \textit{ena wate}. \textit{Eguma si ta be si yutiyuti -tapwalolo...} & \textbf{S.K.}: Like at the Youth Fellowship. When they go and have Youth Fellowship meetings - Church service... \\
\textbf{L.}: \textit{Mmh} & \textbf{L.}: [agreeing noise] \\
\textbf{S.K.}: ‘\textit{Ena wate si egogona}. & \textbf{S.K.}: That is also where they meet. \\
\textbf{L.}: \textit{Mmh}, tuta egogona ta enega. & \textbf{L.}: Yes, time to meet and that is why. \\
\textbf{R.}: \textit{Mmh}, tuta egogona ta enega. & \textbf{R.}: Yes, time to meet and that is why. \\
\textbf{L.}: Yuti enaya be tuga si tata be \textit{convention manudi}, aina tuta gote nadigea be... & \textbf{L.}: At Youth Fellowship meetings they just go and say it was for some convention, and then sometimes it happens and... \\
\textbf{S.K.}: Ta yage, tubuau be gomagwaine idi bubuna maibo'adidi manudi wa nuamwau nai wa gwauso'ala? & \textbf{S.K.}: And so, concerning the attitudes of unmarried men and women, are you disappointed or satisfied? \\
\textbf{L.}: \textit{Gete tugai}? & \textbf{L.}: These days? \\
\textbf{S.K.}: \textit{Mmh, gete tugai}. & \textbf{S.K.}: Yes, these days. \\
\textbf{L.}: Oh, aene...bob'o'ana. Bob'o'ana wawasae ta nigeiya si da guinei al'ailla lowa nadigea. & \textbf{L.}: Well, as if...it is good. It is very good but they do not act like in times before. \\
\textbf{R.}: \textit{Gete tuga atua a nuamwau wate enaya, mana...} & \textbf{R.}: Just now it is also as if we felt sad, because... [referring to recent case of unwelcome pregnancy] \\
\textbf{L.}: \textit{Tai nidi atua si panaitedi ga aina tuta bubuna to'umalina yaben si apweapwesa}. & \textbf{L.}: The men seem to become too familiar and close so that bad conduct has to appear sooner or later. \\
\textbf{R.}: \textit{Wate si mai asa solanaya be si bwau sinabwana. Be si lugu besobeso asa ediya. Nigeiya lowa nadigea}. & \textbf{R.}: And also that they come and shout out within the hamlet. And they enter other hamlets without the proper attitude. That was not done before.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{11} Died in 1993. Robert was the last eye-witness of Bromilow's presence on Dobu.

\textsuperscript{12} See also Smith for nostalgia and a sense of moral inadequacy in the present among Kairiru Islanders (1994:148ff.).
The participation of adult, married men in Church activities is less regular and ordered, and I am not aware of the existence of any practicing Men's Fellowship groups. Some hamlets have choirs that perform during public feasting, such as at mortuary feasting (*wali ewa'ewala*); and while the women practice at Fellowship meetings and festivities, men appear to meet in a less formal way. Men often told me that they find the Church service boring, but that they were willing to support it with more practical work, like assistance in gardening, housebuilding, and in providing access to resources, such as garden land and building material. Both sexes usually sit apart and act separately when performing in a choir group at feasts (see also Chapter Eight), or at the Friday meetings when the councillor's committee distributes community work chores. It appears, too, that while not extensively active in Church 'work' like services, conventions, and workshops, men are not explicitly opposed to its social and spiritual benefits. Most men, however, prefer to spend their time on subsistence work, at meetings of their peer group, and as caring fathers. The message of (patriarchal) Christianity is translated into a concept of parental (*icina be tama* or *sinatama*) care in contemporary Dobu. This is evident at the annual Fathers' Day celebrations, when sermons reflect some residual confusion about the Father-Son relationship in biblical terms, but Dobu reasoning makes allowance for this seeming contradiction as a son can also be chosen as a 'substitute' (*lo'epa'elu*) for his dead father (see also Chapter Eight).

Men with some Western education tend to be regular Church-goers but do not attempt to play a significant role in the domain of local Church activism. Men are the professional Church leaders, like ministers and pastors; the majority, however, is typically attracted by more secular spheres of influence. They involve themselves in the 'Parents and Citizens' committee that supports the Dobu Community School, or become 'authorities', helpers of the elected councillor. Many men are particularly interested in small-scale entrepreneurship, a strategy available only to those who

13 Note the lack of possessive suffixes. Other than in this context, I never heard these words in a non-possessive form but always in deictic reference: *sinagu, tamagu*.

14 Thune also points out the difficulty of translating the concept of God as 'the father' in a Loboda church service (1990:108).
have initial access to money. Unlike Church 'work', seen as beneficial for the community as a whole, entrepreneurs are believed to be concerned to benefit themselves and their immediate relatives. This perspective needs further clarification because it relates to significant issues of new role modelling and shifts in the concept of the person.

THE AMBIGUITY OF BUSINESS

People run business just like their everyday life. I mean on this island if anybody comes and asks for anything or wants to borrow anything, they just give it away without realising that their personal belonging that has been borrowed might be damaged and returned damaged or might not even be returned at all. Just the same way as booking [credit]. Because the people here give priority to in-laws (recorded interview L.B.).

My focus now shifts to the sphere of petty capitalism, to an analysis of the opportunities available for individual business entrepreneurs and the problems of achieving a successful business. I shall focus on small trade stores ('canteens'), and only occasionally refer to small-scale transport businesses, cash cropping, and the harvesting of sea resources. The latter enterprises are more uncommon, and even more economically precarious than trade stores, but are also less well organised and do not display with as much clarity the significant features of local capital enterprises. Western goods constitute Dobu Islanders' second link to the global economy, transmitted through the institution of trade stores managed by local men. These 'canteens' are set up in small huts within the hamlet, easily recognised by their decorative advertisements for PK chewing gum or Winfield cigarettes and the simple wooden steps that lead up to the counter window. Another typical feature is a sign, hung up in a desperate and usually fruitless effort to improve business. This sign comes in different versions, often as short as 'Tua lowaga!' (No more credit!), or 'Geya'abo lowaga!' (No credit given!), but sometimes comprising a list of debtors' names, the individual amounts they owe, the total sum of outstanding debts, and an apology.

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15 See appendix 5 for my census data on Dobu islander's sources of cash other than remittances.
16 PK is a brand of chewing gum which was top of the list of children's preferences when I was on Dobu.
Small-scale entrepreneurship in developing countries faces difficulties of different kinds. For many years, national and provincial administrations have been attempting to improve economic prospects at the village level. Their aim is usually to intensify subsistence production and enlarge local industries through cash cropping, fishery and bakery projects, small trade stores, and transport businesses.

To overcome the common problems of insufficient education and a lack of capital, small-scale rural entrepreneurs in Milne Bay Province have been given access to workshops, information services, and credit facilities. Obviously, some managerial knowledge has reached Dobu, but in spite of all efforts to overcome the practice of giving credit (in Milne Bay English 'booking'), the main reason for business failure is the imbalance between debts and capital. Dobu storekeepers have developed some strategies to control the credit they offer, for example by measuring (etopwapwa) the credit limits according to their customers' income:

So my tambus used to come and ask, I just give, give and they go and they go for good. Now I try hard. If I said no then it's no. If yes, yes. I just calculate their individual [limit of credit], not much, if it's already up [to] almost 100 [Kina of outstanding debts in total] ... I stop ... booking [new credits] [until]...the [old] payments have ... come back in (recorded interview T.K.).

My 1993 census on business activities revealed that every canteen suffered from diminishing capital. Hundreds of Kina drip into the social system through the unpaid debts of those who have to rely on market sales to raise small funds but manage to persuade a storekeeper to give them goods on credit (lowaga).

The main problems that the people have around here is that most of them think that they can any time earn money just like fetching water. So when wantoks, especially wantoks or in-laws come and beg for bookings, they just go ahead and let them. Without

17 For definitions of 'entrepreneurship', see Fairbairn (1988b:17-18).
18 See Healey (1989); Fisk (1972); Fairbairn (1988a); Lambert (1979); Ward ([Ed.] 1972).
19 See Crellin (1972); Dahanayake and Wyeth (1982); Davis (1985); Epstein (1970); Fairbairn (1988b); Finney (1973); Salisbury (1970); Strathern (1972) for discussions of this problem.
20 See also Carroll (1988:117); Epstein (1972); Firth (1964); Rath (1983); Rutz (1976); Schlesier (1963); Strathern (1972); To Robert (1967).
21 For reasons of simplicity, I do not make a distinction here between storekeepers and storeowners, because storekeepers are expected to follow storeowners' policy. If storekeepers are not honest, however, the storeowner has to deal with the case very sensitively, especially if he has employed an affine or paternal relative.
knowing that their wantoks or in-laws are not wage earners. They are village people who hardly earn money and find it very difficult to find money within a week or so. So the bookings stay for quite a lot of time. That is where this booking problem comes from. Immediate families and their immediate in-laws (recorded interview L.B.).

A boat-owner explained:

My main problem is my father's side because for my susu I have my say. But for my father's side - they just come and ask me "Uncle, can I jump on?" I say: "Yeah, jump on." And then they say: "Ooh, I..." Eventually they will tell me: "We have no money. Can we pay it later?" I say: "Oh, yes! If you have the money later then come and give it to me." But they forget (recorded interview).

Trade stores are treasured on Dobu as the providers of much appreciated consumption and luxury goods. Sweetened tea, scones, rice, tobacco and tinned fish and bully beef have not only become part of the diet, but are also prestigious items that have been incorporated into feasting. This aspect causes business instability over time, because whenever a hamlet involves itself in any kind of feasting the need to host and feed guests with store goods often drains the stock of the local canteen without replenishing the capital. When the feast is over, the store is left empty and the bankrupt storekeeper can only hope to 'try again' (too limana) at some later date, when funds can be raised for a fresh start. The amounts of money that are expended by mortuary feasting staggers the imagination:

You have seen feasting. Parties consume more money than any single money-making venture anybody has thought of. You see, people are growing yams. But for feasts, suddenly there are 20,000 Kina (recorded interview D.B.).

In bwabwale and sagali we also need some store goods like sugar [and] rice, so when a canteen owner is involved in the sagali or bwabwale and he himself has no money he can just say : I go up and get this number of packets of sugar, this number of sticks of tobacco and use them up. And [he does this] without trying to cover [it] up. He just forgets (recorded interview L.M.).

During a communal feast, a storekeeper cannot practicably avoid providing his relatives with generous support from the shelves of his canteen. It can be argued that the everyday practice of buying on credit should be banned for the sake of

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22 Christmas, when many relatives who live in urban areas return for a holiday, is the perfect time for negotiations about a new load of cargo as a 'gift of love' (oboboma).
economic viability. This has often been suggested to small-scale businessmen from rural Papua New Guinea in workshops organised by various organisations that aim to 'improve economic development', such as the 'Small-scale Business Development Organisation' founded in Alotau in 1993 to provide rural areas with business assistance. The limited success of this strategy has proven its incapacity to solve the problem. By analysing the way people on Dobu negotiate the symbolic dimensions of credit (lowaga) and money, it appears that people strategically use arguments based on either logic. While it is relatively easy to accommodate God into the ethical system, the roles of the storekeeper and of 'rich' relatives in town appear in stark contrast to 'poor' gardeners who feel unprivileged ('still backwards') and react with envy and anger (e'ipi'ipi and gamwaso'ala). The following discussion shows how the contemporary economic system on Dobu fails to reconcile the demands of local and global exchange ethics, such that storekeeper and customer have to negotiate the legitimacy of each transaction.

The situation can easily be imagined. Just after sunset, a child is sent to buy something from the nearby store. "Go and give this note to 'uncle' (the storekeeper) and get a packet of sugar!" The note reads: Gosiagu! Pilisi 'u da lemema be aama suga u da lowaga tubudai aana ti manuna. Iabeni ya makemaketi be ya emaisa. Kagutoki. (My friend! Please help us and give us credit for a packet of sugar for our (incl.) Granny's tea. I will soon make my market and pay back. Thank you). The waiting child cannot be admonished about the previous credits and it seems too disrespectful to deny Granny her tea. In practice, most storekeepers give in to far too many of these appeals to their generosity (oboboma) and readiness to 'help' (lema). The most common promise, 'I'll do my market and then I'll pay you back' is not kept in many cases, and storekeepers eventually find themselves in an impossible situation. From a social perspective, the debts of senior relatives, especially affines and 'fathers', cannot readily be claimed for reasons of 'respect' (amayaba), though from a business point of view the notion of 'respect' should not matter. Indeed, from a strictly economic perspective this attitude can be interpreted
as a lack of business commitment.\textsuperscript{23} As expressed by a local entrepreneur:

The main problem on this island is that people want to run [a] business but ... they don't take it seriously [enough]. They think that running a business is something simple. They run their businesses and earn money [and] they think that is all (recorded interview L.B.).

As a 'good man' (tai bobo'ana), a storekeeper should use his stock for the benefit of the hamlet group, to show his 'love' and 'respect' for his affines and paternal relatives, and for the affines and paternal relatives of his neighbours. As a businessman, a storekeeper should be concerned with the survival and growth of his enterprise. The obligation to behave 'respectfully' towards affines, paternal kin and senior persons by giving credit and not collecting debts creates difficulties for the assessment of prices and eventually 'dries up' the stock. These demands contradict one another: loving storekeepers and well-stocked stores are incompatible in Dobu. As a result, the entrepreneur is torn between conflicting ideals and needs:

Because I'm successful I have to give away a lot, you know, that type of mentality is there. If a man is successful [it] means [that] the society expects him to give away plenty. When he doesn't then he upsets people. He has no place in society (recorded interview D.B.).

A way to deal with the contradiction is sheer bravado, as expressed by one storekeeper: "I know, they go back and complain and gossip... but abo'agu toloina, ah? I am the boss, ah?"

\textbf{The reason for lowaga}

To understand the reason why lowaga continues to be a business problem, it is important to recall some of the economic principles (or kinds of symbolic exchanges) discussed in previous chapters. The concept of 'work' (paisewa) as a kind of 'help' (lema), for example, is reflected in some businessmen's practice of 'helping' their paternal relatives with occasional 'gifts', namely by accepting their

\textsuperscript{23} For motivational factors of development problems in other regions of Papua New Guinea see for example Finney (1973:146ff); Dahanayake and Wyeth (1982:27).
plea for credit that is not repaid and never mentioned again. Such gifts are intended as tokens of sympathy (oboboma) for the father's matriline, by which to maintain close links that create options of eventual return, like 'une' or rights of land use:

I have all my rights with my mother. But because I work so hard for my father I have to be given free bagi and mwali and even land. And I can use that land until I die.... Business is business (recorded interview M.).

In other cases, small-scale business is intended to support the matrilineal kin, in particular to find money for the education of children, to 'help' elderly relatives, and to raise the living standards of all its members.

The purpose of this canteen: I just want to run this small business to earn some money...for my uncles [sister's children], those kids here, for their school fees and all those [expenses] (recorded interview T.K.).

Entrepreneurs have to secure general consensus from both maternal and paternal kin, because witches and sorcerers from either side are believed able to destroy any business enterprise that they resent. Boat owners, in particular, are anxious to reach full agreement with all concerned, because witches have been known to wreck a boat by placing a coral reef in front of it. The problem lies in the interpretation of the agreement. For the customers, gifts in the form of credit (lowaga) are not the same as 'helping gifts' (lema), because their names are recorded and they are occasionally reminded to pay back, either by the storekeeper when he refuses to give further credit, or by observers who may gossip about a person when he or she is indebted to the limit at all other trade stores. The storekeeper cannot expect gratitude from his customers and kin for his sacrifice, because in their eyes he is only fulfilling his obligation towards them to share his wealth; he is 'working' (paisewa) for them or giving 'help' (lema). Not only is the entrepreneur's 'gift' not fully appreciated, if he refuses to give further credit he commits a social faux-pas: he 'shows off' (gagasa). Sanctions of witches and sorcerers in the form of misfortune, sickness and death are believed to be the consequences of refusal to give credit to a senior person, an affinal, maternal or paternal relative. Anger towards a storekeeper immediately results in gossip, an effective way to 'spoil someone's name' that can result in 'social death' – which is just one step away from
physical death.

From a customer's perspective, a trade store is filled with desirable things that belong to its owner. The customer is usually related to the storekeeper and knows him well (understandably enough on such a small island). Aware that the goods are not needed for immediate consumption, the customer feels entitled to ask (sida) for a share. So doing, he or she enacts the socially accepted custom of everyday sharing (see Chapter Three) while acknowledging the storekeeper's commitment to his business by offering to repay the debt later. Often, however, financial difficulties lead to delay of the payment and renewed desires for trade goods increase the debt before the previous one is repaid.

The contradiction between everyday exchanges and a cash economy is obvious: store goods cannot be hidden to avoid demand sharing (sida). A quick cash return is needed to have enough capital to purchase new stock from the mainland on a regular basis. Store keepers are aware of the social costs of running their business; they all face situations where they have to refuse further credit and upset their potential customers by openly doubting their promise to pay 'quickly'.

The refusal to offer credit is perceived by the customer as arrogant, greedy behaviour, despised in Dobu. To the customer, the denial of credit is tantamount to the denial of a share in the ostensible surplus that is piled up on the shelves, a denial that, as a first consequence, deprives the customer of enjoying sweet tea, clean clothes, a smoke, or a light at night. Disappointment about this prospect, combined with the humiliation of being branded as untrustworthy and the thought of the storekeeper feasting at night on rice, canned fish, sweet tea and tobacco makes the customer angry. Depending on his or her personality and self discipline, the open reaction varies between the extremes of indifference ("That's OK, I was only trying"), and aggression ("Now you show off, but I will see you!"). Confrontations of this kind are normal occurrences for storekeepers and leave them with the feeling of being under constant threat: "If they want to welabana [bewitch] me, they can welabana me. But still I am OK. That's why I am showing off, we say, gagasa" (T.K.). It seems that in this context the term gagasa has particular undertones that
I have so far described the concept of *gagasa* as a character trait ('selfishness') in Chapter Two, as an interpretation of exchange attitudes ('stinginess' or 'greediness') in Chapter Three, as the inappropriate display of wealth ('boasting') in Chapter Four, and as an explanation for bodily harm ('being too egocentric') in Chapter Five. The difficulty of accurate translation is evident, as the nuances of meaning appear only in the context of interaction. In relation to storekeepers and other men who are involved in Western (*dimdim*) matters like politics, business, or urban dwelling, the accusation of being *gagasa* might best be translated as arrogance. This 'arrogance' is related to material wealth ('refusing to share') as an indicator of social attitude ('lack of respect'): "When I think about business people it's true that we have to be greedy to make money" (recorded interview M.B.).

To be accused of *gagasa* is not a statement about one's education, as teachers, pastors, ministers, and 'drop outs' from university are not generally suspected of being *gagasa*. It is rather a statement about a person's conduct and position in society, an accusation that implies a complaint about a person's claim to unjustified social superiority. Toddlers and young children, for example, are often jokingly accused of being *gagasa* when they 'show-off' (dance, make funny faces, dress up, or chatter noisily) in order to attract more attention than they would otherwise be given. Some businessmen are judged to be *gagasa* (selfish) by character, but more usually they become stigmatised in reaction to their 'arrogant' business practices. What Dobu customers in trade stores experience as the most humiliating treatment are attitudes of assumed superiority, as when they are denied credit but well know that the storekeeper himself makes free use of his stock:

The other problem nowadays is the canteen owners themselves. They think that it is their canteen, it is their money and they own everything. So when they run out of sugar, rice or tobacco they just get it at any time. Without knowing that they are running down their business. So when they want tobacco they just go up and get it. Smoke it. And forget it. [T]hat is one of the problems why people are not successful in running their business (recorded interview L.B.).
A misunderstanding, or a strategy for reinterpretation?

The individual's attempt to 'make money' is denigrated as 'arrogance' (gagasa) and the logic of market economy does not mesh well with the principles of Dobu exchange. Tracing back the typical problems of rural entrepreneurs reveals some key misunderstandings, especially obvious in the misconception of 'credit' (lowaga). From a Dobu perspective, storekeeping is not regarded as 'work' in a social sense, as it lacks the dimension of collectivity and mutuality. Storekeepers seek individual profit 'just on money basis', as expressed by Lukas when he outlined his plans to start a tradestore:

For my capital I should be looking at over 500 Kina... and I should be very strict with this lowaga business and I should avoid 'feeling sorry' for wantoks, and avoid giving away goods to traditional activities like sagali, bwabwale. My canteen should be just on money basis (recorded interview L.B.).

To run a store "just on money basis", however, can easily be interpreted as 'bad conduct' (bubuna to'umalina) and creates conflict between customer and entrepreneur. Any sickness or accident that the storekeeper might experience within the vicinity of his hamlet is interpreted as an attempt to punish him for being gagasa. This indicates that capitalist and Dobu exchange patterns are verbalised as different discourses about the appropriate ('respectful') behaviour of storekeepers. In contemporary Dobu, entrepreneurs fail to communicate the demands of monetary exchanges to their customers sufficiently well. Depending on the level of school education and involvement in business practice, most storekeepers and some customers engage in discourses about lowaga that make strategic use of definitions for economic transactions that are drawn from English and Dobu (as by comparing money with betelnuts, see below). Others claim Dobu ethics to be the sole touchstone of assessment of a person's conduct, masking their lack of knowledge of dimdim exchange by questioning its moral legitimacy: "I think people should understand that whatever stock is in the canteen is for buying, not for lending or consuming" (recorded interview L.M.). While a few people are able to distinguish between 'buying', 'lending' and 'consuming', the average Dobu subsistence farmer mostly uses other terms that are derived from the projection of everyday exchanges,
as when appealing to the storekeeper as a 'friend' (gosiaugu) if no closer kinship term is available, and asking for 'help' (lema) by showing sympathy and 'respect'. The storekeeper, in contrast, speaks of 'lending' as a bad practice that can ruin his business. To quote an entrepreneur from Dobu who uses the difference between the systems as an argument against sharing his wealth:

My mother [is] very old. My father died about two years ago. And he [didn't] expect me to send [him any] money. My mummy, too, [she] doesn't expect me to send [her] money.... [S]he has to go and look for [money by herself] ... according to my advice. Because I've got a family. And I've got problems, I have to meet that, meet that, meet that, there and there – you see? I have to buy that, buy this and buy that ... but there, my expenses are [greater] then theirs, so I think they [my close kin] have to look for their own money. Even if she [my mother] comes ... [I don't want her to] ask [me] for money [all the time]. My Daddy [never even ate] from my table until he died. He respected me highly, this is honest, God knows. He didn't ask me for tobacco or anything. He said: "Your life is different from my life" (recorded interview M.M.).

Credit is a universal concept (Firth 1964:29) and an established principle of exchange which, in Dobu, is very useful in its capacity to conceal individual wealth. Pigs used to be obtained on a credit basis (utua bawena), and repaid (emaisa) when social strings were tightened at the advent of a feast (see also Chapters Four and Eight). In kula exchange (Chapter Seven), credit is the driving force of the system, generally called buki ('bookings', credit) that should be returned (ana buki i sugu) within a few months time. Kula partners, however, do not attempt to meet all their obligations because it would put an end to the exchange relationship. In Thune's words concerning Duau practices, accounting is a sign of hostility:

If such an accounting finally takes place, as when a person consistently fails to repay valuables which he or she has received, the trading partners cease to be bound by or even to acknowledge the usual complex of rights and obligations which is to be found between friends (1978:77).

When baskets of yams (bebai) are given away at a feast the receiver accepts them 'on credit' (aga), because she has to give an equal return gift (lotau) as a balancing gift (maisa):
The term *aga*, generally used to identify gifts that require a balanced counter gift, appears to be the root of the term *lowaga*, as the prefix *lo-* means 'to make' and the 'w' might have been the result of a decline in the use of the glottal stop.\(^{25}\) This etymology was not obvious to any of my informants, however, who claimed that *aga* and *lowaga* were altogether different principles. Some argued that the difference between them is revealed by the terms for the respective return gifts, *lotau* for *aga* and *maisa* for *lowaga*.\(^{26}\) The term *maisa* is used for 'price' as well as in general to refer to a return gift that reciprocates the exchange, and it is a concept that cannot be misunderstood from a Dobu perspective. The possessive pronoun used with *maisa* indicates the connection between a gift and its repayment: *ana maisa* means 'its price' (for goods), or 'its return gift' (for Big Gifts). The amount of credit is not constructed as *lowaga ana maisa* ('credit its return') but as *lowaga ana sinabwa* ('credit its size'), suggesting that the repayment is not perceived as 'natural' or inevitable. In nonmonetary exchanges, the 'size' (*sinabwa*) of a gift indicates the appropriate time to repay it. Everyday exchanges are reciprocated quickly and casually, 'small' gifts travel faster than 'Big Gifts' ('une). The size of a pig indicates the time that it will take to raise a counter gift (*utuwa bawena*), while the size of a *kula* shell not only indicates its value but also the speed of its circulation. The larger a debt, then, the longer it takes to be returned. The time for balancing gifts has arrived when a person plans to 'liquidate' assets for a grand prestation and pulls all the strings to recover the treasures of 'une and *bebai* from their 'hiding places' only

\(^{24}\) *Ama aga* refers to gifts of *bebai* yams 'for our consumption'.

\(^{25}\) Daphne Lithgow emphasises the importance of the gradual decline of the glottal stop (') among native speakers of Dobu (pers. comm. August 1992; 1977). Her dictionary has a special section for words beginning with the glottal stop to mark their etymological significance (1984).

\(^{26}\) In the *kula*, however, *aga* and *maisa* are the most elementary forms of exchange, something my informants might have forgotten because I made these enquiries during a mortuary feast, when *aga* and *lotau* are the appropriate terms for balanced gift exchange of yams (*bebai*) and 'une.'
to redistribute everything again. For obvious reasons, this strategy is unsuitable for trade stores. It is reflected, however, in the lists of debtors that are hung up by desperate storekeepers: "No more credit! The following people have not paid their debts. I am sorry... the storekeeper". Debtors do not seem to be unduly bothered by these public announcements and I heard comments like: "I tricked him and now I just buy somewhere else, never mind (ya kabo'ena ta tuga mali kentiniega igu gwegwe ya gimwane, tua nada)". It abets this ethical laxity that, as everybody knows, the payment of credits does not result in any kind of redistribution, unlike a feasting event that compensates a donor with a share of quality food and betelnuts.

Without denying the possibility of a misunderstanding of the nature of Western business by some inhabitants of Dobu, it seems to me that the problem with business enterprises is more closely related to personal conflicts between 'Western style entrepreneurs' and their customers. Individuals make strategic use of the arguments that are available, using the rhetorical dichotomy of 'Western custom' (bubuna dimdim) and 'Dobu custom' (bubuna Dobu) to clarify their points. With regard to small-scale enterprises, the dichotomy of 'respect' and 'arrogance' is a crucial figure that stakes the claims between 'socially apt' customers and 'antisocial' storekeepers. Denigrating storekeepers as 'arrogant' (gagasa), customers criticise their power to decide upon customer's levels of consumption and standard of living. Storekeepers' attempts to counter-argue in terms of the altruistic purposes (oboboma) of their businesses notoriously fail to convince their customers, and they cannot even expect any 'social profit' from open debts (lowaga).27 In fact, Gregory's distinction between 'European-type' and 'Kula-type' economies (1983), while unrealistic in today's practice (see also Macintyre and Young 1982:207), seems to persist in local discourses about Dobu entrepreneurs, when customers demand to be 'respected' while storekeepers demand to be repaid. These understandings are reflected in the way Dobu people talk about money. Thune, in an article about numbers and counting in Duau, draws a distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in regard to the exchange of money and objects:

27 See also Mauss (1990:37); Strathern (1972:500-1); Bourdieu (1977:179ff).
It is no accident that numbers referring to money and other things appear only where there are no permanent bonds linking the participants using them. Within the village, exchange is most important as a means for expressing interpersonal relationships; the actual things themselves are of secondary importance. Outside the village, numbers are necessary and useful because the physical objects themselves are the centre of interest (1978:76).

From my perspective, the existence of trade stores in the hamlets eliminates the usefulness of a distinction between insiders and outsiders. Often, there is a gap within the residence group between those who have had Western education and returned home and those who remained on Dobu. As a matter of 'respect' for those who gained local knowledge and provided money for school fees, those who return to Dobu are expected to be additionally humble and generous: in short, to follow the rules of *bubuna Dobu* in spite of being familiar with *dimdim* lifestyles.

With the passing generations, the increasing number of migrant workers from Dobu increases the cash flow back to the hamlet level. According to J. Tauwaole, an urban Dobu man, men from matrilineal societies who work in towns tend to maintain closer ties with their lineages than people from patrilineal groups. They do so by remitting more money. These men often support their sisters' children back in the village by starting a small-scale business or by sending cash at regular intervals, thereby sponsoring their heirs. At the same time they create a justification for keeping most of their urban wealth for their own children, although strictly this is not acceptable according to *bubuna* Dobu. Some men send their children to their own hamlet in order to participate in *sagali* feasts and gain land rights in their father's place through work (*paisewa*). This is especially common practice if the children's mother is from a patrilineal society. This stands in contrast to urban families of a patrilineal background whose men invest more money in their own children and thus tend to keep it in town. I am not aware of further research on this

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28 Since Firth raised the question of compatibility of economic concepts like 'saving' (1964), some work has been done in this area (e.g. Sexton 1982).

29 When money for school fees is sent to the parents of the child by urban-dwelling relatives, the sacrifice needed to use it for this purpose and not to spend it on store goods permits the argument that it is 'work' for the child, even though the money was not personally earned by a parent's labour.
issue, however.

The reason for lowaga is not only based on notions of 'respect' and 'arrogance'. It needs further consideration of the local concept of money to gain an insight into the complexities of modern exchanges. Dobu people used to compare money with yams, betelnuts, or 'une (bagi, mwali, or pigs) when they were explaining to me the difference between money and local wealth. To my initial confusion, contradictory statements were made according to the context of my inquiries. Money can be hidden, distributed, or used for one's consumption; a demand for someone's money can be rejected as well as approved on the basis of arguments that are related to traditional wealth. The comparison of money with yams and other objects of consumption is made strategically, as a means of legitimising and explaining actual behaviour in the context of sharing or refusing to share. This is also interesting insofar as the value of 'une, which can be roughly expressed in the current pig exchange rate, is then deduced by estimating the monetary value of the pigs: "This bagi equals a pig of this (e. g. knee-high) size; so let's see, that would be about 400 Kina."

Within everyday discourse at the village level, moral ambiguity about the value of money prevails. On the one hand, the desire to consume trade store goods, the joy of smoking twist tobacco, eating rice with tinned mackerel, and taking a trip in a speedboat, all conspire to make people feel that money is 'good'. On the other hand, it is regarded as a foreign kind of wealth, a 'dimdim valuable' which is difficult to deal with. People state that they do not know how to use it and they feel that it works better in the hands of dimdins. Indeed, my ability always to have some money with me was seen as proof of my superior wisdom in this matter, while to me it provided the illusion of security, an idea that people in Dobu do not seem to understand. Whenever someone I knew had money (usually because I had given it to him or her on request), the intention was always to spend some on food and tobacco and save some for later purposes. But the circumstances and attitudes of others never permitted the fulfilment of this strategy. Many reasons made it impossible to save money: an outstanding debt in the store, older children taking some without permission, elderly relatives or visitors asking for sugar, tea, and
tobacco and finishing up the supply too quickly (see also Chapter Three). The frustration of someone who has to distribute all his or her wages on payday can be imagined, and it often leads to a reduced incentive to continue working for money: "When I have to pay 300 bucks for my child's school fee, as soon as I earn that 300 bucks, that's it, I pay the fees and I go back [to subsistence work] and check the weeds in the garden or whatever" (recorded interview D.B.).

Unlike yams, which are kept and stored under the supervision of senior women, there are no socially acceptable ways of storing money. If it is put in a bank account it is regarded as 'hidden', understandably a sensitive issue that cannot be discussed openly. If money is needed for feasts, school fees, church offerings, or similar events, one can often hear older people complaining about the difficulty of raising the funds: "Money is bad, it makes us waste our time. In the olden days we did not need money and yet we lived." (Mani yage to'umalina, ima tuta a mudamudale. Lowa nigeya mani ta mayawasima wate.)

'Money is like yams' (mani nadigega bebai)

The comparison of money with yams serves as a self-explanatory way to prevent people from asking for it. The concept of shame (omeiameia) is used in order to allow for a socially accepted 'storage' of money. Fortune stated that in the event of loss of yam seeds nobody would give any seeds to provide new stock (1932: 69). In fact, although today's subsistence gardener does not need to suffer hunger following a loss of yams seeds because they can be bought from local markets, gossip still attaches to those families who have to buy yams for seeds or as food. It is shameful to lose the seeds, even more shameful to have an insufficient harvest and to be forced to beg fellow hamlet dwellers or muli (in the broadest sense) for yams. It makes no difference whether the yams are needed for exchange or for immediate consumption.

The fact that yams can be exchanged against money raises the question of

30 Gudeman also compares Dobu yams with capital (1986:137).
gendering, because as women are the principal producers of yams, men are the main 'producers' of money. The axiom that 'money is like yams' can also be read as a statement about the establishment of money as an exchange medium that can replace yams. This perspective is mirrored in some families that I observed. The husbands worked for money and showed scant respect for their wives, beating them after beer-drinking parties to celebrate paydays and staying away for long periods without remitting money to the family. Such behaviour points towards a decrease in women's prestige as a by-product of 'development' insofar as their menfolk have taken over the responsibility for feeding the family. A related equation is that of money with food (masula). Money is the 'food that white people eat' (dimdim aadi masula), just as yam is the food on Dobu (meDobu aadi masula). This idiom is applied to a trade store that runs out of stock due to the storekeeper's generosity in giving away the goods: "They ate the canteen as if it was their yam house" (idi kentin si eninaya atua aadi 'anua masula). It is morally wrong to eat all the yams in one's yam store (anua masula), as some of them have to be exchanged, some kept for seeds, and some left for unexpected occurrences, like death. Similarly, it is understood that an empty store does not replenish itself, so that external help is needed to restart the business. As one might expect, the argument that money is like yams would be used only by those who already have money, not by those who are about to ask for it.

As I explained in Chapters Two and Four, yams are conceptualised as 'persons' (tomotai) to be addressed with garden magic (obwala). From this point of view, a lack of yams might also denote the lack of a capacity to socialise and communicate, procreate, and compete with others. Money, like yams, can be obtained through magic and with the help of various spirit beings; it is integrated into the contemporary belief system as a precious commodity and secret treasure. The most popular method (as I was told several times by different persons) is to ask the spirit of a person (yaluyaluwa) who has just been buried. One has to go naked to the cemetery on the first night after the burial and wait for the spirit to appear. First, it

31 See also Fortune (1932:101,107).
is said, little red inhabitants of the ground (tonitonibwa'a) will appear on the grave. Then a huge snake will emerge from the grave and wrap itself around the person who is waiting in terror and disgust, without, however, doing any harm. After that, the spirit should rise from the grave and inquire about the needs of the waiting person. Should a wish then be uttered, be it for a magic potion or monetary wealth, the spirit will say what time to return, usually the next morning before sunrise. People tell of incidents of the successful use of this method, claiming that even the late SIL missionary, David Lithgow, had used it to get 'two bags full of money'.

When I asked him, he laughed and denied it, but the fact that so many people believed it gives evidence of their belief in the efficacy of Christian prayer to control local spirit beings (see Chapter Five). Of all the people who confided about this way of acquiring money, however, none said they were interested in 'trying it out'. Fear of the snake and of the witches who are also supposed to visit the grave and eat the corpse, was too great. There was also the difficulty of keeping the newly acquired wealth entirely secret. "If you tell anybody it will disappear again", I was told. Lithgow could risk performing the experiment because he was a devout Christian and knew enough prayers to protect himself, while his relatively luxurious house on Dobu (with a kerosene fridge, water tank, pit toilet, gas stove, and lockers) provided a safe and secret hiding place for any wealth he gained in this manner.

Giant snakes are a common theme in Papua New Guinea myths, symbolising material wealth as well as the transformation from 'ugly' to 'attractive' by shedding their skin (see for example, Young 1983a:Chap.3, 1987:224-5; Thune 1980:396ff). A modernised myth, presented to an audience as a 'true story', tells of a young girl from Molima on Fergusson Island who went to the garden and was approached by a giant snake. Despite her initial fear she married this snake after it had asked her parents' consent. Later, the snake shed its skin to reveal a handsome young man who took the girl into his house, where bundles of money were stored. The man divided the money into piles, some of which were given to the girl's family to "live on until they die," and the rest were kept by the couple who were never seen
In garden magic (*obwala*), supernatural beings are engaged to support human efforts to grow yams. It appears that a supernatural being is related to monetary wealth, too. On top of the ridge of Gulebubu, the dormant volcano of Dobu Island, some strange stones can be found. It is believed that beneath these stones a white lady with fair hair looks after a treasure of "money, notes and silver, gold, diamonds and everything". The fact that most white visitors want to walk up the mountain is confirmation of the belief, as "many *dimdims* go up and try to get these valuables, but the spirit lady will not give it to them." It is hoped that one day she might give it to Dobu people, who are the true owners of this wealth. Until such time, other helpers are sought, for example the dwarf-like inhabitants of the bush (*tokwatokwa*) who are said to be more generous in handing out wealth. They are only rarely seen by humans, but on such occasions one can ask for magic or money. They would not deliver it immediately, but one would find the desired magic potion or cash sooner or later. One of my friends swears that she found a twenty-Kina note on the beach the very day after she had encountered a *tokwatokwa* just behind her house:

> At first I thought that it was my daughter playing in the bush, but then the *tokwatokwa* turned around and I realised that it was not her and quickly asked for money. You know, I had to pay the school fee. The next day, when I walked down to Buduagula, I stepped on the money. It was covered by sand and I am sure the *tokwatokwa* had put it there for me (interview M.T.).

From these examples it follows that money can be classed as a kind of local wealth. This is evident when the statement that "money is like yams (*bebai*)" is alternatively phrased as: "money is like *'une* (kula valuables and pigs)". As I have explained in Chapter Four, *'une* valuables are used in internal exchanges. Like *'une*, money can be used to acquire land rights, to end a mourning period by purchasing the required pigs (*mani bawena*), to re-establish relationships after a serious conflict (*ta'ona*),

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32 Interestingly, the time when it was said to have happened coincided with a major robbery at the SPAN office at Salamo on Fergusson Island. The rumours about this robbery might have triggered the updating of what was a traditional myth.

33 These stones are close to the topographic survey marker.
and even to buy oneself into the overseas kula exchange. Within the matrilineage, 
yams are occasionally handed over as 'help' (lema or bwaga), especially when large 
amounts of food have to be cooked for helpers or kula partners (muli). Soliciting 
for yams is bad for one's reputation as a gardener and manager of crops; it might 
lead to the conclusion that one lacks economic virtues. From this perspective, 
money is a precious resource that has symbolic power as a medium of exchange – 
like yams, kula valuables, and pigs. Asking for such valuables is shameful as it 
demonstrates an incapacity to acquire them in appropriate ways, that is, by means 
of 'work', exchange and magic. Comparing money with 'une and yams also points 
to the risk involved in its accumulation. As I stated in Chapter Five, success in kula, 
gardening, and business is expected to aggravate sorcerers and witches by causing 
anger (gamwasoala) or envy (e'ipi'ipi). Business people and those families who 
return to Dobu after some years of accumulating money in town often have less 
knowledge in the sphere of magic and feel especially vulnerable.

'Money is like tobacco and betelnuts' (mani nadigega tapwae be magi)

An entirely different strategy is followed by people who argue that money is like 
betelnuts and tobacco. This point of view is adopted by those who feel momentarily 
deprived of their fair share of money. According to this argument, cash is a medium 
of instant sharing, similar to tobacco and betelnuts. The sharing of these drugs is a 
demonstrative gesture, as under everyday circumstances they are hidden as well as 
shared. If they are consumed in public it is regarded as insulting to refuse to share, 
but it is an open secret that everybody can deny having any tobacco, betelnuts, and 
'mustard' (piper betle Linn., an essential part of the betel mixture). The handbaskets 
(tana) that contain these objects all have small side pockets called 'the child of the 
basket' (tana natuna), where such things are concealed. When asked for 'our' 
betelnut (eisa aada magi nina),34 a person can demonstratively open the main pouch 
of the basket to show its emptiness while sorrowfully exclaiming "I am very sorry,

34 Note the possessive aada is used, meaning: our (inclusive) object meant for consumption.
but see, I don't have any either!" (*sori sinabwana, nigeya. Igu tana kakae 'ena!*).

The obligation to share tobacco caused much annoyance when I gave sticks of twist away in public, as at a market or during a councillor's meeting. In no time it was all finished, cut into small pieces and handed to those who were sitting nearby. Later the person to whom I had given the tobacco came to me and asked for another stick, complaining that my public gift had deprived him of it. "It made me angry but I had to share." (*Ma'igu gamwas'ala ya eguyai*) (field notes).

Asking for betelnuts, 'mustard', or tobacco, is a means of socialising which does not necessarily imply that the person making the request is actually short of these things. I was always asked for betelnuts by passers-by, and when I said I had none I was often given half myself: "Look, I only have one, but you can take half of it to chew!" (*U ita, aagu magi ebwe'una namo, ta aamu tunali gete!*) 35 Asking for betelnuts and tobacco can also be understood as an informal way of greeting, a seeking of contact. In precontact days, the greeting formula was an invitation to exchange: "*Ooh keiwa. Aemuya siwalowa, matamuya buyo*" (Hello. Your feet shall walk in peace, your eyes shall see your cooked quality food). Today, introduced formulas such as *gonagona bobo'ana* or *gudemon* (good morning) are in common use, but equivalent to a friendly, informal 'good morning!' between neighbours, passers-by, or friends are the questions "*eisa aada magi?*" (any betelnuts?) or "*mwau tautauya?*" (where are you going?).

These examples suggest that the remark 'money is like betelnuts' can be rendered: 'money is a small gift that has to be either hidden or shared on demand'. Asking for it is not shameful if it is done in a serious and intimate way, but it is equally acceptable to lie and deny possession. The comparison of betelnuts and tobacco with money is not entirely valid in this respect, however, because it is also regarded as unseemly or inappropriate to ask openly and loudly for money. Yet if one who is known to have some rejects demands for money, the result is a loss of social prestige through gossip, or even sickness, caused by witchcraft or sorcery.

35 I never ran out of tobacco because most people did not like my brand ("5 Stars") or the small cigarettes I rolled for them on request. I was not impressed by the taste of black stick tobacco (named 'Paradise' and 'Cowboy') that provided their pleasure.
The comparison also suggests that the amount of money referred to is comparatively small. Tobacco and betelnuts are available for a few coins (*siliba*) in local markets, and a gift of only twenty Toea would be seen as a morally positive response to a person's demand for money. Similarly, if a small gift is required, as in the case of compensation (*ta'ona*) for a dog bite or a trivial insult, some betelnuts, a stick of tobacco, or ten to twenty Toea are regarded as appropriate. To deny them altogether is evidence of a negative, 'hard' (*pa'ala*) character.36

Comparing money with betelnuts and tobacco also offers clear indications about the kinds of people who can be asked for it. In contrast to yams, which can be obtained by request only via matrilineal or paternal kinship links and *kula* partners (*mulilinks*), it is socially acceptable to ask almost anybody for betelnuts and tobacco, if the request is made with an appropriate degree of politeness, depending on the standing of the person making the request. These small tokens of friendship (*oboboma*) are considered as 'helping gifts' (*lema*), because everybody on Dobu knows the unpleasant sensation of craving for a chew or a smoke. For safety reasons (witchcraft and sorcery), strangers and potential enemies are not asked. Big men and women are expected to share their abundance of betelnuts generously, without request. If one can ask for small amounts of money 'just as for betelnuts' it would explain why children are only lightly punished if they help themselves to money for PK from their mother's basket. It also explains why my 'sisters' and 'aunties' came to ask me for coins every now and then 'to go and get our betelnuts', and why it is impossible to store cash for the following market day. The hiding of betelnuts, tobacco, and money as an attempt to save them for oneself is doomed after only the briefest period of time, not least because there is so little space for secrecy within the household.

**DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW?**

From a Dobu perspective, a practicing Christian displays 'respect' (*amayaba*) for God, while a practicing storekeeper displays 'arrogance' and 'shows off' (*gagasa*).

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36 The expression 'hard' (*pa'ala*) is also used in the context of *kula* exchange.
Businessmen have to juggle the demands of a cash economy with the obligation to provide 'help' (*lema*) to members of their entire network of relations. As a result, it is only a matter of time before social pressures get the upper hand, leading to yet another business failure. Often, the entrepreneur is socially stigmatised. A common expression refers to someone who does not provide sufficient support ('help') to parents and elders: "they have built the veranda that he (or she) now sits upon and looks down onto them - what an arrogant person" (*ina bwaima si abina be i miatue - togagasä*). Such persons are the subject of gossip:

Oh, his canteen is already dry. Well, now he can stop eating rice, no more showing off (*gagasa*). Before, when his store was full, he thought he was someone (*nuatue*, literally mind-going-up), but now they already put him back to base (*sa’ina mwauta*). Serves him right for showing off! (*E’ina, gagasa manuna*) (interview M.G.).

Considering the numerous examples of failed business ventures in the past it is surprising that there are always those willing to 'try it out' again. An explanation can be found in the temporarily positive effects of an initial access to luxury food, increased social contacts, and the role model of *dimdim*. The development debate has identified negative 'social pressure' as a widespread problem for rural development, an obstacle that some analysts expect to diminish gradually as Western values become more pervasive (Carroll 1988:118). In an alternative approach, it has been suggested that 'traditional institutions' can be used as vehicles for the development of a market economy. The Trobriand writer and businessman Kasaipwalowa called the *kula* a 'development corporation' and referred to the 'wantok system' as a similar institution to 'further human happiness' (1974:454).

As I have shown, 'traditional' concepts are part and parcel of rural development anyway, having both positive and negative effects on the functioning of business enterprises. The fact that trade stores are re-established time and again points to the demand of Dobu Islanders for ready supplies of trade goods. When assessing the redistribution of these goods it seems that *lowaga* is a method of maintaining

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37 See, for example, Bogner (1968:55); Sexton (1982); Salisbury (1970:335).
38 See also Pitt (1976:7).
egalitarian structures by 'taking from the rich and giving to the poor'. This point was occasionally made by 'poor' people (those without direct access to money) who also stated that people who fail to repay *lowaga* are not stigmatised: they have 'tricked' (*kabo*) the storekeeper, and anyway, they needed the money for more important purposes like school fees or *ebwaea daita* (the annual offering). Dobu people usually differentiate between 'rich' and 'poor' people in the English language when they refer to monetary wealth. This distinction suggests some kind of class division within Dobu society, manifested in the different role models of 'gardeners' (*tobagula*) and those who are currently adopting and modifying a *dimdim* lifestyle.

'Paradise' and 'Cowboy': the 'mixed person'

After two months of field work, I went to Alotau for a week to watch the celebration of Independence Day. Before I left, my 'mother' advised me to do some bulk shopping for groceries and suggested further goods that were not on my list: 'Don't forget 'black tobacco' (*tapwae gaigaina*, the twisted sticks of trade tobacco) and some good rolling papers. In the newsagency you can buy the Sydney Morning Herald, that is best for smoking. As for the tobacco, make sure you get enough of both types. The women usually smoke 'Paradise' and the men 'Cowboy'. Bring at least one block of each, it's much cheaper for you that way!' (field notes).

This gender specification of certain tobacco brands could be interpreted as an indication of role modelling. Women smoke 'Paradise' because they associate the word with Christianity (although the name actually refers to the national bird); men prefer to smoke 'Cowboy' because the masculine image of a Wild West character suits them better. Black tobacco costs about seventy Toea per stick, which makes up to ten cigarettes. It is distributed in square-sized pieces at feasts, and is typically hidden with great care as the automatic response of any smoker who catches sight of it is to demand some. The home-grown alternative is called *kasia* ('bush tobacco'), an unfermented canaster that is sold locally by some men for a fraction of the price of black tobacco. The habit of smoking rolled cigarettes (originally spread

39 The labels of these 'blocks' of tobacco are not commonly seen, however, because the sticks are normally sold singly, wrapped in newspaper. Gender specific advertisements for tobacco are common marketing strategies (compare 'Marlboro' and 'Slim Filters', for example). See also Foster's analysis of advertisement strategies and role modelling (1995:165 fig.6, 172 fig.9).
by late 19th century traders) is regarded by Dobu people as a part of their 'civilisation': the pre-colonial bamboo pipe (baubau) had been given up in the first decades of this century. The availability of black tobacco, in this reasoning, is evidence of 'development' on Dobu, because it is sold in stores. The next stage is within reach: ready-made cigarettes of the brand 'Mutrus' have become increasingly popular within the last ten years. Some men have begun to occasionally smoke 'Winfield' and 'Benson and Hedges' filter cigarettes despite their high price and the stigma of 'showing off' (gagasa) and 'becoming Westernised' (wedimdim). Some women even attempt to give up smoking, because it is not 'good for women'.

The new Dobu person is becoming a social ideal for parents who want their children to adopt what they perceive as a dimdim lifestyle. The richest Dobu businessman, Madati Morea, lives on Sanaroa Island in 'the middle of nowhere' in a permanent house complete with generator, electric lighting, and a water pump. During an interview about his career we sat on the concrete under his spacious and well-furnished house, swatting mosquitos and sipping sweet tea while the radio played string band music of the famous Henry Kuskus. Madati explained (in his somewhat idiosyncratic English) why he had chosen a lifestyle that is apt to cause problems with his neighbours and relatives, who regard him as 'arrogant' and 'greedy':

M.: I need to exercise Western life, and also I have a family. I think it's better to have a permanent house or dimdim house so that my children won't have any confusion whether they are living on a station or back in the village. I'm trying to bring some sort of good example to the family and to show that it's the exercise of the father to practice Western or dimdim ways. But the main aim why I am trying my very best to adopt a Western style is to enable me and my family to have some future of Western life. Some easy way of financing our family group for schooling and hospitality. And also, when I look around, I see it's better to adopt it. Today everybody is calling for schooling and we are learning, but why don't we exercise the life, the living? We can speak good English, we can write good English, we can explain the meaning of English, but we don't have it. It's on our body, it's nothing. But we do speak it. So I am thinking, my qualification is very very low. I'm not very good. Well, people around here in Esa'ala

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40 See Fortune 1932, plate 6 (p.208) for a photo of a man smoking his baubau. According to Macintyre, by the 1930s the baubau was already 'an archaic object' on Misima (1990:84).

41 To my surprise I noted that the newspaper used for making 'Mutrus' is printed in Latin!

42 Henry Kuskus is a popular Tolai musician.
district call me a businessman; but to myself I say "I'm not a businessman". What I'm trying to do, while I have a life to live on this earth is to manage myself by half: I eat bebai and I eat rice. And I must have money to pay my children's school fees; I must have money to get my lighting, to listen to the radio, to afford all these things. So, a very important part, I have to observe my gardening time, my traditional duties. I must see my relatives, I must be friendly with the people, my brothers, my tambus but I have to strain out some of the unnecessary people. I can't love them all, I have to separate out the goodies from the baddies....

S.K.: Do you think that many people hate you?

M.: I don't know because I cannot see my own face. Program is a major law of life. Programming makes use of timing. Timing is very important. There is a time for harvest and a time for planting. But if you have a program of time for gardening, time for looking for money... there are plenty of things which you can get money out of. Go down to the salt water and there is a lot of Trochus, a lot of Beche-de-mer or sea cucumbers and there are shark fins, kaila [pearl shell] and other igoda [shells] are good for marketing. There are a lot of good reefs the people don't use to look for those fish as their economies. What I see is that the lack of program is a major failure of others because people think that when they finish the gardening they just sit around and walk around. They sleep in their houses. When they build a house they think that's a good house for them. But they don't also do other extension work. And when they get money they think that's the only money they'll get, they spend it and that's it. But you need everyday to change life. Because you need to eat everyday different sort of kaikai [Tok Pisin: food]. I must have a five-year plan. Why should I let my government come and force me to do it? I don't like colonial style. Today I must have a tool of my own that I can use to cut the bush and make use from my own land and get the money out of my own land. I get myself down to the sea and find out what is selling and get them. I sell them to the various companies or buyers and I have money. That's it, simple. Market it! I live in the dimdim ways. I live in paradise. There's nobody to stop me. True. Because this is the chance. I don't care about witches. I told them, "Anytime you e'ipi'e'ipi to me but when I see you with my two eyes I'm going to kill you with my guns." That's all (interview 17.12.1993).

Madati's account is evidence enough of some men's wish to remake their identity according to dimdim values. With energy and dedication, these men create a family setup alike to rural government stations. They work hard for their money and try to avoid exchange obligations. What Madati calls 'programming' involves a profound change in the working pattern for men, who usually have peak times for work and recreation throughout the gardening cycle. His life is indeed very busy. He owns two cargo boats, a trade store (as financial security), and spends much time planting useful and decorative crops in his hamlet.43 He sees himself as the patriarch of his

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43 Following a serious quarrel with his real brothers on Dobu, he now lives at his wife's place.
family, its provider and educator. Although he claims that his *dimdim* life is like 'paradise' and that he has reduced his exchange relationships to a minimum, he does not want to give up Dobu subsistence tasks entirely ('I eat yams and I eat rice').

There is an undertone of insecurity in his philosophy when he evokes The Book of Ecclesiastes ('a time to plant ...'), and he shows little confidence in his adopted role of *dimdim* when talking to one. The English language is 'only on his body', he says; it has not truly penetrated his mind. But in returning to his main point, the 'programming' of his entrepreneurial activities, he regains his self-confidence by complaining about other men's lack of motivation. Madati wants to be successful by his own two hands, using his intelligence, opportunities, and self-discipline ('programming'). He is not interested in Government projects and claims to have no problems with witchcraft.

**Women's liberation?**

If the 'new man' is a patriarch, the 'new woman' is disempowered by his rules. This change in gender relations is tacitly supported by Church rhetoric concerning God the father. Similar messages are transmitted by returning families who have lived an urban life and partly internalised Western values of female weakness and subordination as they are conveyed by television series such as 'Neighbours'. Some Dobu women in towns have learned about Western women's resistance against patriarchy and perceive themselves as already 'liberated'. They engage in politics and social activities, and influence the current role model of rural women. But on Dobu, I never had discussions about women's liberation or feminism, and I did not suspect it to be an issue until I interviewed Damian Bobole. He had studied in Port Moresby, earned a degree in economics, and yet speaks in a derogatory fashion about women's attempts to liberate themselves at the village level. In his experience, women who claim to be 'liberated' are usually unable to fulfil their subsistence duties and feed their families. Their main interest, according to Damian, is to get away from family duties; so they get their husbands to look after the children and concentrate on their *dimdim* clothes rather than on their customary roles. By doing so, however, they lose the high status that was a result of their skills
in gardening, managing wealth, communicating between groups, and raising their children. I quote his statements in full, as they reveal a perspective that I was unable to achieve myself.

S.K.: So you think that women's lib is not very useful here?

D.: Women had more value traditionally than now.

S.K.: Than men?

D.: No, about equal. Men had their value in that they were able to defend a community by fighting. They were able to travel out of the community to bring in trade goods from outside. The woman had value because she was able to look after her family well, feed all of them, year in year out. If famine came (ara'a) she was still able to do it. And she was praised and recognised because of her capacity to be able to perform all that. There were specific roles. No, the modern concept confuses them. I see a lot of them thinking that it's not their role to look after babies or to feed the family – the man can do that. But then they are taking the men away from their jobs of repairing their houses or having to build a canoe. Say the woman demands that the man must come to help her with cooking or washing the baby, the man neglects his job and so the family collapses. You find here, that those women, especially the elderly women who were brought up strictly on traditional lines, that they carry more weight than even the average man. Her opinion is more valuable. She has more leading roles to play in the community then a lot of men. Because society demands that you contribute by way of not only sharing goods, you have to be able to organise the community or contribute meaningfully by giving them ideas. The woman has got to understand tradition inside and out. Because otherwise she may misinterpret her husband's intentions and this can be damaging.

S.K.: There is one statement that I heard before from the women's president in Esa'ala. She said that: 'If you go to the mountain areas you see the women still wearing 'grass' skirts. They are so undeveloped, you could cry and cry and cry to see how miserable they live.' What would you say about that?

D: Kabalea (silly, stupid). She doesn't know development, she only talks about development. People don't have the right concept of development. Although a lot of them have gone to high school, they reckon development is about having nice clothes, having permanent buildings here and there, and every year the provincial member coming around distributing money. I reckon those people up in the mountain are much better off than me. I have a very low opinion of this women's council or whatever, women's lib doesn't work here. There's no place for it in this society I think. I am convinced that this organisation is doing more damage then good, bringing in Western concepts of women's rights. Look at all those women who are liberated. Take M. for example. She reckons she is a liberated woman, she's got all the rights and whatever, guaranteed under law of the constitution. OK, but her family is very unstable, she cannot run her own family. Because traditionally the man is the head of the family and everywhere I look I see that families which are headed by women are very insecure, very unstable, I feel sorry for them. This is proof that women being leaders doesn't work. Is not going to work. Traditionally women have their own recognition already, they have their roles to play, specified by tradition. So she has her value there. But if she gets involved in these Western ideas of being liberal – ha – she'll fail. All those
women who have had that idea implanted in their brains find it hard to settle in villages. Find it hard to settle down, find it hard to feed their family.

The new role models, exemplified by smoking gender-specific tobacco brands ('cowboy' and 'paradise') take shape in urban contexts but reach into the rural areas, spread by women undermining the former values of female authority by rejecting a role model that has never been of relevance: the Western housewife. Men want to become 'lone fighters' who provide only for their immediate family, saving money for school fees in order to enable their children to escape the village world. In this light it is surprising that the exchange of shell valuables in the kula ring still continues. As I will show in the next chapter, a multitude of factors contribute to make kula a challenge and an adventure for contemporary Dobu men and women.
Chapter Seven

STRATEGIC FRIENDSHIPS AND PRECIOUS MEMORIES: THE DOBU WAY OF KULA
Name of the gift: bagi, mwali (shell valuables)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss the Dobu perspective of kula exchange and provide an analysis of personal motivations and individual strategies. I focus particularly on the "interplay of strategic control and persuasion" (Munn 1983:293), on tactics, risks and tricks — the knowledge and practices that keep this intricate and complex activity popular amongst Dobu men and women. According to Sahlin's early classification of exchange kula is built on the ethics of friendship, hospitality and delayed, balanced reciprocity as 'built-in peace', to overcome the difficulty of 'border exchange', where "positive morality fades out or where intergroup hostility is the normal in-group expectation" (1972:200-1). For Sahlin, the 'design' of kula exchange "manifestly immunizes an important economic interdependence against a fundamental social cleavage" (ibid). Basing his analysis on Fortune's data, he emphasised 'cheating' and 'trading' as typical features of kula. Sahlin's perspective, however, cannot explain the reasons for present-day kula partnerships and exchanges on Dobu, where economic need is an insignificant driving force and hostile tribes a similarly insignificant threat. My data do not support Fortune's emphasis on cheating and killing by sorcery in relation to kula. Sahlin's concept of problematic 'border exchange' identifies one important source of excitement, anxiety and tension that makes kula appealing in terms of individual experience. As an external exchange network of support, the kula links of Massim people certainly do have occasional economic significance as sources of additional gifts for feasts. From a contemporary Dobu perspective, however, kula is essentially a gamble for bagi (necklace) and mwali (arm shell), the 'shells that matter' for local exchanges.
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Here, their symbolic value is further explored by reflecting on the process of persuasion and seduction that is needed to acquire them; the physical and emotional challenge of travel on *kula* expeditions is discussed as a form of 'work'. New generations of *kula* traders are drawn into the system through such expeditions, when shared experiences strengthen the ties between 'mentor and student' and knowledge is transmitted in line with practice. Structuring the chapter around the narrative of a *kula* expedition, I reiterate the lived experience and the excitement that makes *kula* so engaging. This narrative is fictional insofar as it is constructed from my data of two group expeditions to Duau (Normanby Island); once with Enaiya people to reopen the Kaula area for *kula* exchange following a death, and once with Edugaura people to reintroduce a widower to the exchange. I also include information received on my *kula* trips to Bwaiowa, where I went with individual friends by canoe or dinghy without any formal ceremonies, and from Dobu itself, when I observed *kula* traders from Bwaiowa and Duau attempting to solicit valuables. All these occasions contributed to broaden my understanding and so to shape my 'account of a *kula* expedition to Duau'. Table 10 gives an overview of my experiences of *kula* expeditions.
### Table 10: The writer's participation in *kula* expeditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Name of informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. - 27.5.1993</td>
<td>Duau (Kwanaula)</td>
<td>Yawala to Duau to remove <em>bubuli</em> post as a group (45 persons) by M.V. Kwantas</td>
<td>Arrived too late for the <em>bubuli</em>; however, we got two <em>bagi</em> (whole group: 44 persons). One <em>bagi</em> became my <em>kitomwa</em>.</td>
<td>Susan, Alfred, Alexander, Nobela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.6.1993</td>
<td>Dobu</td>
<td>Botanic excursion to study <em>kula</em> magic</td>
<td>Study of specific <em>kula</em> spells and their effects on the weather and the partner</td>
<td>Alexander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.9.1993</td>
<td>Bwaiowa (Waluma)</td>
<td>Yawala to see <em>mwali</em> <em>(ei'eiya)</em> by dinghy</td>
<td>Negotiations for a <em>mwali</em> that Kaibado wanted to give me as <em>oboboma</em> - gift</td>
<td>Kaibado, Daiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.9.1993</td>
<td>Bwaiowa (Waluma)</td>
<td>Yawala to Bwaiowa by sailing canoe</td>
<td>Success in acquiring the <em>mwali</em> Ulilaba (ranked <em>bulubulu</em>) after a night of 'greasing'</td>
<td>Alexander, Lageyani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.10.1993</td>
<td>Bwaiowa (Waluma)</td>
<td>Yawala to see <em>mwali</em> <em>(ei'eiya)</em> by dinghy</td>
<td>Negotiations for a <em>mwali</em>, study of specific <em>kula</em> oils and brews</td>
<td>Daiba, Kaibado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. - 29.10.1993</td>
<td>Duau (Soisoiya)</td>
<td>Yawala to Duau to reintroduce widower</td>
<td>Experience of <em>kula</em> practice, <em>tanaleleya</em> in Kaula</td>
<td>Kaibado, Tedo, Setepano, Anthony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.11.1993</td>
<td>Dobu (Losina)</td>
<td>Yawala to see <em>bagi</em> <em>(ei'eiya)</em></td>
<td>A man teaches <em>kula</em> to his firstborn son</td>
<td>Lusinda, Aisi, Pusta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. - 31.12.1993</td>
<td>Dawson Island</td>
<td>Visit to Koyagaugau and Ode Island with group from Dobu by M.V. Pesieda and sailing canoe</td>
<td>Bringing gifts as <em>labalaba</em>; specialist's lectures about <em>kula</em>; study of dagula <em>mwali</em></td>
<td>Alexander, Mwalubeyai, Lakatani, Wayaboma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.8.1997</td>
<td>Bwaiowa (Budoya)</td>
<td>Visit in Bwaiowa as <em>labalaba</em></td>
<td>Group discussion about gender roles in <em>kula</em></td>
<td>Nata, Millicent, Lusinda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While participating in these trips, I was taught the moral reasoning associated with *kula* exchange, especially obvious in the use of 'respect' and 'work' as a legitimation for, and explanation of, exchange activities. My involvement in *kula* itself was

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1 This list includes neither the frequent occasions of *kula* activity on Dobu Island that I observed, nor the weeks spent with Alexander on intensive study of Fortune's accounts and other issues of *kula* exchange.
difficult to initiate, as my local 'family' did not approve:

"What do you want to know about kula? It is very simple, we can tell you everything. You don't need to go and risk your life!" My 'mothers' were not impressed by my interest in this classic example of 'ceremonial gift exchange'. "But, lots of books have been written about it and I want to contribute my own..." "Ah, if so many books have been written about it already, what more is there to know? You want to study it? I think you just want a spin, but I will report you to the government. We have to look after you and if you die because of kula we will get into trouble with your government" (F.K., domestic admonishment, December 1992, field notes).

Looking back on this scene, one of many, I wonder how I finally managed to go abroad for kula so many times. To some extent, I had to admit, F.'s point was correct: with all the systematic work that anthropologists have done on kula over the last eighty-odd years, what more is there to say?²

My fascination with kula, originating in undergraduate studies, grew to an understanding of its appeal as I relaxed in the gentle peace of its ethic of hospitality, enacted to lull a visiting kula partner into a perfect illusion of friendship. I experienced the joy of being served quality food and an abundance of betel when staying with informants and joining them on kula expeditions. I learned while sitting on beaches and verandas, waiting for boats or a partner, chewing betelnuts and taking notes. On Dobu Island, there are six distinctive kula areas. People from each of these areas go together for yawala (kula exchange), but frequently others join in. The name of the area is often mentioned in conversations on this topic, for example Edugaula yawalina is 'the yawala of Edugaula people'. If people from all the areas of Dobu go together, this is called Gulebubu yawalina (Gulebubu being the name of the volcano that dominates the island). An estimated number of one hundred to one hundred and fifty people are involved in kula exchange on Dobu Island, an average of one or two for each matrilineage.³

Waiting for the first trip to come up, I visited Alexander Meleodi, my most reliable

² For a bibliography of kula see Macintyre (1983b).
³ See J. Leach (1983a:18). My data are based on the estimates of several kula traders as well as my own.
and reflective informant-friend. As a classificatory uncle (wa'a, MFZS) of my 'mothers', he could use his relationship to my advantage. By inviting me to join him on the trip in their presence, they were morally obliged to let me go. As a matter of 'respect' they could not openly suspect him of being unable to 'look after' me. The following day, I realised that others were using the same rhetorical strategy of 'respect':

My friend and neighbour had to persuade her husband to let her go, though he did not relish the thought of having to cook his own food and look after two older children (she would take the baby). She argued that her paternal uncle ('father', tama-) was ill and would not live much longer. She was obliged to find a kula valuable to be prepared for his death, when she would need it for his funeral gift (talo), and she wanted to see her partner for the outstanding debt of a medium sized bagi. "What if he dies and I don't have bagi?" she told her husband. "I have to go as a matter of 'respect', and so you will have to do without me for a few days. My sisters will do the work." She was using the notion of 'respect' in a double sense: her obligation towards her paternal relatives and her husband's obligation to her in recognition of this fact (field notes).

When the word spreads that a trip is to be undertaken 'soon', many people start considering whether they should join it or not. They think about the implications for those who stay behind as well as their own capacities. If the transport involves a charge, money has to be raised. If fellow hamlet members are seriously ill, participation in a kula trip can be dangerous for them owing to the debilitating effects of gwasa (see Chapter Two). However, sickness can also be the reason for a trip, especially when death is anticipated and no valuable is available to give to the grave diggers after the burial. Considerations about the faithfulness of a spouse, good behaviour of children left behind, and about the impact of loss of manpower for subsistence chores all have to be weighted. In addition, most people are concerned about risks involved in going on the trip.

It is also a matter of 'respect' that the living maintain ancestral kula 'paths' that they have inherited. This moral rule opens up a whole range of arguments in favour of going on a kula trip. Every kula trader tries to find an appropriate heir or substitute (lo'epa'elu) within the matrilineage, chosen for his or her responsibility, intelligence, obedience towards elders and knowledge of the rules. The whole matrilineage has an interest in successful kula exchanges because the valuables are
needed for internal exchanges within Dobu itself. Only those young men and women who behave well and show that they are keen and capable are chosen to inherit the main 'path' and the most precious valuables of their matrilineage. Those who inherited their 'path' in this way have fond memories of past journeys when they accompanied their deceased relative on many previous kula trips, spending time together at a muli's home, helping to carry the gear and listening carefully to the talk and instructions, learning the secrets of attraction magic, and coming to know the partners and valuables. The valuables that the deceased had held, or attempted to acquire in his or her lifetime, are always a trigger for sadness as they revive memories.

In November 1993 I had the chance to observe the handing on of one of the most valuable bagi, called Asanaibeubeu, in Mwemweyala hamlet. For decades this bagi had been held by Ruth's matrilineage as their kitomwa (see Chapter Four). Lakatani, who manages the 'paths' of his wife, had planned to part as well with another first-ranked bagi, called Telefoni, but Ruth started wailing for her deceased maternal uncle whose heir (lo'epa'elu) she was, crying that she could not part with it. "My hands are dirty (nimabaila ya giyegiyei)," she keened to the mourning melody (do'ona'ona, literally cry-and-talk), her face wet with tears. She meant that her hands were still soiled by the recent death, and that the memory of her maternal uncle was too painful to give away this bagi (field notes).

Alexander explained to me that kula partners have moral obligations to act sympathetically, showing 'respect' to one another by attending group activities related to mortuary feasting, such as 'opening up' the region after a prohibition (gatu or kwausa) to honour the name of a deceased big man or woman by symbolically restarting kula exchange (bubuli ana so'o or bubuli ana lasa). This occasion often provokes an exciting and extremely competitive trip, because during the ban on kula large numbers of valuables accumulate (ulai) which are suddenly released at the lifting of the ban. Another reason for a trip is to reintroduce a person to kula exchange in order end a mourning restriction (kumata ana e'eda). In this case, some arrangements with an overseas partner are made in order to provide feasting food (bwabwale) for the participants. Another moral obligation is 'to open

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4 Weiner mentions the excitement about this upcoming exchange in 1990 long before it actually took place in November 1993 (1992:196 note 53).
the heavy clouds' (uma’uma ana giegiei), referring to a partner's visit and gift of a kula valuable 'to make his partner happy again' and 'turn his mind' back to kula matters after a period of mourning.5

Following the yam harvest, the annual feasting period from August to October is regarded as the best time for kula, though much depends on the availability of a work force and resources at home. When new gardens have to be made (from late October to January), every hand is needed and no kula expedition should be undertaken. After the gardens are planted, a period of calm sea and slack work begins (from February to April), that is also well suited for kula trips by canoe (see Fortune 1932:223). No particular rules determine the month of departure; it depends on personal considerations of upcoming events, the possible need to get a valuable, a special arrangement with a kula partner or the simple wish to make a trip that motivates a big man to lead one. The diagram 'The year – Tubudao idu tuta' (appendix 6) shows that only gardening can interrupt kula, so the rising of the Pleiades (gomayawa) which indicates the time to make new gardens, also heralds the end of the kula season.6 This is interesting in connection with the myth of Kasabwaibwaileta, the kula hero who embarked on the Pleiades after being marooned by his envious kinsmen (see below, also Fortune 1932:219).

A DOBU-CENTRIC VIEW OF KULA

Sitting on a fine mat on his veranda in Kwakwamoiya planning the details of the trip, Alexander was about to explain the finer points to me and his brother-in-law, Aisi. We would, he began, 'laga' ('go up') to Duau (the northeastern portion of Normanby Island). His use of this verb opened up a whole field of knowledge for

5 Death can also cause a local ban (gatu) that is ended when the matrilineal mourners walk to a village of the same clan and receive kula shells to 'make them feel able to do kula'. These gifts are called etalai, or e’ebwaeya (literally: to make give). It is done about four days after the death, when the spirit has gone to Mt. Bwebweso (see Chapter Eight).

6 According to Fortune, kula expeditions were made between March and April, "while the gardens are yet newly planted before the yam vines are more than a few inches long" (1932:201). On Dobu Island, however, in March and April the yam vines have already reached the centre stick (ebudi) and are at least one meter long.
me, as our discourse shifted into the realm of directional verbs. The movements of bagi and mwali are expressed in terms that represent physical height: mwali 'come up' from Bwaiowa to Dobu and then 'go up' (laga) to Duau, while bagi 'come down' from Duau to Dobu (dolo). These two verbs, often used with a directional suffix -ma (to here) or -da (to there) (mwali si lagama, bagi si doloma) suggest a local understanding of kula as a non-circular structure.⁷ They are perceived as opposites, so that mwali are said to 'laga' from Dobu to Duau to Tubetube to Muyuwa, and bagi to 'dolo' from Dobu to Bwaiowa to Boyowa to Iwa and Gawa to Muyuwa.⁸ The movement of bagi is related to the verb 'dolo', and the movement of mwali to the verb 'laga'. The diagram below reflects this perception of kula in a Dobu-centric model.

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⁷ These meanings of laga and dolo were not mentioned by the missionaries who did lexical work (Dixon n.d.:42,103; Grant 1953:60,81; Lithgow 1979:56,70). Interestingly, Dixon mentions the verb 'elagasina as the beginning of pregnancy (n.d.:49). It literally means 'to laga into womanhood'. Laga and dolo are extensively used to describe spatial relations, such as in wa'italaga ('look there in laga direction'), u sa'u laga ('put it there in laga direction'), and within Dobu, places are situated laga and dolo in relation to each other. The two directions were not always consistent with my understanding of 'up' and 'down', e.g. from Buduagula one goes laga to Enaiya, but dolo to Piesiya (see map) on the same footpath. Malinowski might have been referring to similar Trobriand concepts when translating 'come' and 'go' in relation to kula (1922:307).

⁸ Following my Dobu informants, I use 'Tubetube' synonymously with the Bwanabwana region and 'Boyowa' synonymously with the Trobriand Islands (see also J. Leach 1983a:18).
These directional concepts do not mean, however, that \textit{kula} as a system is perceived as lineal. The valuables follow their individual 'paths' (\textit{eda}) from one person to the next, ideally going from one \textit{kula} area to the neighbouring one and so on. In spite of the slight possibility of receiving the same valuable a second time after it has made the whole circuit, people claim that this 'never happens'. Their model reflects interactive links from the nodal Dobu standpoint, links that decrease in intensity as one goes 'up' or 'down' the chain of partners. It divides the Massim into a 'core' zone from Boyowa to Tubetube, and a 'peripheral' zone (Iwa, Gawa, and Muyuwa).\footnote{The relative distance between Dobu and Muyuwa may account for some fundamental differences in local perceptions that greatly complicate an application of Strathern's concept of the \textit{kula} as an "asymmetric, cross-sex relation" (1988:199).} A social dimension that is not reflected in the model, however, is related to the notion of totemic clans. In Dobu, I was told, \textit{kula} partner used to be members of the same clan.\footnote{Fortune strongly denied this connection (1932:209).} This practice cannot be followed all around the 'ring' because of local
differences in totemic birds. From a Dobu perspective, however, clan solidarity used to be perpetuated by overseas links, forming same-clan-segments of the *kula* ring that competed against each other for *mwali* and *bagi* of high rank, each clan trying to draw them onto their 'paths'. This practice must have caused local tensions between clans, but accounts are not available.\(^\text{11}\) The directional concept of *laga* and *dolo* fails to represent the double meaning of 'path', as both a structure of relationships and as the actual movements of *bagi* and *mwali* (see also Campbell 1983a:202ff).

Alexander enjoyed our discussion about semantic categories like *laga* and *dolo* and the simple diagrams (like the one above) that I used to clarify my questions. Some days later, he paid me a visit and drew the following diagram to explain the structure of *kula* 'paths' to me.

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\(^\text{11}\) This may be partly due to a representation of the *kula* as a 'peace making ceremony' (Fortune 1932:209).
He explained that it was the sum of possible links of *kula* partners in the system that gives options for strategic planning of hypothetical 'paths' that makes *kula* so interesting – and risky – for its participants. Certain 'paths' have been used in past exchanges and exist as manifestations of the joint efforts of its participants. In the diagram above, one trader in each *kula* region has been marked 'x'. These hypothetical individuals know each other at least by name, are of the same clan (at least within the range of direct partnerships of Dobu), and form a 'ring' of mutual trust: the ideal *kula* partners (*alipoi*). In most cases, however, partners are not always dependable and pass valuables in new directions to suit their own selfish strategies. People with more than two partners act as 'intersections', to use Alexander’s English term, often redirecting the moves of shells on their 'paths' into new exchange-rings. In fact, when Alexander and Alfred made plans to lure the *mwali* Kibutokunawaisea onto their 'path', they drew a similar diagram to explain the current situation, with names of partners and valuables and arrows to indicate
movements, and question marks to indicate doubtful trustworthiness. The heading read 'Plan for Kibu'.

Annette Weiner suggested that one should "visualize the maze of plays and strategies as layers of exchange, which one must constantly build up over time" (1992:141). This model combines both structure and realisation of kula 'paths'. Without a more detailed account of its nature, however, it is difficult to visualise a 'maze', other than as consisting of links between partners exchanging gifts of shell valuables. Following valuables as they travel on their individual 'paths' through time evokes an image of laminated space.  

**Female kula traders**

From a Dobu perspective, there are few grounds for arguing that kula is a last resort of male dominance (Gell 1992:166). In the past, women participated only on Dobu and Tubetube, but today some women participate in almost every region of the kula ring. In fact, a few women are famous, like the late Sinekamwe'i of Egadoi who led the last (to date) fleet of canoes (epoi) to Duau in the 1960s, challenging the participants to bring back more valuables than herself, and winning the competition (doe) in the end. When discussing female participation in kula exchange, some women remarked that there would be fewer quarrels and less tension if women exchanged only between themselves. In Dobu, kula expeditions are not perceived as 'male' or 'same-sex' enterprises, a point that undermines Strathern's model of kula

12 See Munn for an analysis of individual 'paths' (1990); also Campbell (1983a:201ff).
13 Lepowsky reviews the contradictory statements of Massim researchers concerning the presence of women in the kula, concluding that at least in contemporary Tubetube and Duau societies women are regular participants (1994:211). See Macintyre (1987:210, 1988:185); Roheim (1950a:184).
14 I was told that in Dobu, a fleet of kula canoes is called si'alau, not, as Fortune claims, uwalaku (1932:210). It might, however, be possible that both words are compounds, as si alau also means 'they go for kula' and u alau 'you go for kula'. The latter term might be identical with uwalaku, although I suspect Fortune was given the Trobriand term uwalaku (see Malinowski 1922:207-11).
15 Although I am not sure of its truth, I cite this comment because it reflects women's viewpoint: "The men are making it hard for themselves and others because they fight too much for mwali and bagi."
(1988:193ff). In view of the predominantly uxorilocal residence pattern on Dobu (see Chapter Three), her analogy of *kula* and kinship patterns based on sister-exchange is equally inappropriate:

And what they create in their overseas voyaging is already created at home in the manner in which a subclan residually divides itself into its male members who stay and female members who depart: it is a collectivity of (same-sex) males that forms its community (1988:199).

The rules are the same for both women and men in the *kula*, and most women have male partners. Some women let their husband or brother manage the valuables, because they are weak or resent travelling with small children, just as some men who live in town leave the responsibility for looking after the valuables with their sister or mother. The management of *bagi* and *mwali* on behalf of someone else is called 'une etete'. I am not aware of any open discrimination against women, who are represented at all levels of *kula* exchange, although men are over-represented and their (same-sex) 'helpers' (*tolema*) in most cases have a better chance of becoming the principal heir.

Female *kula* traders have a double responsibility because they have to manage food as well as entertain their partners. A successful *kula* woman is *alawata* (of high status), because she is a perfect host for her exchange partners — a task that cannot be accomplished without a wide range of helping relatives: girls who prepare and serve the food, do the dishes and the laundry, prepare the beds, fetch water, sweep the hamlet, supervise the children, and do errands; and boys who catch fish, bring firewood and climb for coconuts and betel. Female *kula* traders, therefore, have to work harder than their male counterparts who can rely on the support of their wives to provide hospitality. The following table lists the names of *kula* persons who are *'esa'esa or alawata* on Dobu Island and who trade on the highest level of *dagula* shells.

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16 It is interesting that Molima people of southern Fergusson Island, who are new to the *kula*, call it generally 'une-ete' (Chowning 1983:416).
### Table 11: Big *kula* men and women on Dobu Island
(In bold: my main informants in *kula* matters from Dobu)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area on Dobu</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Male or Female</th>
<th>Hamlet and Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edugaula</td>
<td>Setepano</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>We'itaa (<em>Bunbune</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demoti</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Gewana alena (<em>Kanagala</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manukalai</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Obunbune (<em>Bunbune</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lakatani (for wife, Ruth)</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Mwemweyala (<em>Kanagala</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tedo</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Gaula (<em>Bunbune</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eli</td>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Derwasiya (<em>Kaukau</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiowani</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Diliba (<em>Gewala</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Kwakwamoiya (<em>Kaukau</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanomwanona</td>
<td>Mini</td>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Dewasiya (<em>Kaukau</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eli</td>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Namoa (<em>Bunbune</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiowani</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Diliba (<em>Gewala</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Kwakwamoiya (<em>Kaukau</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enaiya</td>
<td>Semele (Waisa)</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Siwabuya (<em>Magisubu</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egadoi</td>
<td>Wasailo</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Wabala alena (<em>Bunbune</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabuna</td>
<td>Dele</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Udebi (<em>Magisubu</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barabara</td>
<td>Nekwailesi</td>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Naikwala (<em>Magisubu</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TO DUAU, THE LAND OF PLENTY: AN ACCOUNT OF *KULA* TRAVEL**

A *kula* trip is called *yawala* (used either as a noun or a verb), no matter whether it is made by a group or as a single person. Competitive *kula* expeditions are more specifically referred to as *alau*. These days Dobu people travel to Duau by diesel-engined vessel or dinghy, but most of the trips to Bwaiowa are still made by canoe. The proximity of Bwaiowa allows for better bonding between *kula* partners, as visits are more frequent and news spread quickly across the Dobu Passage. When a group goes for *alau*, its members compete for the valuables before returning home, then the size and number of shells are publicly compared in a ritual called *tanaleleya*. Such trips are notable for their adventure and sheer fun. A *kula* trip is announced by its prospective leader who directs the participants by giving them

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17 I also received information from *kula* traders from Bwaiowa (Millicent, Daiba, Lageyani, Lusinda, Nata), Duau (Alfred, Anthony) and Koyagaugau (Mwalubeyai, Wayaboma).

18 The verb for travelling by boat (*adau*) is also used when referring to *kula* trips.
their 'rules' (*loina*) in public speeches (*awagwae*). This person, the *tosanawaga* (literally 'person-look-after-canoe'), arranges the transport with one of the local boats, sets the schedule, and provides meals and betelnuts for the participants while aboard, a type of gift called *aupatala*.\(^{19}\) He will have a specific reason for going, and sufficient prestige and wealth to lead the trip. If a widow or widower is to be reintroduced to *kula*, she or he has to maintain a mourning attitude, and as there would also be more mourning passengers, the mood on the trip is somewhat subdued to show them 'respect'.

On these trips much time is spent simply waiting. Sitting on the beach, or on a relative's veranda in the shade, chewing betelnuts, chatting about everyday events, eventually going home to sleep but returning early the next morning for another day of waiting. False rumours such as 'the boat is coming and it will not wait – we have to leave in a hurry', and 'we leave tomorrow morning at daybreak' keep people idling on the beach for days, until eventually the trip is either cancelled or commenced. Waiting on the beach, chewing betel, gossiping, represent a typical Dobu situation (not only for *kula* traders) as boats are usually unpunctual. I observed that people from a matrilineage normally stayed together. Adults rarely mixed with the owners of the village while waiting. The children and teenagers, however, who had accompanied their matrilineage elders or fathers to lend a hand, were more at ease with their agemates of the place, welcoming the trip as a rare opportunity to hang out together. The appropriate attitude for senior persons was a dignified silence, interrupted only by the sounds of betel chewing, notably the rattling of a lime stick in a container. As well as the heat of the day and the unspoken dangers of being in strange territory, there might be many mosquitos and sandflies, no toilet facilities and no way to get food. In spite of all these discomforts, one should display strong character by showing no signs of exhaustion or impatience. To restrain emotions (*alamai'ita*) is a rule of conduct that is mastered brilliantly by many people. Indeed, the meaning of the word *alamai'ita*

\(^{19}\) Fortune calls the leader of a fleet 'canoe owner', or *toniwaga* (1932:216, 224ff). This is incorrect from a Dobu perspective, as the owner of a canoe is not necessarily the leader of a fleet. See also Thune concerning contemporary boat charter for *kula* in Duau (1983:353).
was explained to me in the context of a kula trip:

When you go to Duau, there is no toilet on the small boat. You stay for a long time and want to have a piss and take a proper rest, but you can't. So with your alamai’ita you simply wait and stay quiet without complaining or pissing anywhere. That's what alamai’ita means (M., field notes). 20

I recall these long days of waiting as productive for ethnography. The general themes of conversation concerned issues of kula exchange, and my enquiries usually initiated group discussions or elaborate explanations. Sitting on a beach, swatting sandflies, chewing, smoking, distributing tobacco ('Cowboy' brand), talking, writing, and drawing in the sand to clarify a point, transformed our time of waiting into an opportunity for learning. Having most discussions in Dobu language, I noted words for gifts that I had never heard before. Kula gift categories from the Trobriands have been widely discussed in the literature, but their Dobu counterparts are not as well documented. Aisi, my neighbour and helpful friend, recruited Alexander and Lakatani, both knowledgeable and successful kula men, to answer my questions about kula gift categories in Dobu. They also taught me the strategies of gift giving, the most important ways of maintaining strong bonds with partners and persuading them to relinquish their shell valuables.

The right gift at the right time: persuasion and balance

A basket (kwalisi) of raw yams and other seasonal food can be sent to the partner, when there is the likelihood of a safe delivery. This gift is called eyabala ('looking across', 'passing on') and symbolically begs for a valuable. The recipient should give a bagi or mwali to the deliverer who has to pass it on to the sender of eyabala. At some later opportunity, a matching valuable has to be returned, but the value of the basket of food remains unbalanced. It is meant to 'make the partner happy' (ina gwauso'ala manuna) and willing to part with a valuable. A gift of eyabala is most

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20 Eguma u laga Duau be waga gidalina nigeya ana toiletimo. Adau dedulana be ni'atu nuanuayo soso, nuanuayo eno, to'ase be to'ase ga nigeya sawesawenaya. Enega ma'imu alamai'ita u yamwayamwa namo, tuga u miami be geya'abo lomugi, geya'abo soso besobeso. Nate alamai'ita ana nuwasabwalena.
appropriate for mwali and bagi of medium to low value. If a very precious valuable (bulubulu or dagula) enters the sphere of Dobu kula, emotions run high and everybody tries their best to win it. Gift giving is a powerful tool towards achieving this goal, although it is essential to understand clearly the meanings and values of the respective gifts.

A person who holds a precious valuable is courted by many would-be partners as well as those from his established exchange 'paths'. He or she receives different gifts from people to ask for the valuable. One kind of gift is po'ala ('betrothal'), common throughout the kula ring.\(^{21}\) It consists of baskets of yams, banana bunches and seasonal food, betelnuts, tobacco, even pigs or money, and is meant to solicit the valuable. This gift is not to be returned, but when its size reaches a certain point, the holder of the valuable is expected to relent: 'You po'ala too much, today I give you the valuable' (u po'ala sinabwana wawa'sae, batuwa ya pele). The gift itself is not returned but to a Dobu person's understanding it is sufficiently well reciprocated by the honour of being chosen to be the next holder of the valuable. Po'ala can also be used to persuade a partner to relinquish a valuable sooner than planned. It is a polite, legitimate way of putting pressure on a partner through the display of generosity, friendship and wealth. It does not convey any rights, however, and in the case of successful po'ala the valuable it was used to solicit still has to be returned by an equivalent shell valuable, no matter how large the po'ala gift had been. As Alfred explained:\(^{22}\)

People think nowadays that po'ala is like buying the valuable, but this is wrong. You only try to persuade your partner. We have many court cases because of this misunderstanding.

The gift called masula is a different matter. In spite of its meaning ('vegetable food') it does not consist of food at all but of a small bagi or mwali. Masula is given to someone who holds a special valuable to encourage trust (yaleyale) and elicit a

\(^{21}\) See also Fortune (1932:218); Munn (1983:290); Macintyre (1983c:375); Damon (1983:320).

\(^{22}\) Alfred Lazarus of Kwanaula village (Duau), a former informant of Thune's ('Mr. Kalo Kwin'), is a member of the kula committee for the Kwanaula area. See Thune for his life history (1980:548ff).
promise to pass the valuable to the giver when the time has come. In this regard, the intention is similar to *po'ala*, but as *masula* has to be balanced with an equivalent shell after some time (*masula ana maisa*), the recipient only temporarily benefits by holding a larger number of shell valuables, thereby increasing his *kula* in quantity and making him appear 'wealthy' and perhaps more reliable. The name *masula* refers to 'food for the valuable'. Instead of being 'betrothed' (*po'ala*), the valuable is 'fed'.

A small *bagi* or *mwali* can also be given as *logita* (literally: 'to spear', see also Digim'Rina 1995:166ff), but if this gift is accepted it means that a serious transaction has been initiated, aimed at securing a very precious valuable. Logita 'spears' the desired valuable, making it quite unlikely that it will be given to a competitor. Some time later, it has to be returned in a balanced way (*logita ana maisa*). A penultimate round of exchange will be undertaken before the 'big one'. The name of this second gift is *unua'ila* ('hit it again'), which refers to the previous gift of *logita* as the first 'hit'. This time, the 'hit' is stronger because a more precious *bagi* or *mwali* is handed over. It also has to be returned later with an equivalent valuable (*maisa*). Logita and *unua'ila* are means of increasing the mutual trust between partners, stimulating their interaction and preparing the ground for the exchange of the precious valuable. The terms and procedures are confusing — and often confused — in their practice, an indication of the complexity of *kula* that can appear even greater when described on paper. The following diagram attempts to clarify the gift categories used for strategic exchanges by the average *kula* trader who operates without much hope of ever gaining a valuable of the highest category.

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23 Munn suggests that Gawa *pokala* is similar to Dobu *logita* (1983:291). I agree with Campbell (1983a:227), Macintyre (1983c:234ff) and Fortune (1932:234) that the Trobriand concept of *basi* is like *logita*, while *pokala* is the cognate of *po'ala* in Dobu.
In addition to these gift categories, a further level of exchange comprises the most precious shells, *dagula* and *bulubulu bagi* and *mwali*. These exchanges, called 'atupa and kwabukwabula, are performed and fully understood by only a small number of people who have access to the most precious valuables as their kitomwa (personal property, see Chapter Four). When someone takes the risk and 'throws' (pele) such a valuable as aga (opening gift), the counter gift is called 'atupa. It consists of a matching bulubulu or dagula valuable that has been exchanged against the initial kitomwa and follows its 'path' in the reverse direction as its 'marriage partner'. This gift, however has to travel further on its designated 'path', to replace another partner's kitomwa. When this second kitomwa eventually arrives in the hands of the initiator of the exchanges, it is the final gift in the often more than life-long series of transactions required to realise the strategy. To receive this gift is the

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24 See Munn for a similar concept called *katuwupa* (i.e. match) in Gawa (1983:306, n.13).
most prestigious event in any kula trader's life, a dream that for most never comes true. It is called kwabukwabula, a term that could not be explained by Dobu informants (though kwabula means widow). The exchange of high ranking valuables can be the most exciting (or devastating) experience in a person's life, and the expression 'people die because of bagi and mwali' (tomota si mwamwasa bagi be mwali manudi) is a direct reference to this exalted level of exchange. The following diagram illustrates such a successful exchange sequence.

In the context of kula, gifts of different qualities are exchanged, either symbolically 'begging' for relationships or particular valuables, or responding to such pleas with confirmation. The names of these gifts indicate their purpose as well as the modalities of the appropriate return gift. A prime requirement of kula traders is therefore a solid knowledge based on first-hand experience. The characteristics, values and histories that give high value to individual bagi and mwali also have to be fully understood and the information kept up-to-date. This is of particular
importance when two or three second-class (*bulubulu*) *bagi* or *mwali* are exchanged against one first-class (*dagula*) *mwali* or *bagi*. For example, two *mwali* of the size of the *bulubulu* Ulilaba are equivalent to one *dagula bagi* like Telefoni. In addition to this dimension of knowledge, which is virtually in the public domain and easy to obtain by regular *kula* participation, another dimension is needed for success: the secret realm of magical practices.

**The secrets of *kula* magic**

Friendship, trust, and mutual understanding are not normally expected among relative strangers in the Dobu area and most people believe they need some reinforcing magic to display these feelings in a convincing way. Some *kula* magic is aimed at making its owner look *bobo'ana*, that is, beautiful, clever, strong, healthy, 'shining' (*namanamala*), trustworthy, lovable, and so forth, by changing the perception of the partner rather than the appearance of the user. The spells are secret and it is a sign of true love and friendship, trust and gratitude, if a formula is passed on. Its potency varies and while the strongest magic would be used only for *kula*, others can be used for less important purposes as well, such as fishing, sexual relationships, and even election campaigns (as I was told by a former member of the PNG parliament who used it successfully for campaigning). There are many different methods in use and most people claim to have their personal spell or magical compound, usually either a herbal mixture (*kaiwe*) or an oil (*bunama*).

The mind-seducing qualities of this so-called 'love magic' have been discussed in

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25 This practice interferes with a definition of the concept of the 'kula gift' as inalienable in a quantitative sense (Gregory 1983:104,115). I agree, however, with Weiner's concept of the symbolic inalienability of *kula* shells (1992).

26 See Fortune: "Knowing also Dobuan distrust of, and lack of hospitality to strangers, his fear of strange sorcery, the fact that he is given hospitality and fed by his host, his *kula* partner abroad, may well be viewed, as he views it, as one of the strange miracles of magic" (1932:215).

27 Fortune mentions such a magic formula (1932:229), consisting of the leaves of the "*lamalama* tree", *Scaevola* sp. (1932:215n), which, according to my information, is a common creeper that grows on the beach. Its capacities seem to be extensive, as I was told that the male plant can be used as a cure for *kinkin* (enlarged scrotum).
Chapter Five. This magic can also be used to increase the beauty of a valuable itself, so that the partner accepts it as the equivalent of a previously given valuable even if it would otherwise be considered too small for the exchange. A woman, usually the spouse of the host, has to perform this magic. There are several methods, but I was told only one recipe: the leaves of a certain plant are cooked in a clay pot and the bagi or mwali is hung inside the brew. This magic can also be used to attract persons by hanging one's clothes inside the pot (my friend had practiced it several times, with success).

Participants in a kula expedition pay special attention to the weather conditions, observe the waves and comment on the winds. They understand weather to be subject to various influences, such as the sun, moon, and stars, to the activities of supernatural beings, and to human manipulations. The last are of significance for kula expeditions, as spells and secret practices are believed to have an impact on the weather. While at sea, the winds are called, or whistled for; clouds can be sent away, or lured closer. I was given incantations for the bolimana (south-easterly) wind by different men, and another one to 'cut the black clouds' with an ebony lime spatula (bibi). Nobody could confirm Fortune's statement that wind and rain magic are "exclusively woman's property" (1932:213). Before departure, magic spells for good weather during the trip (gayoseula) are spoken into parts of the canoe, especially the splash board (lagimo).

Sightings of black clouds in the direction of the destination can be read as a portent of powerful kula magic; it causes the clouds to accumulate to alert the partner about the coming fleet. However, when this magic is used, the weather usually turns bad. Rain and heavy winds make the trip unpleasant, but the partner will look up into the sky and say: "Look at these black clouds ('aniana). Who made this mwakimwakiki

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28 Fortune's account of Kasabwaibwaileta's famous kula voyage refers without further explanation to an activity called tunaseana that is performed at the beginning of the expedition, when the canoe reaches the deep sea (1932:216). My informants know this as a protective spell that is muttered over the bailer when used for the first time. The magically treated water is sprayed all over the canoe. The word, however, should be spelled gunaseyana as it refers to the punting pole (guna) that is used 'to move out' (seyana).

29 I learned of one such a spell called lagimo ana didiga ('lagimo its personal fear').
(bad weather caused by *kula* magic)?" When the magician arrives at the beach
chewing the magical root with betelnut, his partner, like all the others who come to
welcome the visitors, will immediately know who caused the bad weather.\(^3\) He will
rush towards him, thinking: "Oh, this is the beautiful, strong man who made the
*mwakimwakiki*, I will give him all my valuables because he will certainly not cheat
me."\(^4\) In this context, the weather is observed with more than one interest in mind.
If it is calm and benign, it might be an indication that one's *kula* magic did not work
well; wind, clouds, and rain, on the other hand, can be interpreted as indicators of
personal power, substantiated in *kula* magic.

Fortune complained about the short-sightedness of his Tewara *kula* companions
because they did not launch the trip on a day with fair winds, but procrastinated
until it was too calm to sail and they consequently had to paddle all the way. His
explanation is that of a 'ritual custom':

> After the *toni-waga* and his wife collect the charmed root at midday, those going on the
> expedition descend to the beach and sit solemnly beside the canoes on the beach all
> afternoon. A fair wind was blowing on this occasion; but according to ritual custom it
> had to be ignored, despite the risk of a calm next day. As dusk fell everyone rose and
> re-climbed the hill to the village, remarking that the wind, which still set fair, had been
> impossible. Next morning early, we put to sea in a calm and did not get to Sanaroa,
> with a very light breeze, a fifteen-hour voyage that would have been in four or five
> hours the afternoon before, when the ritual was observed (1932:225).

Discussing Fortune's accounts during a *kula* expedition I accompanied, the majority
of my informants doubted the possibility of any such 'ritual halt' without food
distributions. They suggested that the reason behind the delay in the departure of
the Tewara fleet, as described by Fortune, was in fact related to *kula* magic, citing
the remark that the weather was "impossible" (1932:225). They argued that they
would have used the term *waiwaina* (strong) – a strong *mwakimwakiki*, caused by

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\(^3\) According to Fortune the bad weather is called *kaniana* (1932:231). In Dobu language, *'aniana*
means 'black cloud'.

\(^4\) *Ah, tauna ana mwakimwakiki. Tai oba'obana. Iabeni igu bagi/ agu mwali maibo'adi ya pele.
Manuna tauna igu muli ai'ailina, geya'abo i da butu eguya.*
Leaving Dobu – the trip begins

Eventually the boat arrived, causing news to spread quickly, calling the last passengers to return immediately to the shore. I was told that this would be the time to hang out a magically imbued pandanus streamer (doe) so that it can begin to flutter (kiakiala) in the breeze and 'turn the partner's mind (nua-) soft'. This kind of magic is called doe ana sipwa (literally 'streamer-its-personal-knot'). The leader of the expedition and other important kula traders prepared the way for speeches by distributing betelnuts to all the people who were waiting. In their speeches they reminded the participants many times that they were about to go "as one matrilineage" (ebwe'una susu wa gelugelu), warning that there must not be any trouble between them: "Don't go as many hamlets, you shall go as one hamlet – we all go as one matrilineage to get bagi for our hamlet Dobu." In spite of the claim of 'oneness', the participants are clearly divided. From one perspective, everyone is going on behalf of his or her own matrilineage, and is interested solely in gaining valuables. In terms of spatial arrangement, a different order emerges: the women, children, and elderly men usually try to get a seat inside the boat, next to the engine, where they sit beside a relative or friend. The best places outside are occupied by the men, depending on the weather, either on the roof or in the stern. The more comfortable spaces on the sheltered side of the boat are usually taken by those senior participants who choose not to sit inside. During the trip, friendly conversations create the atmosphere of a peaceful passage, yet all the passengers are in direct competition with one another. The subgroupings on board according to gender and age are maintained when ashore, and in fact for as long as the Dobu group is acting as a unit under the leadership of the tosanawaga.

32 In this context, see also Fortune’s reference to ‘thunder’ (1932:224).
33 See also Chapter Six for the spell called ‘Kasabwaibwaileta ana doe’.
34 Geya’abo asa yaudi wa gegelu, asa ebwe’una wa tataya sabi elolobagi ida asa Dobu manuna.
The meticulous ceremonies to influence the wind described by Fortune were skipped in favour of a prayer to God, the 'Lord of all winds' (*toniyagila*), led by a woman from the Women's Fellowship.

Behaviour on *kula* expeditions may have a different meaning than on ordinary boat trips. For example, when I asked my friend who was staring into the sea what he was thinking, he smiled and said that he was looking out for a fish (*wewebuyo*) that looks like a snake.35 “If you see one it is a very good omen for your *kula*!” On one level, there is happiness about having escaped the cares of everyday life, a fact that is manifested in the plentiful supply of betelnuts. Nevertheless, if the weather is poor, if anything goes wrong, if someone gets sick or dies, it is likely that these incidents will be interpreted as having been caused by a fellow passenger's magic, anger, or envy.

During my first trip, one of the old men got very sick and was left behind to get better. But he died and had to be buried at his *kula* partner’s place. Fortunately, his partner was of the same clan so that it was possible for them to perform the proper ceremonies. I did not hear any accusations from other members of the group, but after we returned this death was time and again used as an example of the dangers of *kula* (field notes, June 1993).

After a seven hour journey we arrived in Kaula hamlet on Normanby Island. No one welcomed us. We simply disembarked, sat on the beach, drank some green coconuts that the young men cut from palms, and started to cook some rice for dinner. The subject of our conversation concerned the days to come, returning time and again to comments about the ethics of *kula* partnership. 'Being there' often led to illustrative statements, examples and anecdotes from previous *kula* trips, focussing on a partner's wrongdoings and other gossip about *kula* partners (*muli*).

**Starting kula: a greenhorn's position**

There are different ways to begin a *kula* exchange relationship. In the past, a young man had to work for his father or maternal uncle until he was nominated as the heir,

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35 Pika identifies *wewebuyo* as brown moray eel (n.d.:18-19).
either of some valuables, or of a 'path'. The inheritance includes valuables, debts, and promises. In this way, knowledge was transferred before a young man took any action himself, thereby reducing the risk of being cheated. Today, many young people involve themselves, sometimes using their inherited valuables to establish a new relationship. Middle-aged men with Western education also participate nowadays, although they have not always served an 'apprenticeship' by helping a mentor. As they usually lack knowledge, they are welcome prey for the adept traders, and I learned of a few cases where false promises forced aspirant kula traders to face facts and 'return to gardening' after the loss of valuables. If a greenhorn is cheated, everybody smiles with Schadenfreude: "E'ina, gagasa manuna" (serves him/her right for showing off for no reason). Fear of sorcery and gossip often keeps a young man quiet after he has lost a valuable, because all parties would be embarrassed by a court case. Being cheated is proof that one's knowledge of kula magic, oratory skills and strategic planning is lacking - a matter of shame that one would not want to be made public. Fathers often create a new 'path' for a favourite son to prevent him from being cheated. They use their network and influence, perhaps establishing a link with a relative of their own favourite partner (alipoi) and encouraging the son to exchange small valuables while themselves engaging in more serious kula matters. Maternal uncles instruct their heirs about the details of their current kula affairs, for with their death the exchange has to be continued. However, as I was told, while kula magic is transmitted from the mother and father 'for free', the maternal uncle expects 'work' of his nephew or niece before he gives his kula magic to the principal heir (lo'epa'elu).

Inexperienced men and women often attempt to compensate their lack of knowledge of the skills of persuasion by exchanging in rapid sequence, keeping it a secret and not participating in the night-long discussions about strategies. Naturally, there is a greater chance of getting a certain valuable when, due to lack of time, the plan is less likely to be altered by someone's sudden death or unexpected move.

36 See also Munn for the importance of 'respect' and 'work' for kula inheritance on Gawa (1983:109).
Secrecy has always been a common feature of the kula, but the 'new fashion' does not allow for public display (tele'uwait and bagi i sana) and the 'throwing' (pela) of a valuable. Neither is the conch shell (yoguli) blown, nor does a public speech (awanana) announce the exchange. In this ethos, individual trips are preferred to group expeditions. This new way of doing kula is seemingly a response by young people who either have no interest in helping their father or uncle in the appropriate — that is, obedient — way, or do not have access to the knowledge that is needed for participating in the old style kula with any chance of survival. The educated young men who return to the village after years of high school and working abroad often feel that participation in kula is an amusing and prestigious activity. But their 'new way' is deplored by their more knowledgeable elders.

Established partnerships and the security of friendship

The chances of being cheated are smaller when dealing with the alipoi of one's deceased maternal uncle, but at the same time, the difficulty of keeping inherited promises and strategies can lead to faulty decisions and the subsequent loss of valuables. Ideally, this established partner is a true friend, 'like a blood brother' (atua tasi ai'ailina), a partner who is interested in mutual help for the benefit of all members of the particular 'path'. A main 'path' consists of persons who are the heirs of their respective matrilineal ancestors who used it to transact their favourite valuables. Between alipoi there is a constructive partnership, where everybody tries to increase the level of exchange by directing the best valuables onto it while simultaneously cheating less reliable partners from minor 'paths'. Valuables are exchanged frequently between alipoi, 'they flow like water' (si pilipili nadigega bwasi). The word for 'trust' (yaleyale) is frequently used in this context. In fact, I am tempted to state that it is not used at all except to describe the appropriate sentiment amongst alipoi. The use of the word alipoi is in many partnerships only a pretence, a rhetorical device, but the concept itself offers some security in a world of exchange rivals. In a broader sense, the word alipoi is used for the principal partners on both sides, hence the most trustworthy partners that a person has. They
are the partners who show 'respect' by proper participation in ceremonies related to 
gatu (blocking of kula after a death), bubuli ana lasa (reopening of 'paths'), and 
alau (competitive expedition).

Those men and women who are important persons in the kula exchange have access 
to the 'heads' (bulubulu) and 'feathers' (dagula) of all valuables. Their bagi and 
mwali travel on safer 'paths', because they are exchanged only between alipoi.
Those 'paths' that are large enough for bulubulu and dagula valuables were formed 
by those individuals, carefully selected, who hold the best knowledge of how to 
acquire a valuable, without being cheated or killed. They are 'rich' people (esa'esa 
and alawata) in terms of valuables, knowledge and oratorical skill. The extreme 
difficulty of managing an object which is passionately desired by everybody brings 
partners close together in conspiracy; and by plotting the next few moves together 
in the game of kula, friendship and true partnership develop out of mutual interests.
A wealthy person is usually involved in more than one 'path' but invests his loyalty 
in the inherited main 'path(s)'. It is a challenge for his secondary partners to lure 
valuables from the main 'path', but the danger of being cheated is greater because 
the loss of a secondary partner does not cause as much damage as the loss of a 
partner who approaches the ideal of a 'real brother', and who has access to 
important valuables. Very important persons in kula, like the late Mwalubeyai of 
Koyagaugau Island, are said to have up to one hundred partners on either side, 
exchanging approximately six precious dagula valuables each year, while most 
people never get hold of any dagula at all. This is why Mwalubeyai, like the late 
Lepani Watson, was feared and hated by many people, as I was so often told.

Today, some rich men in terms of Western wealth are active kula traders. They are 
attractive to their partners because it is pleasant to visit them. They provide better 
accommodation and food, have access to kerosene for the lamp, and offer more 
tobacco to their visitors. On request, they are also obliged to give small amounts of 
money or clothing to their partners. Madati told me that he would rather like to stop 
his kula, because he feels exploited:

I find it difficult because when I go to them they cook only yam. When they come to me I 
cook rice. And when they come to us or to me they demand money, kaliko (clothes) and all
that. So I think it's unfair. But now our children are educated, the older one, Solo, said:
"Daddy, I disagree with what you are doing. It's ruining the business. Waste of money!" So
I have to sit quiet. It's only my son telling me but I have to work it out. Then I worked the
thing out and it is true. So I said I must give it up (recorded interview, Madati Morea).

With money, people not only entertain their partners well by feeding them rice and
canned fish and by providing more tobacco, but they can also buy their way into
kula, even into the highest level. The Australian trader Bill Rudd of Kiriwina is an
example. Bill is said to have 'his house full of mwali'; he is partner in at least one of
the 'paths' that exchange the most precious dagula valuables.37 He is also said to
bring confusion into kula by making bagi finer and smoother with sandpaper,
soaking mwali shells in bleach to whiten them again, changing the names of mwali
and, by separating the bagi string from the kaila shell, creating two bagi with the
same name but of quite different value.38 He has named one mwali Dividend, and
two others after his children, though it is more usual to name a newborn child after
the valuable if there is a precious one in the house at the time of its birth. Bill began
his kula with valuables that he purchased with cash, and no one I asked complained
about this way of entering the system. People did object to his tampering with the
valuables, however, though no one seemed inclined to make a fuss about it. The
latest rumours reported his returning to Australia in 1997 and presumably retiring
from kula.

Kasabwaibwaileta: marooned alone

The myth of the kula hero Kasabwaibwaileta expresses the anxiety that I sensed
among those waiting for the hamlet dwellers of Kaula (in Duau) to come back from
working in the garden. Kasabwaibwaileta was an ugly man from Tewara who

37 One of Bill's 'paths' includes Maidala (Woodlark) – the heir of Mwalubeyai (Koyagaugau) –
Isileli (Duau) – Alfred (Duau) – Alexander (Dobu) – the heir of Lepani Watson (Kiriwina).

38 For example, the mwali Debabuwa has been treated with bleach. The bagi Lepoeyata has been
split, so that the old bagi string circulates with a new kaila shell as Lepoeyata One and the new
one, with the old kaila shell, as Lepoeyata Two. The latter practice is called 'esabalana' (literally
'wealth-across-it').
initiated a competitive kula expedition (*alau*) to Kiriwina. With his superior magic, he shed his ugly skin and appeared as a handsome man to his partner. He not only received the desired *bagi* but also spent the night with his partner's pretty daughter. His companions were so angry and jealous that they 'tricked him' and deserted him on an uninhabited island. He managed to escape, however, by sailing on the Pleiades and lived for a while in the 'sky hamlet' (*asa galewaya*) before using his long *bagi* to climb back down to Tewara. There he punished his former companions by turning them into birds and wild animals (see transcription in appendix 7).

Among other things, this myth reflects the tensions between the group members as they present themselves as 'one matrilineage', while at the same time planning various strategies to 'trick' one another and collecting the last ingredients for their kula magic: in short, preparing for a competition that generates heated emotions.

After we had waited for two hours, the people from Kaula came back from their gardens and there was a formal welcome. Anthony, a kula man from Kaula, informed us that we had come too late to remove the *bubuli* post and join the accompanying feast. My friend had already noticed that there was no such sign on the shore. It turned out that kula traders from Bwaiowa had taken away the *bubuli* about a week before, securing a haul of *bagi* for themselves and thereby squeezing out their partners from Dobu (*edagesi*). We were given good fruits of 'mustard' and everybody chewed betelnuts, waiting for the rice and tea to be done. There was very little further interaction with the inhabitants of Kaula, and after we had

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39 According to Dobu informants the myth is from Tewara and Sanaroa Island and is not a real 'Dobu story' ('emwasala Dobu). Young has compared six versions of this myth (1983d:383). I collected this, seventh, version on Sanaroa Island, where it was told by Simon Kinokino.

40 According to Alexander, he was left behind (*i kasabwaibwaileta* in Tewara language) on Gabuwane Island; see also Fortune (1932:229).

41 Beatrice from Nemunemu hamlet told me the names of the four stars that Kasabwaibwaileta refused to climb upon. She counted them (beginning with the thumb, as their names resemble those of the fingers on the hand): Weupoi, Kwuiyamousi, Salisaliliyana, Yalayalabubu, Gomayawa (the Pleiades). The prefix *nima-* (hand) turns these names into words for fingers (see also Roheim 1950a:199).

42 A *bubuli* pole should be decorated with a conch shell and a pandanus leaf streamer (*doe*).
finished our meal the tosanawaga announced the next stage of the trip.

We were to walk to our partners and spend four nights with them, then walk back, sleep in Kaula, and return home the following morning. We had to get as many bagi as possible for the 'fame/name' of Dobu (Dobu ana esana). There were no comments or objections, and no expectation of criticism. The authority of the tosanawaga is never openly challenged, I was told. People began to walk off in small groups. The villagers along our way did not seem to pay any attention to us, and only the dimdim (myself) was given a solemn 'yauwedo' (hello). It took a few hours' walking to reach the general kula area, but as people dispersed so quickly in different directions, I am not sure exactly where they stayed. At least half the people walked to the Kwanaula area; some stayed in hamlets on the way and others climbed further into the mountains.

Visiting the partner

I was so glad when we arrived. My feet were sore and shoes wet after crossing river mouths at high tide. We all were hungry and thirsty, wanting to bathe and rest. Quietly, we approached the house. I felt unwelcome under the shy gaze of the children who were not used to me (a dimdim, after all, they reminded me of my whiteness that was no longer a sensation on Dobu). The wife of our partner came rushing from the garden, alerted by some children. Her husband, she explained, was paying a visit and expected back in the evening. We sat down in the shade of the veranda, chewed betel, smoked and waited – again. In the kitchen hut, girls started to peel yams. We watched the children chasing a chicken and felt happy about the prospect of eating it (field notes, 24.5.1993).

The luxurious feeling of being a guest of one's kula partner can hardly be imagined by one who has not experienced it. A bath in a clear river, plenty of water to wash clothing, good quality food, betel in abundance, friendly faces and no need to get up and do any work. All these factors combine to make life good despite the strangeness of the place. A host has to sit next to his partner, serve sweet tea and scones, maintain a pleasant atmosphere and see to all his partner's possible needs, whether spoken or not, by delegating most tasks to his helpers. Domestic arguments among the hosts are suppressed and a show of harmony and 'respect' is maintained to honour the visitor. This intense hospitality is intended to persuade the visiting
partner of the wealth, prestige, access to resources, knowledge, technical skills and strength of character (hardworking, disciplined, reliable) of the household. The accomplishment of this show is in fact a powerful means of persuasion, a strategy of hospitality that is acknowledged in a Dobu phrase that I heard frequently:

\[
\text{Tai 'esa'esa mamwanena o manuuna.}
\]

Man wealthy with-wife or with-sister.

Behind every big man is a wife or sister.

Hospitality is a strategy of persuasion that aims directly at the satisfaction of the guest's physical needs. This includes optional sex, as in the myth of Kasabwaibwaileta. In some cases, the kula magic of the visitor accidentally causes sexual attraction, leading to adulterous sex with the spouse of the partner, or with the partner himself (in cross-sex kula partnerships). I was not aware of this possibility, but noticed that I was never included in the 'hot stage' of the nocturnal talks (described below) when I accompanied male friends to their partner's house. Later, Alexander explained my exclusion with the risk of contagious 'love magic'. In this light, the terms alawata and esa'esoa refer not only to managerial and social skills, needed to control the helpers and perform exemplary hospitality, but also to the knowledge of how to repel kula magic and avoid problems of contagion.

The nights were long and full of conversations about valuables; the days relaxed and pleasant. Everybody was keen to get at least one or two bagi, but unfortunately the people from Bwaioawa had secured about one hundred and fifty, as we learned. Consequently, it was on this trip that I was told many times how wrong it is to jump over a partner (edagesi). As only a few bagi were left for us, the competition was even tougher. The lucky ones with a partner who had kept at least one bagi for his Dobu visitor had to fear the others who would try all their skills to persuade the Duau partner to give the bagi to them.
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Confidential plotting: ona'une

The most important activity during a kula trip is the confidential chatting about kula-related news. In these conversations, the partners test each other's knowledge, exchange information, and try to come to an agreement about future exchanges. Concerning the last, the host can use his valuables to attract the visiting partner who has only one aim: the partner's shells, the more the better. Future opportunities will take care of the repayment, which from a visitor's point of view, is only of secondary importance at this stage. These two positions are carefully concealed during most conversations about kula issues that are not directly linked to their present exchange negotiations.

It is crucial to be up-to-date as shell valuables move on 'paths' that constantly change in the flexible structure of the 'kula ring'. Detailed information about the persons and valuables within reach is necessary for developing strategic plans. As people die and their heirs take over it is important to know all the gossip about these new elements in the chain. Will there be a change of policies, because, say, the heir is not as smart, fair, or knowledgeable as his or her predecessor? Is the new person keen to continue the exchange with the same chain of partners, or is he more inclined to try out new 'paths'? Are there any debts (buki) that the heir is likely to pay off (sugu) by releasing an important valuable? In addition, it is desirable if all the partners in the chain can be trusted, persuaded, or pressured, to follow the 'rule of the valuable' (mwali/bagi ana loina), and ensure that it is not passed to another 'path' nor given to a secondary (or tertiary) partner directly, thereby leapfrogging some links. The strategy of by-passing unreliable links and progressing faster on a 'path' is very common and causes much anxiety and anger. Depending on the context, it is called lopwali ('to leap over') or edagesi ('to go the wrong way').

During these talks that often take days and nights, the partners celebrate their

43 See also Damon (1983:328) for the use of the word 'buki' (book) as a loan word for debt in Muyuw.

44 I was told that this happens even among trusting partners (alipoi). In a recent case, the dagula mwali Tokulasi was passed from Kwaudi (Tubetube) to Daiba (Bwaiowa), skipping over two partners, John of Tubetube, and Eli of Dobu. Both were said to be very angry about it.
companionship by developing confidential strategies to lure important valuables into their sphere of exchange.

Only those who calculate the responses and initiatives of their partners, their partner's partners (mulimuli) and even the further partners of mulimuli, have good prospects of securing valuables of higher rank, becoming more attractive to their partners, and eventually gaining great prestige as kula traders. A kula trader who has many debts with other partners can be a risk, as anyone who pays off the debts (buki ana sugu) can secure the valuable. It is also important to be alert to the likely death of a fellow village member of any one of the partners, because the ban (gatu) on kula activities in either direction creates a wavelike movement of valuables when it is lifted. At times, bagi accumulate in one place and are then released in great numbers, while mwali are blocked elsewhere until a final mortuary feast has been held (bagi/mwali ana ulai or lolomane). The blocking and releasing (bubuli ana so'o or bubuli ana lasa) has such a great impact on kula that bans are sometimes omitted by the heirs of the deceased 'because it spoils kula exchange' (ida 'une iabe i giyeto'umali). For these reasons, actuarial calculations about people's life expectancies are among the considerations when developing exchange strategies.

As described in Chapter Four, the most precious valuables have individual names. These are often written with a marking pen on the kaila shell of the bagi or on the mwali itself. For obvious reasons it is important to know the name and rank of a bagi or mwali in order to talk about strategies and it is also crucial to have criteria for their value and how they might form 'matching couples'. An outsider is lost, however, when confronted with statements like the following: "If Aimiugini comes to Robert, I will offer Botana to Anton and ask him to see Peter for Aimiugini. Like this, we can repay Simon, and finally Aimiugini will come to us" (Aisi). It is almost impossible for a visiting anthropologist to fully understand these strategies,

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46 Aimiugini and Botana (Dobu for 'hunger') are bagi of bulubulu value.
to judge their effectiveness, and to participate in serious kula discourse. I found myself in the dilemma of either remaining ignorant or disrupting the conversations with simple questions, annoying my friends by asking them things that could not be explained out of context. Finally, I decided to honour their specialist knowledge and not to attempt to learn in a few months what it takes a kula trader a lifetime. The names of important people and valuables helped me to get some sense of it, but a successful kula trader needs to know not only names, but also associated stories, details of movements, and possibilities for future exchange options.

An essential part of ona'une is talk about future exchanges, though the true purpose of a trip is to bring home at least one of the partner's valuables. This is not easy to accomplish, especially if the host is uncertain about the fidelity and trustworthiness of his visitor. I once had a lesson in 'greasing' or 'sweet-talking' (woiwoila), when a group of kula traders from Bwaiowa came to Dobu.47

While I sat in one of my neighbour's houses, sharing my stick tobacco and listening to the ona'une, someone mentioned that I had brought a fine bagi from Duau. A man from Bwaiowa showed some interest and I proudly went over to my house to show it to him. When he saw it, he started to 'grease me' (woiwoila), trying to persuade me to part with the bagi in order to receive a fine mwali from him in the future. I resisted but with difficulty, so sweet were his words, so convincing his arguments, and so funny his little jokes. He managed to create an atmosphere of friendship and solidarity as well as the illusion that I would be 'doing the right thing' by parting with the bagi. When I went back to my house to hide the bagi away once more I began to write down his arguments, and in doing so I realised that I had been very close to trusting and believing him, not for the logic of his argument but simply because of his fine rhetoric (field notes, 5.8.1993).

When I reflected on this experience later, memories returned of my adolescent trips abroad, when I was verbally entreated by Mediterranean men in a very similar style. When I mentioned this parallel, my Dobu friends confirmed that 'greasing for 'une is like greasing for sex'. A soft voice is essential to create the right mood of intimacy, also reflected in the frequent use of the personal pronoun ta (suffix -da, the inclusive form of 'we'). Beautiful prospects are painted in the event of an

47 Malinowski translates the equivalent Kiriwina term wawoyla as 'wooing' (1922:353-4). Damon provides the Muyuw equivalent siwayoub (1983:320). Strathern refers to wawoyla as a gift category (1983:78), but this is not the case in Dobu.
agreement being reached ("your name will be known all over the kula ring; I will give you a very large mwali, it is in my house already and when you come to pick it up I will be a very good host; I am a very good man in kula and I will be a very trustworthy partner for you..."). Rational arguments and extravagant compliments were joined ("a mwali suits your beauty much better, because mwali are female; just imagine the feeling of going back to your University telling your supervisor that you have kula partners yourself; for the mwali that I will give to you, you will get an even larger bagi in Duau; kula is about exchange, so why don't you participate properly; if you make me happy today, I will make you happy later and we will both be happier than before..."). I felt that the Bwaiowa man was indeed wooing me. Simultaneously, the terrible consequences of my rejecting his kind offer were politely mentioned, just to make me aware that he was a kind of saviour ("someone might steal the bagi from your house; if you give it to somebody else you might be tricked [butubutu] and lose everything; people might get envious and attempt to harm your health if you have such a lovely bagi – better give it to me now..."). The conversation was relaxed and playful, with jokes and counter arguments tailored to avoid any antagonism or suspicious thoughts. This feeling of confidentiality and solidarity is reinforced by gossipping about other kula traders. A lot of laughing and giggling, offering betelnuts to each other, and friendly smiles made it very different from ordinary conversations between relative strangers.48 Kula partners are supposed to be good friends, and they certainly reinforce this impression with clever rhetoric. I never experienced such a powerful and open display of solidarity anywhere as when kula traders 'talk about kula' (ona'une).

Ona'une is often pure make-believe, and the better one can pretend to be a friend the more success as a kula trader one will have. Scoditti and Leach mention the recitation of 'paths' as a rhetorical tool in Kitava (1983:270f).49 In contrast to everyday speech, the rhetoric of ona'une contains many metaphors. Talk about kula

48 See Scoditti and J. Leach for similar observations concerning Kitava 'kula speech' (1983:270).
49 They might, however, have misinterpreted conversations about the concrete exchanges of a particular valuable, consisting basically of the recitation of names that formed 'paths'. This is a frequent subject of ona'une.
should be 'soft' (nuwana) and not 'careless' (besobeso), that is, without proper regard for the consequences. Similies such as 'mwali that are running like water' (mwali si pilipili nadigega bwasi) for regular exchange are frequently used. Kula shells of high value are called dagula, literally the feather used as a head decoration while those of slightly lower rank are called bulubulu, literally head or skull.

Valuables are said to 'marry' ('ai) one another when matching ones are exchanged. Most gift categories have metaphorical names that can be used in persuasive contexts, like masula (vegetable food), po'ala (betrothal) and logita (to spear).

Another expression for being a 'hard partner' (muli pa'ala) is 'building a fence' (sa'u ali) around a valuable to keep it 'tight' (also pa'ala). The practice of removing some bagi beads from a necklace is called 'to eat a bagi' (bagi i 'e'ani). 'To make a path' (we'eda) refers to finding partners for a new exchange route. Those who are active in kula are said to be 'working kula' ('une paisewa), in positive contrast to those who are slow and 'hard' who are said to be 'sleeping kula' ('une 'eno'eno).

The art of cheating

My friends explained that the risk of losing all was greater when exchanging with older people who have more experience in cheating. A beginner, like me, should start exchanging with another beginner and with small valuables only, even if the 'path' and the larger valuables were inherited. Initially, I did not understand how people could become 'bigger' in kula, if equivalent valuables only were to be exchanged. The answer is simple. While ideally a balanced exchange should be performed, everybody aims at getting larger, and more, valuables by 'tricking' (kabokabo) the partner.\textsuperscript{50} There are many different ways of 'tricking' (see also Chapter Five), but a special term is used for cheating in kula exchange: butubutu.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{50} See also Weiner (1984:170) and Thune (1980:259).

\textsuperscript{51} Fortune refers to the practice as "wabuwabu" (1932:216ff), but no one whom I asked about this word could make any sense of it. When I explained the context, everybody offered the word kabokabo, and so I presume that this is correct. Wabuwabu might be a term from Duau, as Roheim also mentions it as a synonym of kabo (1950a:199).
The easiest way is by returning a smaller valuable, thereby profiting from the stupidity (assumed to be induced by magic) and ignorance of the partner who accepts the bad deal. Fortune describes a more elaborate way by which the same mwali, say, is simultaneously promised to several partners (1932:217). The promise persuades all the partners to relinquish a bagi, so that the visitor leaves with, say, four bagi that he can use to increase his kula activities. Only one of his partners will get the promised mwali; the others will get different ones in the next round, after their bagi have been successfully exchanged for mwali. Those partners who are left temporarily without any valuable are in a disadvantageous position for some time. They lose prestige and credibility, because their partners on the other side of a 'path' are held up as well. The delay produces a chain reaction of angry partners if it concerns high ranking valuables. This is a risky strategy of cheating, feasible only for persons with a good knowledge of protective magic. As in Gawa, such anger is memorised similarly to the debt of a valuable (see Munn 1986:223), objectifying the feeling so that it can persist over a lifetime. If a person loses all his or her valuables due to false promises and misguided expectations, the others will exclaim happily with a good deal of Schadenfreude: "E'ina. U lugu bagulaya!" (Serves you right. Go back into your garden to work!) An account of a man in this situation is given by Fortune (1932:234). From his data, he presumed that valuables are frequently not returned at all:

It appears that credit in the kula is sometimes damaged by worse sharp practice than the wabuwabu even. This was my impression of it. I only had two kula trips, one north and one south, in which I had experience of the kula as a participant. But I think that if I had carried on over a long period as a participant I would have discovered much more of this type of situation that I found in Sanaroa (1932:234).

Munn reports the Gawa perspective that Dobu is archetypical of 'slow and tricky' kula (1983:299f, 1986:76,159), but none of my informants believed that Dobu was any worse than other areas. They stated that the 'speed' of kula depends on several factors everywhere: the relative value of a shell, the quality of a 'path' and the individual trader's inheritance and knowledge. Senior persons who are 'rich' (esa'esa, alawata) in kula terms are indeed expected to be 'slow and tricky' (see Munn 1983:301ff). They choose their victims according to clever plans which are
beyond the latters' understanding, aiming at large valuables that no beginner would ever dream of acquiring. Their greater frequency of exchanges gives them further options. By taking off small portions of a *bagi*, for instance, they can create new valuables. The fact that this leads to a gradual shortening of established valuables is good reason to keep it secret, not least because the partner is 'tricked' by receiving a shorter *bagi*.

One practice that 'slows down' *kula* in Dobu is the delay of repayments to all one's partners but the two principal ones, thereby piling up valuables and appearing to be rich and trustworthy – as long as gossip does not make one's partners too suspicious. A beginner is well advised to keep the more precious valuables at home as 'baits' and exchange only with smaller ones. This keeps prospective partners interested and faithful for the time being and gives more time for practice without the danger of losing the precious valuables. A valuable that is kept for this purpose is called *bwau* (call), referring to its ability to attract partners. In the past, revenge for being cheated could only be taken by means of sorcery, one reason why beginners with no renown as sorcerers were at great risk of never receiving a return (*maisa*) for their initial gift (*aga*). Many stories recall casualties that occurred after such incidents of cheating:

> He went to see his *kula* partner, but only to find that the *bagi* was already gone – given to someone else. Oh, he was so angry! His partner's wife cooked good food, but he didn't want to eat. He did not eat in the evening, nor the next morning, no lunch, nothing. His partner was getting worried, he saw the anger and tried to calm him down. No way! Eventually he found out who got the *bagi* that he was expected to be given, and when he was back in Dobu he made 'one something' (sorcery) with the footprints of his enemy and a week later he was dead (J.K).

Today, groups of knowledgeable men have established *kula committees* all around the 'ring'. Unfortunately, I never managed to witness them sitting on a court case, but I spoke with some of the Dobu, Bwaiowa and Duau committee members about cases and the way they are dealt with. The court is held in the village of the offender, with the village councillor and the local authorities as well as an appointed *kula* mediator hearing it. It aims at reaching a peaceful settlement, but serious offences might be brought to the district court for further investigation and
punishment. The *kula*-authority has to decide upon the seriousness of the problem and possible solutions or punishments. As an expert in the rules of *kula* he has to explain them to the contending parties. In an interesting article, Munn (1990) describes and analyses conflict over a *dagula mwali* named Manutasopi on Gawa Island (see also 1983:294ff). This case exhibits further strategic details of *kula* trade and chain-reactions resulting from cheating, death, and accusations of sorcery and witchcraft. It appears that the practice of *butubutu* that makes *kula* 'slow and hard' is part of the overall concept of 'tricking' (*kabokabo*) that I discussed in Chapter Five in connection with witchcraft and sorcery.

**Blowing and throwing**

Once the host has been persuaded to give away a valuable, the visitor might be invited to stay for another night, so that the ritual of ‘throwing’ can be performed in the morning, in front of all people who are interested. The host hangs the valuable on a nail on his veranda (*'une i sana*), and gets a member of his household to blow the conch shell — once only for a small valuable, several times for a major one. When people hear this sound they habitually assemble, so that usually a small crowd witnesses the launching of a valuable onto its 'path'. The host stands upright, picks up the valuable and carelessly drags it through the dust towards the visitor, walking forcefully and halting about a meter away to utter a speech. This speech is typically short and harsh, referring only to the agreement that the partners have made to accomplish the exchange. It sounds like a command or a legal judgement:

> My partner, today I give you the unindebted *mwali* Kaba. Its rule goes as we have agreed upon yesterday. You will give me the *bagi* Sidatua in exchange. You will pass this *mwali* on to Peter when he comes to you so that you will get the *bagi* Sidatua from him later.52

His speech over, the host literally throws the valuable towards the visiting partner,

52 *Muli u da nono. Mwali nina aga'agana, ana esana Kaba, batua ya pele. Ana loina gete nadisega, boga ta tagwala. Mwali ana maisa yabenib *bagi* Sidatua, ta mwali nina u pele eguma Peter i mai manuna, ga enega tauna ina *bagi* Sidatua i da pele.* See Malinowski for a similar speech in Kiriwina (1922:389).
an act that appears quite hostile. Sadness is in his eyes, and if the valuable is of high rank or associated with sad memories, some women might begin to wail (do'ona'ona) for it. If a very high ranking valuable is thrown, some boys of his matrilineage might raid the visitor's possessions, take his clothing, decorations, basket, seize his paddles or any other object they fancy. This does not occur very often, as those valuables of the highest rank (bulubulu and dagula) are given away far more hesitantly than smaller ones. The seizure is called o'ae — 'to take things to express anger about the loss of the valuable'.

The visiting partner has presumably tried all his tricks and tested all his skills to persuade and magically seduce the host to part with the valuable. He has been treated like a first-class guest and received small presents if he had asked for them. He has been in a superior position thus far. Suddenly, their roles are reversed and it is the host who now displays power and aggression. The visiting partner has achieved the goal of his trip, yet he does not seem at all happy. Deeply embarrassed he sits and pretends to be looking for his lime container, eventually finds it and chews betelnut as if nothing had happened. He does not look up, not even at the valuable that lies in the dust in front of him. He will not make any move until attention has shifted away from him, then he will casually pick up the valuable and put it into his basket. I never experienced this shame myself, for my joy at a successful acquisition (as of the mwali Ulilaba in Alexander's name) was too strong to remain hidden behind a doleful face. From the perspective of a Dobu kula trader, however, such patent gratification expresses gagasa ('arrogance') and lack of self discipline (alamai'ita), faults regarded as typical of dimdim. Postures of embarrassment are more appropriate, such as looking down, pretending to be busily occupied in betel chewing, rolling tobacco, or cutting a piece of wood. Fortune observed such behaviour on his kula trip to Sanaroa Island, misinterpreting it as 'injured pride':

The evening ended in the best Dobuan manner. The moment the Sanaroa policeman had thrown the sapi sapi belt as basi and ceased speaking his speech of decision, a Tewara man

53 When the bagi Asanaibeubeu was thrown in Dobu (see example above), the young resident men of Mwemweyala hamlet took the kula partner's paddles as o'ae.
took up the basi gift. My Tewara friends seated beside me on the Sanaroa man's house platform rose and said quietly, but urgently, "Come away". We all stalked away in injured pride, I somewhat amused but acting my part – no farewell greeting, and no more commerce with the Sanaroa policeman, though someone had the basi gift (1932:234).

Home sweet home: gifts, gagasa and gossip

Walking back to Kaula on the last day, we met some of the other traders and joined them, staying overnight in an empty trade store and arriving in Kaula early next day. Again the waiting began, though this time there was a different atmosphere. There was much talk about the bad luck ("there were no bagi left for us"), about incidents with the partner or while travelling on the rough track. Such stories about common experiences produced some sort of group feeling. Kaula people 'felt sorry' (nua'ole'ole) about our misfortune and hung up (sana) the few bagi that they had left. As we inspected these bagi ('ei'eiyya), we were treated with more hospitality. Sitting on Anthony's veranda, chewing his betelnuts while waiting for a cup of tea and a hearty meal, the traders told stories about historic 'rip-offs' in kula exchange. "It is all so funny as long as you are not the one who is cheated," as my friend explained. We all watched when Anthony finally threw three fine bagi to his Dobu partner. The mood was far less tense than on the day of arrival, perhaps because the task had been fulfilled and the competition was over, or because the group somehow grew together while in a strange place. The time of waiting passed more quickly, as a lot of chatter kept us busy. There was still very little contact with the inhabitants of Kaula, but now we knew that the widow of the deceased was still in mourning with her female relatives, sitting on the ground and watching events without expression on her face. Although the bubuli was removed, the hamlet was still mourning the death of its Big Man.

When the boat finally arrived, we loaded our gear and the gifts of food, stored in simple baskets (kwalisi), and took up our places on board. The forty-five passengers had secured fifty-four bagi between them, not very many, but reasonable given the fact that the first 'harvest' had been taken by the people from Bwaiowa. The distribution of bagi among our party was by no means equal: nineteen persons got
none at all, thirteen got one, eight got two, and five got three. On the boat there was little talk due to a general weariness, but the mood lifted when we arrived on Dobu at about midnight. Most people were greeted by relatives who asked for betelnuts and were keen to hear stories while walking home. The tosanawaga and other senior members of his matrilineage demanded our attention for their final speeches, thanking us for our good manners, and complaining again about the Bwaiowa people who 'spoiled' the trip ('ida yawala si giyeto'umalinaya'). Everybody was tired and the tosanawaga decided to omit the public assessment of all our valuables (tanaleleya). Instead, a final distribution of tobacco and betelnuts put the seal on the group enterprise and we all hurried home in small groups.

I witnessed the public comparison and ranking of bagi (tanaleleya, literally personal basket-same) on another occasion. All the bagi were hung up on a horizontal pole and the traders walked around it, comparing and discussing certain features, telling stories about individual bagi and deciding on their ranking order.54 It is during tanaleleya that a valuable is given its relative rank, when the traders recall the names of a shell's past 'spouses' (mwane-), evaluating its rank on criteria based on its history rather than on actual size. In this way, a shell valuable can undergo a rapid increase in exchange value if it is of impressive size, shape and decoration. If such a beautiful shell enters the kula it only impresses the beginner and its value will remain low until it is accepted as the countergift for a more precious shell (see Chapter Four for criteria of evaluation). This means that in practice, on the tanaleleya pole at the end of a kula expedition, the value of shells is judged and updated in acknowledgement of their most recent 'paths' and 'spouses'. When all the participants are satisfied with the judgement of the valuables, they are returned to the individual traders (tana elelewana) or kept by the leader for a short while and returned with a small feast.

When returning home the members of a trip feel happy to be back and proud of bringing valuables, or at least, gifts and stories for their matrilineage and household

54 See Macintyre for tanaleleya on Tubetube, there called tanalele (1983c:378).
members. The children might get the ripe fruits, the yams are stored away and the flowers are planted as reminders of the trip. Everybody has had a break from the daily routine, and only those who split up with their kula partner or did not succeed in securing a valuable might feel unhappy. Walking back to my hamlet the following day, everybody asked me about the trip and whether I had got any bagi. As my friend and I had brought two I was considered to be very lucky. The sore foot that was worsened by wading back from Enaia to Losina did not evoke any sympathy. My 'mother' phrased it in her usual blunt way: "It serves you right, you have got it from your useless walkabout!"

Visitors came during the following days and asked for permission to inspect (‘ei’eiya) the bagi that I had been given. When one praised its beauty or value, I had to return this compliment (tupu) with a small gift, like betelnuts. "Anything will do, betelnuts, even money – ten Toea, twenty Toea, one Kina, it's all up to you" (A.M.). This gift, called tele'uwait, is also expected after a personal compliment (as in past times the expressions awabasayo or sinetaeyo, literally: 'I eat your shit' or 'I eat your mother's shit'), or the symbolic tying of the wrist with a string (nimasipwa, literally 'hand-tied') as a sign of praise (tupu). It is a kind of compensation for the visitor in exchange for his compliment, given by the host as a sign of appreciation and shame to balance the additional value that his or her person gains through the conspicuous 'ownership' of the bagi or mwali. One also gives to be polite and in order to avoid being accused of 'arrogance' (gagasa).

New stories, gossip as well as accounts of the trip, have entered the community. A lot of talk was triggered by each trip and in the evenings there were always visitors on the verandas of the participants who enjoyed listening to those who had come back. I vividly remember the funny story of Nobela who was not fed properly by his partner:

When I arrived, he told me to sit down and talk about kula until his wife came from the garden to cook. I was already very hungry from the long walk up the mountain but followed

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55 E'ina, adadana besobeso manuna!
56 I generally gave one stick of tobacco per guest.
his instructions, not without keeping an eye on the kitchen. It was getting dark and still no fire was burning, but with the last light she finally came and went to the river to have her bath. My stomach was really empty after the long day, and I was constantly watching the kitchen, where she was supposed to start working. I was so hungry I could not even listen to my partner's words. Eventually, I dared to ask about the progress of her cooking, and that was when he called her. She was still peeling the vegetables. Just imagine, the pot was not even on the fire! She said that she had just told her daughter to light the fire, and in fact, I finally saw some light flickering in the kitchen. I felt so miserable and hungry, and it seemed to take ages until the food was cooked and she brought it up to the platform where we sat. But then I got a real shock, because when she started to fill our plates I saw that she had cooked only tapioca – no yams at all! And tiny ones only, as thin as my small finger! And she put four pieces only on my plate! Of course, I did not say anything, but my muli must have seen the disappointment in my eyes, because when she had gone back into the kitchen he told me that they had just had a domestic argument and that she did not go to the proper garden further up the mountain but only to the yakwala [last year's garden with secondary plantings] close to her hamlet. I am sure she spent the whole day gossiping with her mother just to punish her husband. What a shame for him, I bet he beat her after I left, because the next morning the food was just as bad, with no protein at all! I think when he comes to my house next time, I will pay him back.

Almost every participant of the trip brought back some coconut leaf baskets (kwalisi) containing food, a farewell gift from the partner: yams, mangoes, pineapples, betelnuts, 'mustard', and other garden produce. Some people brought cuttings of flowers or shrubs that they liked, special varieties that were not available on Dobu. Such gifts are not a form of barter (gimwane), nor are they regarded as exchange with delayed reciprocity. They are termed oboboma ('out of love') reflecting the friendship that exists – or is displayed for the sake of kula – between the partners. The host cannot object when asked for something. A beautiful mat (sita witi), a clay pot, or a carved spatula for betel chewing (bibi) are more common gifts, but sometimes modern household items, like a torch or even a wrist watch might be given to the partner on request.

These gifts are given 'because we feel sorry for them' (nu'a ole'ole manuna). This emotion expressed by 'feeling sorry' is not synonymous with the English word 'sorry'. It is used in contexts of empathy with or without sadness, as when looking at a nice picture or a baby, or when receiving a letter. In the context of kula partnership, it refers mainly to pity (nu'a ole'ole). Damian from Bwaiowa explained to me: "This Gumawana man comes here and I feel sorry because he had to paddle so many days, trying weather and whatever, so I have to feed him, give him a good rest, plenty of food, and send him on his way. If he came on his modern dinghy,
then that kind of feeling is no longer appropriate" (recorded interview, Damian Bobole). I once helped some women from Kaula in Duau who came with a *kula* party, because I 'felt sorry' for them, by lending them my spare mosquito net for the time of their stay. After they had gone, I realised they had taken it with them. This misunderstanding arose because of the time I had spent in Kaula with *kula* traders from Dobu. They saw the mosquito net as a gift to maintain our friendship, and I am sure that I will be a welcome guest in Kaula if ever I return, finding the hospitality of *kula*, and maybe even a *bagi* from a future partner there.

**PLAYING THE GAME OF FAME**

The *Kula* is the highest and the most dramatic expression of the native's conception of value, and if we want to understand all the customs and actions of the *Kula* in their real bearings we must, first and foremost, grasp the psychology that lies at its basis (Malinowski 1922:176).

Analytically, based on the Dobu perspective, *kula* exchange is the movement of shells that interconnect generations of traders in different islands in a form of laminated space. It is constituted by ethical rules that encourage traders to put all their efforts into acquiring shells and becoming a part of its history. Instead of a 'ring' it can be perceived as a nexus of relationships in which shell valuables are passed on in two directions, 'up' and 'down'. Traders go overseas to solicit valuables and compete with their knowledge of persuasion which is linked to notions of inheritance as a reward (or return gift) for 'work'. If a *kula* trader is successful, this fact reflects on his personal qualities. The overarching ethic of 'respect' (*amayaba*) is an overt motivation for *kula* activities as well as a rhetorical strategy that disarms possible objections against participation in a *kula* expedition.

On Dobu, the ethic of *miabaula* (to stay at home and do one's work) prohibits casual travelling. The outside world is regarded as dangerous, and serious health problems are expected to result from 'useless walkabout' (*adadana besobeso*). In addition, a social syndrome called *gwasa* (see also Chapter Two) afflicts those who are left behind, keeping them in a state of bodily discomfort for two days. To be left at home doubly disadvantages a person, firstly, by missing all the exciting things that happen on a *kula* trip, and secondly, by having to do the extra work
while feeling lethargic from *gwasa*. Accordingly, senior relatives, affines, or children often resent *kula* expeditions of younger, inexperienced persons as a 'waste of time' (*tuta ana mudala*). Nevertheless, middle-aged men with Western education often develop an interest in *kula* and manage to persuade their elders to let them go.

Behind the façade of 'respect', however, individual motivations are more practically related to personal well-being. Going for *kula* not only allows the participants to escape work and trouble, it also enables them to maintain relationships with people of other villages and clans, to chat about matters that have already been discussed thoroughly within one's own hamlet and to hear new gossip. It refreshes the mind and the body to leave everyday life behind, as I was told many times. There is a chance that some conflicts will have resolved themselves by the time a trip is over, and if it is a successful one there will be small presents for those who were left at home. In short, going for *kula* is going on a holiday.

It is still is an adventure to go for *kula*, especially on the longer trip to Duau, although it has lost the excitement and terror of pre-colonial days of warfare and occasional cannibalism. There are still several kinds of dangers, caused by strange and hostile environments and strange and sometimes also hostile people. Sickness can come from 'strange water' (*mali bwasi*), accidents can happen on the long walk along the coast, by slipping on strange paths, walking on corals that are as sharp as needles. One can suffer cold on the higher slopes or remain hungry for long hours. Insects and dogs can cause problems, just as the toilet facilities in some places are quite different from the discreet off-shore huts on Dobu. Although beds are often prepared in the houses, it may happen that some nights are spent on the beach without cover, as was certainly the norm for previous generations of *kula* traders. The hamlet of the *kula* partner is not a place to walk about in without the consent and company of the partner or a member of his family. When we walked past villages in Duau I was surprised to be ignored entirely by the people unless they greeted me as a *dimdim*. I sensed the hostile atmosphere that unnerves and even scares the Dobu traveller just as much as it does the Duau traveller in Dobu. Only at one's partner's place is one supposed to be safe, but when sudden sickness strikes,
everyone knows that safety was but an illusion.

The threat of death is also present among the fellow traders. Envy at another's success is common, and to avoid it a *bagi* or *mwali* may be hidden from the others. This practice is a breach of the rules of group expeditions, as all the valuables that have been won are supposed to be temporarily handed over to the leader of the trip for the display and judgement (*tanaleleya*). If one goes alone on a *kula* trip it is common practice to keep secret the successful acquisition of an important valuable, but the news tends to spread quickly in spite of all efforts to conceal the transaction. Senior *kula* traders are known to have elaborate strategies at their avail, a reason for beginners to avoid them and transact only with partners who share the same degree of experience. Although *'kula* commitees' have been introduced to solve conflicts between individual traders, sorcery is still suspected to be a major form of revenge by angry or 'envious' opponents. This dimension adds to the risk and the sense of competitiveness of *kula*, as sorcery is transmitted down the generations as a return gift for personal 'work', just like *kula* valuables, 'paths' and the magic of persuasion.

Despite these risks, the long walks and the uncomfortable boat trip, it is fun to go, a pleasurable challenge and sometimes a treat in terms of food and betel. In Duau, the swift rivers are a luxury for people from Dobu who do not have clean fresh water. Bathing and eating, chewing and chatting are experiential aspects of *kula* that have been undervalued by previous researchers.

> When we stay with our *kula* partner, we get everything. We eat pork and fish and the young boys of our host climb for the best 'mustard' and betelnuts for our pleasure of chewing. Everything is set for us and we don't have to move a single finger but are treated as very special guests. That is the good thing about *kula*. You sleep and eat for free. You *dimdims* have to pay for everything when you go travelling, but we don't because of *kula* (J.K.).

Young men who accompany older members of their matrilineage to give them a hand and to learn about *kula* by listening to the talk told me that they enjoy it for

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57 Kasabwaibwaileta, the mythical *kula* hero, attempted to hide the *bagi* Goma'alakedakeda in a large sore on his head (see transcript in appendix 7).
three main reasons: the good food and betelnut supply, the escape from work at home, and the chance of meeting local girls. Unlike their mentors, they often show little enthusiasm for the serious business of kula. But those young men who are actually committed to getting valuables from their partners are less keen to waste the nights with girls. They are challenged by the difficulty of convincing the partners that they would be doing the right thing by passing the valuables to them. Oratorical skills, a sensitivity to the partner's desires and needs as well as sheer persistence and powerful magic are required; and those who succeed and return to Dobu with a bagi or mwali of high rank thereby give proof of their cleverness and the power of their magic.

Exchange 'intoxication'?

The native theory is not bad; but it is the love of exchanging valuables, the love of exchange carried on in an extreme state of exchange intoxication, and not really a personal love towards a kula partner dandy such as the kula magic invokes, which is the force at work in this great and widely ramifying institution (Fortune 1932:233).

What the 'love of exchange' consists of has been analysed from different perspectives throughout this thesis. Fortune's observation has some truth, because it is obvious that kula shells are, in a way, 'loved' objects. Bagi and mwali are adored for their beauty and preciousness, carefully decorated and hidden in the house, sometimes even lent to a relative in Port Moresby in order better to resist the pressure to pass them on. Although cheating ('tricking', butubutu) is a legitimate way of increasing one's wealth, actual theft is despised. "It is like stealing someone's baby", I was told. Women decorate themselves with bagi when they climb a platform for the ceremonial distribution of yams and pork (dugumalala or sagali) to enhance their beauty and display the wealth of their matrilineage.

When I went to Ode Island next to Koyagaugau Island as the guest of Wayaboma, I found that the large mwali Ulilaba had made its way into his hands already. I had accompanied Alexander to Bwaiowa to receive it from Lageyani and felt some pleasure to see it again. When I mentioned this feeling, I was told that this was a perfectly normal reaction, as 'kula valuables become like our old friends and we feel good when we see them again' ('une nadigega gosedai ga ta gwauso'ala eguma ta eloabaloba limana). To my surprise, I met Ulilaba again in 1997; this time it was owned by Nata from Bwaiowa who was our host (field
Such sentimental attachment to shell valuables is an essential part of the system, and as they become invested with personal memories it is sometimes difficult to pass them on. It needs the hard 'work' of persuasion to lure a 'hard' bagi or mwali from its current home, as in the case of the bagi Asanaibeubeu mentioned above, where it took more then thirty years of hard work to move it. As I have said in Chapter Four, bagi and mwali signify a person's 'work', giving evidence of his or her capacities that were needed to acquire them: that is, intelligence, sensitivity and self-discipline as well as physical strength, willingness to work hard and deny bodily needs. Such individual virtues are rewarded by the acquisition of the secret knowledge of persuasion and seduction, essential for successful kula. I would argue that the experience of kula travel gives that special "halo of romance and value" (Malinowski 1922:86) to bagi and mwali, a dimension of value that is more sophisticated and 'spiritual' than that of 'down-to-earth valuables', such as yams and pigs.

Kula valuables have travelled, have seen different places, have a history of adventure and connection with different partners. The term for high ranked mwali, gaiyosakoasi ('to wade ashore and visit different places'), indicates this association. This symbolism, verging on a mystical projection of travelling in a 'spacetime' that is beyond any individual's reach, is kept alive in conversations about kula amongst participants and through hearsay. It is reflected in metaphors of life and death, in Dobu as in Kiriwina, where according to Weiner, "kula actions are associated metaphorically with seeking lovers, being married, and giving birth; kula paths die and are reproduced" (1992:144).

The force of this symbolism makes bagi and mwali treasured possessions and supremely meaningful gifts in local exchanges. While kula exchange involves legitimate strategies of cheating (butubutu), mortuary gifts are perceived as fundamentally compensatory in their meaning - expressive of genuine feelings of pity, gratitude and generosity. From a Dobu perspective, 'work' for kula represents a certain character: an intelligent, ruthless and potentially dangerous person. As an
ideal type, this person is opposed to one who 'works' for mortuary feasting. The latter is a more sociable person, equally skilled in managerial matters but relying on a wider, and tighter, network of partners. This contrast, of course, only concerns the difference of roles, because 'rich' kula persons ('esa'esa or alawata) are usually also very influential in local feasting. If kula trading makes friends, feasting makes relatives, as I shall show in the final chapter.

58 See Roheim (1950a:199) for a similar perspective based on dream analysis in Duau.
Chapter Eight

THE PRICE OF LOVE: MORTUARY FEASTING AND PATERNAL DUTY

Name of the gift: *pegita* (*love-gift*)

INTRODUCTION

A line of people approached the boundaries of Losina hamlet, led by a young man with a conch shell and followed by some men who carried a pig. Next came five women with baskets of yams or clay pots of food and *mona* pudding on their heads and babies on their hips, and three other men with banana bunches and lots of betelnuts. Some children as well, carrying more betelnuts and smaller babies. Loud sounds of crying and wailing, as if they were singing in utter despair. The women held towels in front of their faces to wipe away the tears, and they blew their noses as they let themselves get carried away with the sounds of sorrow. The conch shell was blown occasionally as the group entered Losina. We stood and watched silently as they put the gifts in front of us. Formal speeches followed, but the wind and the waves took the words away. We gave them four aluminium pots of cooked food, called *loeyawasina*, and some *mona* that they took back home. 'Auntie' Labenia explained: "They tire our *labalaba*, my late mother's brother's children. They bring *pegita*, a gift of love. Later, we return it, because 'love has a price' (*oboboma ma'ana maisa*)" (field notes, 13 January 1993).

The gift of *pegita* is significant as a public display of socially appropriate exchange relationships between 'fathers' and their 'children'. The term *labalaba* was translated as 'boundary man' by Fortune, which seemed inaccurate to my informants as it appeared to exclude women.¹ One Dobu friend speculated that the term might refer to closeness, as "in the garden we plant in neighbouring *laba* [the word for the boundary of an individual's garden plot] that is maybe why we call our brother's children our *labalaba*" (J.J.).² For Fortune, however, a man's relationship with his deceased father's hamlet is marked by hostility: "Boundary man ... does not eat of the fruits of his dead father's village because ... 'The heir will arise and kill

¹ For a critique of Fortune's term see also Schlesier (1970:64 n.8).
² *Nadigega bagulaya idi laba selabedaya ima laba, nai enega nu'udai natunao ta awa ima labalaba.*
boundary man by sorcery if boundary man offends' say the natives. The heir will be supported by his village kin" (1932:53).

Several times during field work I acted as labalaba, experiencing the benevolent atmosphere between 'fathers' and 'children' that is encouraged as typifying their morally appropriate relationship of mutual 'love' and 'care'. Two small children, a middle-aged man and a senior woman died and were feasted in 'my' hamlet Losina. I recall the sadness and force of these exhausting events that left me sick, weary and drained. Initially, too, I was puzzled. As I fully participated in all feasts, the news spread about my special interest in mortuary feasting and I was invited to observe a major bwana awana feast in Biabiaunina hamlet in Miadeba on Normanby Island. Another time, I distributed food from a platform in Gomwa hamlet on Fergusson Island and on numerous occasions I went with groups from Losina to see other feasts, receiving and further distributing gifts of feasting food. The economic importance of labalaba, their steady and obedient support in Losina were obvious during feasting times. My data, however, indicate a discrepancy between the ideology and the reality of fatherhood that had not been mentioned by Fortune and others.

The ambiguity associated with paternal love versus avuncular duty in matrilineal systems has been established since Malinowski's analysis of Trobriand kinship (1929:4ff). Thune writes of an ambiguous paternal role in Duau, marked by "personal warmth, love, and even seeming sharing" while the father is alive, contrasting with a child's "permanently inferior, transactionally defined position with respect to their father's susu" after his death (1980:128-9). He identifies the conflicting interests of a man's matrilineage and his affines and children's matrilineage as the root of an inherent flaw or 'problem' in the matrilineal doctrine (Thune 1980:vi,134).

In an early attempt to solve the so-called 'matrilineal puzzle', Audrey Richards

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3 As an unmarried woman, I was not directly involved in affinal exchanges. See Macintyre (1989) for an analysis of affinal exchanges in mortuary feasting on Tubetube.

4 Fortune only mentions the death of a child that he witnessed (1932:193).
points to the option of uxorilocal marriage and the practice of "borrowing husbands" (1950:246ff). She states that "this might in fact be described as the solution of the detachable husband" that gives only senior men the privilege of living matrilocally (1950:248). As we have seen, residence in about two thirds of all Dobu marriages is uxorilocal (see Chapter Three), though people anticipate problems arising between a man's matrilineage and his own children when a man lives uxorilocally. Numerous myths address this issue, for example:

A girl lives in her father's hamlet and sleeps in her cross-cousin's house. The latter is envious about a *bagi* that the girl has been given by her lover. When both girls paddle out to a reef to collect shell fish, the *labalaba* is marooned by her cross-cousin in an attempt to kill her. A sea-witch (*gelaboi*) comes to the rescue, however, greedily swallowing all the girl's shell fish while paddling to the shore. The witch chokes while swallowing a whole octopus. The girl reaches the hamlet safely and tells her father what had happened. He believes her after seeing the dead witch and pretends to be sick, asking his sister's daughter to attend to him inside the house. There he kills her with a knife in retribution for what she did to his daughter.

The concept of the 'detachable husband' also seems appropriate in the light of easy divorce and simple means of adoption for 'fatherless' children (*pesieda*), accompanied by only minor stigma. In her analysis of Tubetube myths, Macintyre argues that husbands are represented as 'dispensable': "In myth, the intrusive, alien husband is conveniently disposed of when his sexual services are no longer required" (1988:193). As in Tubetube, similar myths convey the same message on Dobu; they present marital bonds as fragile and – if too troublesome – as easily obviated.

When applied to Dobu, however, the concept of the dispensable or detachable husband seems to be contradicted by a strong moral emphasis on 'paternal love'. How can a 'borrowed' husband feel strong bonds of sentimental love for the

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5 The concept of the 'detachable husband' would appear to be mirrored in Dobu women's comments about men's dependence on them, such as "we don't need a husband, but men do need a wife, otherwise they become crazy" (M.T.).

6 Fortune's description of the deeply rooted mistrust between spouses (1932:23-4, also Bloch and Parry 1982:27-8) seems exaggerated to me.

7 As on Tubetube, the cross-sibling relationship is regarded as an unbreakable bond on Dobu (see Macintyre 1988:193).
children of his household who compete with him for his wife's affection and create extra work? Why give labalaba substantial gifts, even kula valuables and pigs that need not be fully returned, if not 'out of love and respect' for their father? It is a fact that, on Dobu, biological fatherhood is sometimes associated with paternal neglect, and the process of divorce and remarriage often brings children a new father who provides for the household with his 'work' (see also Schlesier 1983:79ff). The new household members 'get used to each other' (si panapanaita) and as the years pass they develop a relationship of mutual 'work', based on the notion of 'respect'. In cases where this is not achieved, the marriage ends in divorce and the caring relationship between a man and his wife's children ceases to exist.

In this chapter, the tributary character of pegita gifts will be analysed for its significance for father-child relations as strategic rather than emotional bonds. My point is not that sentimental love between father and child does not exist, but rather that it really does not matter too much in the light of hamlet politics, in which this love is deployed as a rhetorical trope of closeness that legitimises the option of future relationships of mutual 'help' (lema) by formally integrating a son into his father's matrilineage. It should not matter in everyday life either, because a man has the duty to provide for his wife's children, 'his children'. As a friend put it:

If I do not look after my children well, then nobody is going to look after them well. Because their [maternal] uncle is not going to look after them well. Knowing that whatever the uncle has will be automatically inherited by them, they do not have to contribute towards winning their uncle's favour. So it's not necessary for me to look after my niece and nephew. Sometimes the nephews even make jokes about you, knowing that whatever you have they will inherit, whether you like it or not (recorded interview, D.B.).

I argue that a relationship based on duty and 'work' (paisewa) is a more apposite characterisation of the Dobu father-child relationship than 'love and affection'.

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8 Malinowski reported that Trobriand fathers 'work' when nursing their children (1929:17).
9 Malinowski declared Trobriand mortuary proceedings, such as the cleaning of the bones of the father, to be acts of piety (1929:133).
10 A man formally acknowledges this duty when he pierces a baby's ears and compensates the mother for her birth pains and 'work' for the infant with a gift of kula valuable and yams, called loduwaduwa.
While affection is often created by 'getting used to each other' (giepanaita) in everyday life, the notion of 'paternal love' reflects a moral ideal rather than a practical reality in many households. 'Looking after' a child creates a 'personal debt' and a man's children repay this debt after his death by giving pegita as a tribute to his matrilineage, the unit that represents him as 'the fathers' (tamanao). The better the relationship of a dead man's children with his matrilineage, the larger the pegita gift, and the more likely the integration of one child into the deceased father's matrilineage.

If on Dobu husbands are detachable, it appears that a strong ideology of loving fatherhood balances the discontinuity of male care-givers while extending the options for a person's definition of paternal relations. While matrilineal relations are inevitable or given, paternal bonds are optional and based on complex personal relations between the members of the household and both spouses' hamlets. To those brought up in a matrilineal regime themselves, however, like the Trobriand anthropologist Digim'Rina, there is no particular 'problem'. Commenting on Thune's concept of the 'tragedy' of matrilineality (1980:13-4) Digim'Rina stated: "I sensed no such 'tragedy' in Basima perceptions of their world; again, perhaps this is because neither they nor I saw their matriliny as 'uncompromising'. We shared a common 'matrilineal' perception of the world, if such exists..." (1995:52).

The debate on the Massim father-child relationship has often been too far removed from everyday practice by focussing on psychoanalytical aspects (notably the Oedipus debate),11 normative rules (Thune 1980, Kelly 1968), and the institutional perspective of structural-functionalist (for example, Fortes 1957). The ideal role of a southern Massim male household member and loving care-giver has been described for Duau by Thune (1980:87,107) and for Tubetube by Macintyre (1983a:52,53n). He gives freely to his children, cares for them with his 'hands and heart' (nimanege be atega), 'working' (paisewa) for them as long as he lives with their mother. A man is not supposed to discriminate between his biological and

social relationship to his children as a matter of respect towards their mother, his 
wife. Under such conditions, according to the Dobu ideal, a man 'looks after' 
(nua'i'isi, ita'i'isi) the children in his household with loving care, 'working' for them 
and for his wife in a relationship of mutual help and affection.

Basing my discussion on the analysis of a single sagali feast, I argue that mortuary 
exchanges on Dobu provide a significant element of flexibility, as they depend on 
individual conditions and relationships framed by considerable choice through the 
rhetoric of 'love' and 'work' as expressions of duty. The word for 'love' (oboboma) 
really means 'generosity' and 'friendship', indicating an emotional willingness to 
share, based on a positive feeling for one another with a semantic undertone of 
indebtedness (maisä). It is a 'name of a gift' rather than a description of sentiment, a 
form of voluntary giving and taking under conditions of familiarity within a 
household. The sentiments involved in such gift-giving are described as 'pity' 
(nua'ole'ole), 'care' (nua'i'ita), and 'being used to each other' (panaita). In practice, 
relationships between children and male care-givers are more likely to develop on 
the basis of everyday routine and duty (notions that are better described as panaita) 
which are motivating factors for oboboma gifts.

As Thune correctly points out, individuals are multiply linked to other individuals 
of both maternal and paternal sides in any formal event, so that "the problem is 
really one of deciding to which side of a formal event one is to affiliate oneself and 
how to define that affiliation rather than whether or not a basis of affiliation exists" 
(1980:146). These 'formal events' are mortuary feasts, in which 'fatherhood' 
becomes a strategy to crosscut matrilineages, an optional pathway for strategic gift- 
giving 'in the name of love'. The notion of 'respect' for a father includes his 
matrilineage and affines while he is alive, as the bilateral use of kinship 
terminology suggests. After his death, his matrilineage replaces his person by 
taking over his responsibilities towards his children, when all members turn into 
classificatory 'fathers' (tama-) in relation to his children, their labalaba. Fortune

12 See also Thune (1980:87:322).
13 See Schlesier for similar results based on his detailed kinship analysis (1970:56).
misunderstood this shift in kinship terminology (1932:37ff) and the restrictions of labalaba in their deceased father's hamlet (1932:194). Diagram 4 in Chapter Three shows the parallel use of kin terms for both mother's and father's matrilineage. The shift is most obvious where generational terms are involved (see also Thune 1980:127-8); it includes, however, all members of the paternal matrilineage. This shift points towards a concept of ideal fatherhood as an important principle of social organisation, based on the doctrine of 'love' and sense of duty between a male care-giver and the children of his household.

When a man dies, many individuals can trace their position as a classificatory 'child', but only those who appear at his mortuary feast acting as labalaba verify their 'respect'. By 'working' for their 'father', they can negotiate rights to use gardening land and maintain links of mutual support (lema) that can lead to various degrees of adoption, if both sides desire it. The following diagram shows common cases of kinship construction on the grounds of collective 'fatherhood'.

**Diagram 14: Constructed relations through fatherhood**

Those who 'work' for a hamlet's mortuary feast can legitimately claim rights of land
use for a seasonal garden. This is in fact the main aim in constructing exchange ties: the island's limited resources are managed through the strategic use of kinship relations. The economic and political importance of mortuary feasts in the Massim has been widely discussed with a focus on exchanges (for example, by Chowning 1989, Damon 1989; Digim'Rina 1995; Macintyre 1989; Young 1971). This aspect is also reflected in the expression of 'straightening the paths' (eda ana giepalupaluna) of a deceased in terms of exchange relations (these final gifts are called 'ula'ula or aga, 'new credits', updating the ongoing relationships). The political significance of sagali feasts as arenas for individual initiative has been highlighted (most recently by Digim'Rina 1995:188ff) as well as their capacity to divide and create groups, to construct "enduring aspects of community by reference to the dead" (Bloch and Parry 1982:36).

On a symbolic level, it has been argued that "Massim mortuary practices rid the living of the active memory of the dead" (Damon 1989:17). Thune's analysis stresses the underlying dualism of the 'body' of the deceased, represented by his matrilineage who recovers the corpse, and his 'mind', represented by his personal network that has to be discarded while retaining the fame of his accomplishments (1989:156-7). Despite Damon's suggestion that this perspective might help to provide "some of the social and symbolic sense that would appear to lie behind the concentric village structures Fortune described for Dobu" (1989:7), my data do not support Thune's argument. The network is re-organised, in particular when a male labalaba is accepted as his father's substitute (lo'epa'elu) and fully adopted into his paternal matrilineage, thus enabling him to support his siblings through his father's wealth.

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14 See also Schlesier for Me'udana (1970:50).
15 For the use of the same expression on Tubetube, see Macintyre (1983a:350, 1989:152).
The complexity of mortuary feasting on Dobu in exposing 'total social facts' is comparable to other Massim societies. In Damon's words: "[N]o description of any single Massim society, and no understanding of the region as a whole, can approach completeness until these rituals are understood" (1989:3). In attempting to provide the data needed for such an understanding, my discussion of the concept of 'fatherhood' will be illustrated by the analysis of a large feast. It is important to note that labalaba and 'fathers' are constant observers, advisers, supporters and critics of mortuary feasting, a role that is related to the 'voluntary' (oboboma) character of their gift giving. The labalaba are classified as tolema (literally 'person-help'), or to'etabutabu- (literally 'person-prohibited'), depending on the context. In all cases, they are 'workers' (topaisewa, literally person-work), contributing individually to the success of another matrilineage's feasting.
Chapter 8 - 270

FEASTING THE DEAD: BASA, BWABWALE AND DUGUMALALA

Consonant with Massim ideology, Dobu people explain that mortuary feasting serves to honour the dead members of a susu. It is accomplished by pleasing the spirits (yaluyaluwa-) whose hamlets on Bwebweso are a precise copy of their hamlets on Dobu Island. After a person dies, the body is buried, and the spirit feasted and sent up to Mt. Bwebweso in events called basa, awanoi i daudau, e'ule paipai and lausa apwesa (see Table 12 below). The subsequent stages of bwabwale, dugumalala and sagali are said to serve primarily to maintain good relations with this spirit world. When such a feast is performed on Dobu, there is an identical one in the respective hamlet on Mt. Bwebweso and the spirits eat the non-substantial part of the food (‘they smell it’) and are happy. As the connection between Mt. Bwebweso and Dobu is not totally severed, the spirits are believed to remain involved and partly present at their burial sites – ideally in the centre of each matrilineal block of land. For this reason, a widow or widower is never again allowed to enter the village of her or his former spouse, not even to walk past it within view, because it is believed to be upsetting for a spirit to see the former spouse alive. Male spirits, however, are believed to enjoy seeing their children, a reason why it is regarded as ‘bad manners’ to expel them from their paternal hamlet (asa tamana) if they wish to remain closely attached to the homely place of their childhood.

To ensure good relations with the spirits, three kinds of mortuary exchanges are required. First, basa immediately after the death, second, bwabwale or dugumalala

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16 It is difficult to assess whether people actually believe in the spirit world of Bwebweso (see Chapter Five) but they continue to explain their mortuary feasting in these terms.

17 The precolonial burial sites in the centre of hamlets (bolu) were abandoned in many cases when hamlets moved closer to the shore in the nineteen-sixties; however, a sense of privacy remains attached to the centre of a settlement.

18 After the death and bwabwale of the second partner, however, the spirits are expected to continue their relationship on Bwebweso.

19 See, however, Atchinson (n.d.) and Fortune (1932:57) for a different perspective based on restricted movement and reflected in the term asa kopuna (literally, ‘hamlet in which to bow the head’). My informants emphasised that this term refers mainly to mourning restrictions for the widow and her children during their enclosure in the deceased father’s hamlet.
after the burial, and finally sagali as a generational event that feasts all the deaths that have occurred since its last performance (see also Beledami 1974). Since space does not allow for a full discussion of each of these events, my focus will be on sagali, the most organised and most 'secular' of all mortuary feasts. As sagali is a complex version of dugumalala and contains the basic elements of bwabwale, a brief account of the 'death rituals' basa, bwabwale and dugumalala will resume and extend Fortune's account of these feasts.20

Wailing over the body

After a death, the closest relatives head the long procession of mourners who come to mourn over the corpse (basa). Parents and children stay close to the body, unable to recompose themselves or to stop crying, often remaining for hours until they are so exhausted and voiceless from wailing that they have to be forced to rest a little. When all the matrilineages involved, headed by their elders, have cried over the corpse, their senior members immediately call a meeting of representatives of the hamlet's matrilineages and same-clan hamlets who want to engage as 'helpers'. These delegates decide on a time-table, organise a roster and allocate the immediate work for all household members. Affines follow in the line of mourners and adult labalaba are expected to rush to their paternal hamlet to wail and support their 'fathers'. Every adult brings one large yam tuber (bebai) for a gift called basa (or three yams in a bowl, termed ege'egelu - 'to make the deceased enter the canoe') and passes this gift to the heirs of the deceased.21 Sometimes a kula valuable is given together with the yams, a gift called talo, given either 'for love of the deceased', or as a return gift (talo ana maisa).22 This bagi or mwali is displayed on top of the pile

20 When I discussed an earlier draft of this chapter on mortuary feasting with Dobu informants in 1997, they were uncomfortable with my narrative of their dugumalala feast of 1993 and requested me to make it anonymous or excise the account of witchcraft accusations associated with the death. These alternatives did not appeal to me and I decided to omit the entire account in order to respect my friends' privacy.

21 These yams are bwabwale food; they can be eaten only by the heirs of the deceased, as I shall explain in detail below.

of *basa* and *ege'egelu* yams. The *basa* gifts are heaped in baskets. A few mourners go to the dead person's garden to plant *gwala* poles, declaring its produce as *bwabwale* food.  

Gifts at *basa*, like *talo* and *ege'egelu* yams, symbolise grief and formalise the acceptance of dutiful involvement. Such gifts are measured as precise indicators of the number of mourners who are willing to participate in the future feasting events. Bringing yams for *basa* and crying over the corpse is both the public display of pity and sorrow and the assurance of support.

In the evening, there were two full baskets of *basa* yams, each topped with a *kula* valuable (*talo*) and some betelnuts. The mourning continued as small groups were led to the corpse where they cried and sobbed (*dedoi*), wailed and keened (*do'ona'ona*, to cry and speak). They embraced the corpse or gently touched her hand. At this time, small parcels could have been placed on the right side of the corpse as presents or messages for the spirits of the mourner's own kin. The widower lay next to the corpse as if he was sleeping. We 'felt sorry' for him as he was to go back to Duau for good (field notes, 27.7.1993).

'Eating' is 'work'

After the body is buried, the *talo* gifts are counted in order to be weighed in the decision-making process about the 'rules' (*loina*) for the events to follow. Two kinds of procedures are legitimate as *bwabwale*: the full cycle of exchanges (see Table 12 below), or a truncated sequence which tries to 'finish everything' after only a week or so. To my initial confusion, *bwabwale* refers to a multitude of elements of mortuary feasting: the feast itself, the dead body, the food for the heirs, and other inheritance. The statement that 'pegita is *bwabwale*' increased my confusion. While a more comprehensive explanation for *pegita* will be given below, the concept of *bwabwale* will be explained in terms of the 'work' of mourning and eating, as a metaphor for everything that is part of the inheritance, including the corpse, the mourning widow(er) and children of a man (*labalaba*), growing garden produce, wealth, debts, and yams from the yam house. *Bwabwale*

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23 Fortune mentions this pole as well by its Bwaiowa name *yadiyadi* (1932:197-8).
gradually decreases in intensity as the corpse decays, the spirit leaves, *bwabwale* food is consumed, the seed yams cleaned, the wealth distributed and the widow(er) and *labalaba* released from their mourning restrictions.

As I have indicated, the fact that individuals are multiply linked makes death an occasion when people consider their range of options to link themselves to other matrilineages in order to 'work' for the feast. Their choices are made public through – quite literally – conspicuous consumption.

Meliba, to give an example, is a senior landowner of Losina, a steady source of encouragement to me when times were tough, though with little influence. For personal reasons, she lives on a block of land on Fergusson Island that was given to her husband for lifetime use, a grant that she has extended to her immediate descendants through 'work'. In Losina, too, many pigs were killed in her name when she contributed with her entire network of relationships, extending up to the Trobriand Islands, at various *sagali* feasts. When I returned to Dobu in 1997 and attended a *dugumalala* feast in Losina as a classificatory heir, 'eater', and landowner, I was surprised to see her in the role of *labalaba*. She explained that as she has done more than her duty for Losina, she had chosen to support her 'father's' side which was involved as the matrilineage of the father of the deceased, an affine to Losina. Subsequently, Meliba had sent her *basa* yams and informed her sisters and 'fathers' of her intentions. As a *labalaba* she only made an appearance to deliver her gift and cry over the corpse together with the delegation of her 'fathers'. She did not touch the *bwabwale* food, out of 'respect' for her 'fathers' who could not eat it. Her sisters ate *bwabwale* as the classificatory 'mothers' sisters' (field notes).

In such manner, the division between 'those who eat' and 'those who must not eat' *bwabwale* food splits matrilineages, hamlet dwellers, and households of the hamlets of other 'helpers'. It is crucial to know one's position in relation to a particular feast, as the consumption of 'forbidden food' not only leads to a deadly disease, *lala*, but also to spiteful gossip and shaming sanctions. As a rule related to the concept of *bwabwale*, the food from the platform cannot be eaten by individuals who have patrilateral links to Losina within two generations. The father's place (*asa tamana*) and the mother's father's or father's father's place (*asa tubuna*) have to be 'respected' (*amayaba*) by food taboos. The following generation is free of these restrictions (*tubua limana*, literally: to be born again). Spouses always have to observe each other's restrictions. Namesakes (*waliesa*) and close friends declare themselves non-
eaters as a token of grief. The strong emphasis on 'respecting' the rules of public consumption, the rigid division between those who eat and those who cannot eat bwabwale appears less severe in practice, however, when the labalaba are informally consoled for their abstinence with substantial gifts 'to make them strong and happy'.

The labalaba came to their paternal aunt's house later in the evening. They received a gift 'out of love' (oboboma) and as a sign of gratitude for their generous support of the feast: a live pig, three baskets of yams and a bunch of bananas 'so that they have something nice, too', as I was told (field notes, 12.1.1993).

Once the person has announced the role that he or she will be playing, conspicuous eating or equally conspicuous abstention formalises the role. The gwala pole, a simple stick with a coconut jammed onto its top, indicates that a village is in mourning, that food restrictions are in force to 'respect' the deceased. If paternal relatives want to, they can also erect a gwala pole in their village. The food that is growing in the restricted areas can be used only by those relatives who are classified as 'eaters' of bwabwale food. A gwala pole reminds every individual of his or her particular form of involvement and sets landmarks of kinship reckoning.

So far, I have referred to 'eaters' and 'non-eaters'. As the complexity of bwabwale is centred on the notion of conspicuous eating, this distinction is legitimate. Yet 'eating' is but a metaphor for a more general form of consumption that leads finally to the extinction of the person as an individual, incorporating his or her spirit in the nameless line of ancestors, usually imagined as ancestresses, of the same matrilineage or hamlet. The following outline of the roles of 'eaters' and 'non-eaters' will clarify the implications of decisions to be aligned with one or the other. A person who elects to be a principal mourner accepts to endure physical pain and deprivation as a form of 'work' that will be compensated later. In addition, mourners surrender themselves to the control of the heirs, a disempowered state that would be impossible to imagine in any other context. Senior persons can express

24 Fortune underestimated the importance of the two categories of 'eaters' and 'non-eaters' (1932: 195-6).
years of anger and enforce strict rules on 'their widow(er)'. As will be evident, to be an 'eater' gives legitimate personal power in various ways. As a general principle, the members of a hamlet's other matrilineages and of the helping hamlets of the same clan are automatically treated as classificatory kin through totemic reckoning (manua), unless they formally act as a member of another group of their choice (like Meliba in the example above, who preferred the role of labalaba to being a hamlet 'owner').

Those who eat are called to'ebwabwale. This category of persons consists of the heirs of the dead person: that is, her or his sister's children or mother's siblings, maternal nephews and nieces, maternal aunts and uncles. The leaders of this group (toni tomota) are the principal heirs, those who set and remove the mourning restrictions (toloina). They are regarded as the only true mourners, the 'persons who cry' (totedoi) and 'bury the corpse' (to'ali). This group can include the undertakers if they come from a helping hamlet of the same clan (who chose to 'eat' as classificatory 'uncles') and occasionally yet other classificatory 'uncles' from a village of the same clan, if it is agreed that they had a special personal relationship to the dead person or to the mourning matrilineage. The gifts of food are reciprocated at a later stage. Nevertheless, those people who appear too keen to participate as to'ebwabwale are subjects of gossip. It is gracious, on the other hand, to refrain from eating bwabwale for sentimental reasons in spite of one's rightful position. This is why like namesakes, adopted children and best friends of the deceased are expected to decline to be to'ebwabwale.

Those who may not eat bwabwale are called to'etabutabu-. They comprise those who were closest to the dead person, his or her real mother, her own children and daughter's grandchildren, real and classificatory brothers and sisters, namesakes, and closest friends. This category also embraces labalaba, the father and his matrilineage ('fathers'), all spouses (aiyai) of hamlet 'owners' and the widow (kwabula) or widower (kumata) together with their matrilineal kin.

The role of the to'etabutabu- during bwabwale is not pleasant. They are also referred to as 'the working people' (topaisewa) and although the food that is given
to them in acknowledgment of their hard work is meant to strengthen or 'harden' their bodies \textit{(lo'epa'ala or lo'eyawasina)} it is usually of lesser value than the \textit{bwabwale} food in terms of the amount of pork. Like the Big Gifts to demonstrate grief \textit{(pegita)} that are given by the children of a dead man to his matrilineage, the mourners refrain from 'happiness' \textit{(gwauso'ala)} 'out of love and respect' \textit{(oboboma be amayaba manuna)}. This explanation, however, conceals the fact that 'work' \textit{(paisewa)} is at issue, partly as a return gift and partly as a credit. In mourning, more specifically, a form of counter exchange takes place, when the restrictions are tailored according to the past conduct of a widower or a widow and her children, to 'reply to her conduct' \textit{(ina bubuna ana e'isa)}.

Mourning restrictions are strategically used as a legitimate form of punishment, as is reflected in the angry statement of my friend about a 'bossy' woman: "Now she is showing off \textit{(gagasa)}, but I simply wait until her husband dies. He is my maternal uncle \textit{(wa'a)} and I will keep her crying for a long time when she comes to mourn him" (B.P.). Sentimental reasons, based on the notion of 'love and respect' for the matrilineage of the dead and for their ancestors, are available to disguise such punitive intentions. In the past, mourning obligations were sometimes so severe that the early missionaries felt disgust and pity (Bromilow 1929:132-141, see Young 1989:118). In fact, it must have been extremely painful to be a principal mourner under traditional conditions. The mourning ropes \textit{(mwagula)} around the neck and upper arms had to remain dry, making it impossible to wash. Only the poorest food in the smallest quantities formed the diet for several months, even years. Mourning huts \textit{(libu)} were rough shelters on the bare ground, often under someone's house. Before the missionaries banned the mourning necklaces \textit{(mwagula)} for widows and widowers, both sexes blackened their bodies; women wore long, dark skirts made from roughly cut coconut leaves \textit{(sali)}.

The mourning necklaces \textit{(mwagula)} were indicative of servile obedience, for if they became wet or if insects infested or destroyed them, the \textit{to'ebwabwale} had proof of disrespectful mourning demeanour.

\footnote{See Macintyre on \textit{mwagolu} on Tubetube, widow's strings that were twined from the hair of the deceased (1995:32); also Thomas (1991:20-21).}
In this light it is obvious that *bwabwale* is an opportunity for personal revenge. If the matrilineage of the deceased is not happy with their affines, the rules for *bwabwale* might be 'hard' (*pa'ala*) and in the past could even be life-threatening. Anger about the attitude or behaviour of the widow or the widower towards the deceased during the time of their marriage, the suspicion of death by witchcraft, or sometimes sorcery, can result in very harsh mourning restrictions (*loina pa'alina be waiwai'ina*). These cause physical pain, skin diseases and general misery. As in many Massim societies, an increasing state of filthiness prevails until it is removed in the grand finale of *bwabwale*. Laughing and singing, dancing and *kula* exchange, are forbidden until the final release.

Although the mourning rules have been significantly relaxed during this century, they still involve restrictions of dress and demeanour, imposed by a man's kin on his widow and children, who have to endure them stoically (*alamai'ita*) as a moral duty. I have not seen such drastic mourning, nor was I able to witness many *bwabwale* events during the period of my research, partly because hamlets tended to choose *dugumalala* feasting instead, and partly because *bwabwale* involves long hours of food preparation and exchange that is a more private affair and would have escaped my attention if done in another locality. The word *bwabwale* has no concrete referent as far as Dobu speakers could tell me; one might speculate, however, that there is an etymological relation to the word 'boiling', *bwebwela* (as on Tubetube Island the similar feast *ligaliga* is associated with the semantic context of being cooked [Macintyre 1983a:346]).

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26 Discussing the etymology of *bwabwale*, Alexander pointed out to me that 'in the olden days' men did not eat boiled food except at *bwabwale*, because it was said to 'spoil a man's heat'. According to Fortune, *bwebweso* means 'extinguished' (1932:187).
Table 12: An ideal cycle of *bwabwale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event and time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crying over the dead body: <em>basa</em></td>
<td><em>Toni asa</em> guard the corpse and look after the mourners, erect gwala poles. Relatives come, cry over the corpse and bring a few yams (<em>basa</em> or <em>ege</em> <em>egele</em>). Widow(er) lies next to the corpse or inside the house, wailing or 'like sleeping'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial: <em>ali</em> <em>ali</em> after <em>basa</em> in daytime</td>
<td><em>Toni asa</em> prepare the grave and bury the corpse, often with a church service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing for the deceased: <em>awano</em>i <em>daudau</em></td>
<td>All male residents of the village go fishing, tie the fish on a pole and pass it to the women at the beach. They shout out the name of the dead person, asking him for some water (<em>x, amu bwasiega u me'e be a nunumal</em>). Meeting for organising further feasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking for the undertakers: <em>e'ule</em> <em>paipa'i</em></td>
<td><em>To'ebwabwale</em> cook fish and <em>basa</em> yams for the undertakers and half peeled yams for the <em>to'etabutabu</em> and give 'une to the man who climbed into the grave (<em>talo</em>). <em>To'etabutabu</em> receive some gifts as substitutes for the household items of the dead person that the heirs have removed from the house. Cooking in the village of the deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying a basket in public again: <em>enaba</em> <em>i</em> <em>ita</em></td>
<td><em>To'ebwabwale</em> gradually remove mourning restrictions. For the next harvest, they remove the gwala pole(s) and let the widow(er) walk out of the mourning hut (<em>libu</em>) into the garden. A widow is given a basket to wear on her head and she has to harvest her late husband’s yams. Food restrictions are gradually lifted by <em>to'ebwabwale</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The end of mourning seclusion: <em>kwabula</em> <em>i</em> <em>bwabwale</em> after the next harvest, formerly up to four years after the death</td>
<td><em>To'ebwabwale</em> remove the last mourning restrictions. 'Human' food and body care are reintroduced. The <em>labalaba</em> (<em>to'etabutabu</em>) bring a large gift of yams (<em>pegita</em>), including the seeds and all the yams that were left inside his yam house, and a pig. <em>Pegita</em> is redistributed amongst the <em>to'ebwabwale</em>. The heir of the dead, the substitute (<em>lo'epa'elu</em>), gets the seed yams after they have been symbolically cleansed by the <em>to'ebwabwale</em> who also cook food (<em>buyo</em>) for the <em>to'etabutabu</em> to 'give them strength' (<em>loeyawasina</em> or <em>lo'epa'ala</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning to love affairs: <em>baila</em> <em>oli</em> some time later</td>
<td>When the widow has a new lover, he has to give her 'une (bagi or mwali) on the first night that they spend together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last visit of the former affines: <em>toolo</em> some time later</td>
<td>Brothers of the dead come and demand the 'une from the widow, leave dirt and demand a lot of things in her village, take a pig and cut down trees. The widow cooks for her villagers who have helped her at <em>toolo</em>. This restores the relationships to normal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasting the widow(er): <em>ola</em> <em>mwau</em> <em>mwau</em> after the second spouse has died</td>
<td>When the second spouse dies, the feasts are returned and the gifts exchanged as equally as possible. Ideally, everything is normal thereafter, new exchange relations through a man’s children (<em>labalaba</em>) take over in the following generation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dugumalala - the 'short cut'

If the number of basa gifts indicates that a large number of mourners can be expected to provide cooked food for bwabwale exchanges, the elders may decide to save resources and perform the alternative feast, dugumalala. This is often the case when people die in old age and leave a number of adult children behind. However, apart from material considerations, dugumalala is also more appropriate (ana lobwene) for senior men and women as it involves a triumphant distribution of raw food from a specially erected platform (called bwaima or ata'ata, or by the Bwaiowa term, talaboi). This event is called 'une, 'to give away Big Gifts'. It is also referred to as a 'small sagali' (sagali gidalina). Like a genuine sagali feast, dugumalala offers opportunities for public statements of a personal and political nature. Unlike a real sagali, gifts of affines are generally not required, thereby keeping the range of indebtedness significantly narrower. A quick feast is in line with 'modern ways', meeting the requirements of those who are employed elsewhere and have only short periods of leave. After it had been modified by missionaries who outlawed the handling of human skulls, it now serves Christian ideals by limiting mourning restrictions.27

There are three alternative 'short cuts' for bwabwale, three versions of dugumalala feasts, depending on the length of time between death and the final ceremony, the lausa apwesa dance and distribution of gifts from a platform ('une, sagali). After a person's death, his or her spirit (yaluyaluwa-) is believed to be present in the village for another three days, waiting for spirit relatives to come and strengthen the immaterial body with a kwaputa banana to help endure the trip to Mt. Bwebweso. The spirits, as well as the human hamlet dwellers, prepare for the mortuary feast and take the new spirit with them to Bwebweso after 'their feast' is over. The humans should begin the feast by performing lausa apwesa (literally: 'dance-appear') before the spirits do so to ensure a dignified end of the feast that is thought

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27 According to Dixon the term duguma refers to a model house "with a skull in it, used at dugumalala" (n.d.:42), see also Fortune (1932:187,277); Macintyre (1990:100). The connection of the duguma house with ancestral skulls is unknown on Dobu today.
to please the spirit of the deceased. Otherwise, the drums will not sound as powerfully and the dance will lack beauty and force of expression, hinting publicly that the feast was so late and poorly organised that the spirits have already gone back to Bwebweso.

In a strict sense, only a celebration that takes place on the very day of the burial is a dugumalala. If the dance and distribution takes place up to four days afterwards it is called kobakobala, and if the preparations take still longer it is called pwauta sagasagali. The more time that has passed, the more likely it is that 'the spirits have gone back', but, understandably, delays and postponements often occur. The debts of the deceased have to be repaid at dugumalala, an obligation that might need time and even involve hastily scheduled kula exchanges with overseas partners. With time, however, public expectations of the size of the feast grows, resulting in even more strain on the budget and its management.

On the appointed day of the lausa apwesa dance with subsequent distribution of yams and pork, decorated men with drums hide in a small hut (yoeyoe). Outside, women in their finery, firstly hidden behind a mat, call out for the spirit to go to Bwebweso, until the drums answer them and the men emerge in dancing formation. Amidst the men are two dancers who hop like birds, one holding a small model of an outrigger (kewekewe'u), the other a model of a yam house (duguma). The dance proceeds with the women encircling the men with quick, long steps, holding their right hands up and waving cordyline leaves. I could not find anybody, including the dance teacher, Taitai from Enaia, who was able to explain the meaning of the dance other than in terms of its purpose – to send the spirit to Bwebweso. The words were recorded by Fortune (1932:257; see also an interpretation by Franklyn 1936). Informants were unable to translate all the words, let alone their symbolism; however, they stressed the importance of its function in sending the spirit away.
Table 13: Sending off the spirit with *lausu apwesa*

The women are hidden behind a mat that is held up, facing the *yoeyoe* hut. One of them begins to sing the *lausu apwesa* song; the mat is removed and the women form a line, singing:

| Ya bwebweso, gwamaina, gwama i do, douina | On Bwebweso, the child is crying. |
| Ya bwebweso gagabia ya doudou diladila | On Bwebweso, (?) I cry desperately |

Drums. Repeat three times, each time louder, and the walls shake more until the men burst out of the hut and the dance begins.

The drummers form a circle, at its centre two boys holding *duguma* and *kwekekewe u*; the women circle around the group of men. The men sing *lausu ba u*:

| Mwedukuna, mwedukuna, ya bwebweso | In the early morning on Bwebweso |
| gwama i dou, Bwebweso lagalaga. | the child is crying, I go up to Bwebweso. |
| Mwedukuna, mwedukuna, | In the early morning, |
| galoibwa i bwaiabwaia ya ulawa, | (?) |
| mwedukuna mwedukuna. | In the early morning. |

A short break indicates the start of the second 'song' by solo singers:

| Dokwabu salewina | (see Fortune 1932:187 for a lyrical translation of this part as my informants did not understand most of the words of this song.) |
| salewega salewina. | |
| Bwebweso lagalaga | I go up to Bwebweso. |

These lines are repeated twice by the first singer. A drum stop follows, the men make a hissing sound, another man repeats it once, another drum stop. This whole part is repeated (*popola*, 'cut') thrice, then the first singer ends with a 'chorus' (*sipwa*, literally 'knot'):

| salewega, ya mwela ya 'eseyaseyalu | From (pandanus?) I climb, I (get stalks ?) |
| Dobu ya mweloloe, Bwebweso lagalaga | I mourn for Dobu, going up to Bwebweso. |

Then men and women disappear into the *yoeyoe* hut and the door is shut.
This dance takes about twenty minutes. As soon as it is over, the female 'owners' of the hamlet open the distribution ceremony by encircling the platform. The gift-giving, the decoration of the platform, the order of gifts and speeches are basically the same as in the sagali distribution that I shall describe later. The platform is removed as quickly as possible and the widow(er) is formally released and brought back to the hamlet of his or her matrilineage (kwabula or kumata ana ebe losalowa). The end of the mortuary ritual is marked by a final meeting when the last comments and complaints, accusations and declarations can be expressed in public.

A person's history of participation in feasts like basa, bwabwale and dugumalala is an indication of his or her individual qualities. The observed attitudes and conduct during such participation are testimony to his or her motivation, ambition, ability to sustain physical discomfort, and socialising skills. In rhetoric, these qualities are expressed in comments about someone being 'truly hardworking' (paisewa alena), having extraordinary stamina (alamai'ita alena), or having a friendly or amiable temperament (gwauso'ala alena). Such individuals have achieved a degree of personal renown that gives them multiple sets of options for future pleas for support in return, as for a temporary plot of garden land. This is the sense in which 'love has a price', for the rhetoric of 'friendship and generosity' serves to indicate the moral duty to return such gifts (maisa).

**SAGALI IN LOSINA**

The decision to host a major feast is often motivated by political reasons, expressed in terms of 'shame' (omeiameia): 'shame has speared us, sagali closes the wound' (gitai ta ewayaule sagali enega). In the case to be described here, the jolly entertainment of an all-night disco-dance in Losina had disturbed the silence of mourning (lomwamwadu) in the neighbouring hamlet of Obunebune, just fifty metres from Losina. As a result of 'caring' relationships between individuals of Losina and the deceased, and classificatory wa'a relations of these persons with Obunebune, the incident had insulting overtones. Manukalai of Obunebune, a powerful and determined man (esa'esaa) and senior resident ('inapwana) in his
maternal hamlet, reacted by 'shaming' Losina with gifts. First, at the *dugumalala* feast that ended the immediate mourning for his sister, he distributed a portion of the initial *ali'ali* gift to Losina, an insult that was ignored by Losina and never returned (so he told me in 1997). Second, with only his sister's knowledge, he had prepared an accusatory gift (*gaipoteya*), a huge basket filled with large yams. He called out from the platform: "Eh, Losina, your share for 'our sister' (*nu'u'udai*)! You like your disco music, don't you? You have no respect at all. Here your *gaipoteya*, and your pig is down there. And here is your *mwali*. Shame on you!"

This public shaming of Losina residents was too severe to be ignored. Furthermore, Manukalai's gift of 'une had to be returned (*maisa*) to avoid even further damage to 'Losina people's name' (*meLosina adi esana*). The only way to repay such debts is through counter gifts at *sagali* (see also Digim'Rina 1995:167). This context facilitated the consensus needed for a successful *sagali* feast, increasing the residents' resolve to invest months of work, recall all outstanding debts, sacrifice all riches and activate the entire network of 'helpers' (*muli* and *labalaba*). A formal reason for the feast was easily constructed, forcibly involving the errant teenagers' matrilineage as principal feast givers (*to'ali*, literally person-burial).

It took several meetings and some months of informal negotiations until the residents of Losina decided in December 1991 to hold a *sagali* a full year later, which would be formally dedicated to the memory of all the deceased of the hamlet, in particular to Lilly (1914-91), the teenagers' maternal grandmother, and her brothers Jerome (1912-80) and Gibson (1921-91). It is an accommodation to workers' and students' Christmas leave to hold *sagali* in December, the hottest time of the year, when new gardens should be the focus of attention. Before such factors became important, *sagali* were usually held after the yam harvest.

Our time for preparation was short and relations between the four matrilineages of

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28 Lilly and Gibson were brought up in a missionaries' home, as their mother, Ruby (named after Bromilow's daughter Ruve), was adopted and raised in the Mission station in the late 1890s as a 'saved child' (see Young 1989). She had married Lisania, a missionaries' son from Piesiya hamlet who followed in his father's footsteps.
Losina were tense. An open conflict over a block of land between a returning elderly couple and the matrilineage who used the disputed land, took several mediating sessions to settle provisionally. The elderly couple (of local eminence) who tried to move into Losina were interested in participating in the sagali in order to strengthen their argument for land rights. With the exception of the opposing party, the Losina matrilineages sympathised with the couple’s involvement because it would increase the amount of gifts and make the feast more impressive, thereby enhancing its fame.

To avoid aggravating tensions, the elderly couple did not attend the meetings but used a middleman to keep them informed and transmit their responses to the main organiser, tonisagali or toloina, Kaibado. He qualified as tonisagali both as the husband of the eldest woman and as a feared sorcerer who was active in kula exchange and known for his efficient garden magic (obwala). This was despite the fact that he belonged to a different village and clan, though he and his matrilineage (from We’itaa) had always been reliable helpers and had generously contributed to a former sagali in Losina in the mid-seventies. Since his marriage was intact, everybody expected his wife to have a strong influence on his decisions and there were no objections to his leadership on this occasion.

When I arrived in Losina in July 1992, the harvest was still continuing and the final decision as to whether a sagali would be held had not yet been made. The conflict over the land was about to escalate after the couple’s sons devastated a plot that was claimed by their parents. For the sake of the sagali, there was little response to this act of deliberate despoilation. And although it was strongly disapproved informally, the councillor who tried to settle the dispute was unable to call any witnesses.29 Nobody wanted to raise the question of land rights, because any statement could have disrupted the solidarity necessary for the sagali.

Meetings were generally held in the evenings after dinner. They rarely took longer

29 The elderly woman produced the nose ornament (mwa’u) of her ancestress Iyadili, the wife of the legendary ‘Chief of Dobu’, Gaganumole (see their photograph in Bromilow 1929:120), to prove her matrilineal link to Losina hamlet.
than an hour. About thirty adults with their children, landowners and their spouses, sat together in a rough circle, grouped into matrilineages. Hamlet 'owners' sat closer to the centre of the circle than affines; women of the same matrilineages sat together. A lot of attention was given to the preparation of betel chewing and smoking ingredients, to settling down the children, and to swatting mosquitoes. As I learned much later, these were all gestures of embarrassment concerning open talk about 'une rather than the signs of indifference that I initially suspected. After a while I realised that some of those present were not Losina residents. "We are like you, of the same clan (gegela), so we help each other," as one of these visitors (Eisaki) explained.

While Losina was still in the process of decision-making, affinal relatives were informally alerted and began to organise their losusu gifts of a pig, a couple of baskets of yams and some bunches of bananas, sugar cane, and betelnuts to support their relative and 'make the food bigger' (loepwaseyana). These gifts improve the social standing of an affine residing in the hamlet of the spouse. As years – and feasts – go by such affines eventually become respected and powerful elders, occasionally accumulating sufficient prestige to speak out publicly, acting on behalf of the landowners, like Kaibado, the organiser of the feast described here.

While preliminary arrangements were being made in the slow process of negotiation, keeping the men busy with visiting exchange partners, the women finished their yam harvest and decided how many yams they could contribute to the feast. Finally, at a meeting on 30 August 1992, each woman named the number of large baskets of yams from her yam house. As a rule, there should be at least ten baskets from each adult landowner but as the preparatory time was short some families claimed to have slightly less. Calculating their resources, the villagers decided to make a feast on a small scale with the help of only the direct in-laws' families (eyena). Another possibility would have been to activate these in-laws' networks (muli) as well, but the burden of debts for a long period afterwards made this strategy unattractive, its 'repayment heavy' (ana lotau mwauna).

Senior women (alawata), often paternal relatives who have renown in the
management and proper packing of yams into baskets, count each yam house's contribution and announce the numbers. The counting took place at around noon but these women had to refrain from touching food until the task was completed, when a good meal (*niaula*) was cooked for them. The yams that were counted were later piled into separate heaps (*siwa*) in the rear section of the individual yam houses and were not to be used for any other purpose.

The definite decision for the celebration of *sagali* in December 1992 was made on 3 September. The women were formally asked for their consent (*Iine, wa tagwala?*) and answered 'yes' (*Oo*). No *sagali* can be made without the women's consent, a generally acknowledged fact that shows that women are the true rulers (*toloina*) of such feasts while the men act as speakers, drawing public attention to their wealth. In Dobu, this is expressed as a proverb: 'The man is rich, the woman is the person giving the shade' (*tai i esa'es, waine i to'eyauyaukwa*). After the women had agreed to provide the yams, the *tonisagali* could proceed to plan the next steps. Each household was expected to provide at least one large pig, to rebuild houses and kitchen huts to make the village look nice (*asa ana ita bobo'ana manuna*), and to help those relatives who came only for the time of *sagali* to build temporary shelters.

Hamlets which were involved as *labalaba* or 'father's' had internal meetings and decided upon their degree of involvement. Gibson's children still had to return their main *bwabwale* gifts (*pegita*), an event that could be accommodated within the preparations for *sagali*. The landowners and the *labalaba* had grown up together as cousins (*niba*) and if they performed well during their father's *bwabwale* feasts they could expect to be respected by their 'fathers'. The children of *labalaba*, called *tutututu*-*, assist* their parents with further contributions if they are old enough to produce. At the *sagali* the *labalaba* climbs onto the platform and distributes the wealth that he or she has collected through matrilineal links, and is thereby enabled to become a full member of his or her father's matrilineage. Out of respect for his dead father this person would still not want to eat anything that grew near his grave or within the village. But apart from this rule there are no restrictions in gardening
or general conduct.

Names are commonly passed on within a matrilineage and lent out to other matrilineages through paternal relations to create the option of a son becoming the 'substitute' of his deceased father. Such a namesake who participated in all the celebrations of his bwabwale feasts gains land rights and might eventually be accepted as the full 'substitute' of the deceased, the lo'epa'elu. To the feast in Losina, for example, Gibson's children contributed a total of seven huge pigs, more than sixty baskets of yams, including several baskets of valuable seed yams (ewana), and an abundance of sugar cane, betelnuts and bananas. This list does not include debts owing to the store by 'fathers' from Losina and substantial amounts of store goods that were part of pegita.

It is a principle that sons only should be adopted into their father's matrilineage, limiting the granted rights to only one generation. The temporary character of this privilege would be in question if a daughter were to become a 'substitute' because she would pass her residential rights onto her own children, a right that no one could deny her. In Dobu, the proverb 'the woman has a tail' (waie mayuyuma) describes this principle succinctly, referring to her offspring as a 'tail'. In reality, it has often been disregarded, for example, when a matrilineage feared its extinction (sumwamwasa). Adopted women form new matrilineages whose members can claim residential rights, often leading to land disputes between such 'subclans' (the term used in land mediations). In fact, both parties in Losina's current land dispute had originated from adopted women (from Duau and Trobriands) and people made critical comments about the assertive and 'disrespectful' behaviour of such 'passengers' (togelu) who fought for rights that had been granted to their ancestresses some generations ago.

The second principle governing the adoption of a labalaba is based on the notion of 'work', a point that I have made repeatedly throughout the thesis. The expression that 'work sets the rules' (paisewa i loiloyna) subsumes this element (see also Thune 1980:222). Thirdly, it is generally seen as an advantage if the adopted member belongs to the same clan, or at least to a clan with a bird nesting pattern that
matches the father's totemic clan. This last requirement is flexible as it mainly concerns issues of mortuary 'work', but if the totemic clans do not match and a namesake cannot be returned to his or her mother's hamlet for burial, another nearby hamlet of the same clan can bury the body.\textsuperscript{30} Many people stated, however, that interpersonal conflicts can be expected if the clan birds do not align.

Talk about the feast often uses gifts as metaphors or to anchor points of discourse. I often participated in mortuary 'work' because I had shown interest early in my fieldwork and people liked me taking photographs and distributing prints later on. I joined the joking women before and after they cried over a corpse. On these occasions, I was told gossip such as the following: "Ask her where she was at x's \textit{bwabwale}. She won't tell you, but I tell you now: she didn't come! She did not bring her \textit{pegita}. This is true! And now she wants some garden land from them! Really, she has no shame!" (M.M.).

At this stage, it seems appropriate to explain further the 'gift of love', \textit{pegita}. As I have indicated, it is a form of tribute, given to express symbolically one's grief over the loss of the father and to demonstrate the 'love' and sense of duty to the deceased and his matrilineage. It is meant to finish the debts that were created through the dead person's involvement in 'work' and life in the village of the spouse, to return his or her yam variety (\textit{uma}). The seed yam are 'spoiled' (\textit{baila}) by the death and have to be cleansed by the \textit{to'ebwabwale} by eating a part of it cooked as a special mash (\textit{maisi}).

The smaller return gift for \textit{pegita} is called \textit{seudana}. It is presented together with cooked food to 'strengthen the bodies' of the \textit{labalaba} (\textit{lo'epa'ala} or \textit{loeyawasina}).\textsuperscript{31} If, for example, the \textit{labalaba} give five baskets of yams, two pots of \textit{mona}, and a pig as their \textit{pegita} gift, only one basket of yams and one pot of \textit{mona} are returned as \textit{seudana} (for ten baskets five are returned, for eight baskets four are returned, for twenty baskets five to ten are returned). Pigs are not explicitly returned at all. In

\textsuperscript{30} The fact that cemeteries are related to clans and not to matrilineages refutes the argument that "burial hermetically seals descent groups from one another on Dobu" (Bloch and Parry 1982:30).

\textsuperscript{31} See also Fortune (1932:196).
total, approximately one third of pegita is not repaid. It is a tribute and represents a male care-giver's 'work'. This unpaid part, called estio daita, is a symbolic crystallisation of the bond of duty between a man and the children of his household, the 'price' for his 'love', reinforced, as we shall see, by shame as a sanction for labalaba who fail to 'show their respect for their father's love and care'.

Based on this symbolism, the labalaba are expected to associate pegita with the memory of their father and to feel their grief with renewed intensity while witnessing how it becomes food for the to'ebwabwale. They watch how the last possessions of their father are burned when a large pig is singed, when his heirs destroy the last mementos, incorporating their maternal uncle. The term for this procedure refers to the perspective of labalaba: 'they burn the basket of their father', tamadia ina tana si gabugabu. If the relationship with the to'ebwabwale is good they receive a smaller gift of yams and sometimes a pig for their consumption, 'to make them feel a little better'. This gift has no specific name and is meant 'to strengthen their bodies' (loepa'ala), but the labalaba come and pick it up at night as if in secret, because they may not consume any food that is related to the feast and have to redistribute any public gifts given to them.

**Getting it all together**

Building material for shelters, extensions of kitchen huts and repairs of existing houses had to be acquired through muli links, because Dobu has scarcely any sago palms or large trees for house posts. The sewing of sago leaves for the roofs was done communally; the women took out the middle rib of the thorny sago leaves while the men sew the leaves onto sticks. Some days were spent on this work and those whose roofs were being prepared provided cooked food, tea, betelnuts and tobacco for the helpers (niaula). The work took place in the centre of the hamlet of the matrilineage who had organised the sago for their own houses. The hamlet, usually divided by the separate matrilineages and their constituent households, was formally united during this work, and people sat next to their same-sex-siblings or other peers and chatted while working.
The next phase was announced on 9 December 1992, when the first pigs were brought to the village by landowners. A diesel-engine vessel was chartered to go to Ioo (northern Normanby) where three pigs were bought from the relatives of a landowner's husband. On this trip everybody was very happy and felt relief because these first pigs were the signal for all the helpers from different villages to bring their contribution. All the way back the conch shell (yoguli) was proudly blown. A particular sequence of blasts – long, short, short, short – announced the transport of pigs for a feast. It was night when the vessel anchored at Losina beach. The people gathered and helped to bring the pigs ashore and into their fences. There was much excitement and a general feeling of relief – the sound of the yoguli had spread the news already and now the concrete stage of accumulation had started.

The landowners as well as their eyena and labalaba now had to bring more pigs and the men spent much time visiting other hamlets to meet their friends, relatives, debtors, or kula partners. If the feast had been planned well ahead, more people would have raised their own for this purpose. At short notice, however, only a few households were able to make use of their networks and obtain pigs on credit (utua bawena), while most others had to spend money and undertake extended travelling to find pigs. Our affinal helpers had to overcome the same difficulty. The sound of the yoguli became very common during the following month as the eyena brought their losusu gifts. The landowning spouse, in most cases the wife, had already begun to prepare a rich meal (niaula) for the guests while serving tea and biscuits as a first refreshment. This meant a lot of work and much strain on the household budget of money and large yams. These visitors had to be treated with the utmost politeness and as they brought their contribution they sometimes gave speeches, mentioning embarrassing events and criticising the landowner, a practice that I have mentioned in Chapters Three and Four as an option when giving Big Gifts (ta’ona).

Rosie (45 years) was very embarrassed when her husband’s relatives from Gomwa (Fergusson) came to bring their contribution. After they had placed ten baskets of yams, one pig and a bunch of bananas in front of her, her husband’s sister raised her voice and told her off: "This is our share, we brought it because

The long blast indicates that a traditional exchange is under way and each short blast indicates one pig.
we respect you. We wonder if you, too, respect us, because you never come to live in our place with your family. Is Gomwa a bad place? And why are you so unfriendly with your husband – my true brother?” Rosie could not reply but she felt very ashamed and spent much time thinking about the incident. Her sister-in-law was right; she had rarely spent more than a few days in Gomwa and her husband often went there on his own to help with the garden work. She told me that her main reason was the long way to the toilet and the discomfort that was caused by this. The second accusation was related to a domestic argument after her husband had belted their children. She had said that he would have to make bwabwale for the children if he killed them. This he had reported to his matrilineage and they were angry. If he made bwabwale they would have to participate by giving pigs and yams. It is very rude to anticipate this feast, even jokingly, and her statement was certainly not meant to be reported to her in-laws. The feeling of shame would not be expunged until the peak event of the sagali when Rosie could give a gift to her mother-in-law with an apology or retaliatory response (field notes).

The sagali was a good occasion for settling all kinds of personal debts. One affine had not come back to Losina to mourn the death of his mother-in-law who had died about a year ago. As a consequence, he was expected to display mourning behaviour until he returned to Losina with a large pig, some baskets of yams, betelnuts and bunches of bananas. His matrilineage joined him when he brought the required gifts of apology and the party began to cry as in mourning when they approached the landowners. This gift is called matabola, a compensation and apology for failure to 'work' for the hamlet when needed.

One senior woman received a special gift from her husband's sister's son who had lived with them for some years. As a sign of his love and gratitude (oboboma), he and his helpers built an enormously enlarged basket in front of her house. This construction (udila) was in fact an ordinary basket with long sticks vertically attached to extend its height. About eight baskets of yams were emptied inside and as the sticks were tied together the yams were visible. This impressive structure was decorated with some betelnuts, bleached pandanus leaves and some two-Kina notes. Beneath the udila the man had also erected a small platform that was filled with two more baskets of yams and betelnuts. Five bunches of bananas were hung besides the platform. This gift was meant to be a repayment for all the help and support that the donor had received during the period he had lived in this household. It was oboboma – and not to be repaid, as he announced in his speech of
gratitude. Strictly speaking, it was a return gift for the woman's 'work' for him in his childhood, but as it concerns the ethics of household life, the term *oboboma* reflects on her everyday sharing with him as well as a moral obligation to display 'love' for one another and to return it (*oboboma ma'ana maisa*, 'love has a price').

This stage of preparation was very stressful for the landowners. The sound of the *yoguli* made them dash to the beach to find out whose *muli* had come to bring their share. The woman whose in-laws arrived had to rush and prepare food, spread comfortable mats and arrange everything for a warm and generous welcome. All of a sudden, she had to peel yams and cook rice, find betelnuts and tobacco and share them with the guests. Often the children were sent running to the next trade store to get some canned fish, rice, tobacco, sugar or hard biscuits. Very often they had to ask for credit (*lowaga*). There was much solidarity during this time, and a lot of mutual help, such as sending a child with a large yam or some fresh scones across to a sister who was about to start cooking. At this stage, this help (*ada lema* or *ada bwaga*) occurred mainly within the matrilineages of Losina as they independently hosted their respective helpers. Sometimes, people had to stay awake at night because they expected *muli* to arrive, but schedules were characteristically vague and the uncertainty about their time of arrival increased the general domestic stress.

As those landowners who lived elsewhere arrived, built their shelters and moved in, it became obvious why some of them did not live in their own village. Quarrels between siblings broke out openly, and in this time of extremely hard work and strict duties everybody's patience (*alamai’ita*) was stretched. Children were scolded more frequently and they had to help much more than usual. Some of the people who came for the feast brought children who had never lived on Dobu and knew nothing about local custom. They did not share the fears and worries, could not see the importance of the feast and did not care about the shame that they could cause by behaving improperly. They did not even understand that their very presence at the feast would grant them land rights in Losina.\(^33\) The parents of these children

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\(^{33}\) One eighteen year old student told me that he never wanted to return to Losina after the feast was over, mainly because he disliked the strict social control exercised by his 'mothers'.
brought money in order to purchase some yams, pay off debts in trade stores and provide all the 'help' that they were expected to give. Many people were worried, however, that the *sagali* might be 'spoiled' through the ignorant, unthinking mistakes of these children (*geya'abo ida sagali si da gieto'umali*). Interpersonal tensions are often blamed for sickness and death, perceived as personal revenge for conflicts arising from incidents during *sagali* time. In fact there were some cases of severe malaria and typhoid-like fevers; one girl developed an eye-infection ('red eye', *mata bweyabweyalina*) that is generally said to be caused by witches, and most people (including myself) had bronchitis. These sicknesses were all explained in terms of 'jealousy' (*e'ipi'iipi*).

Hamlet life was intensified by the visitors in their temporary shelters, and they almost doubled the usual number of residents. Gibson's namesake likewise built a hut and moved in with his wife and children, though he spent much time in his mother's household. Building a house signifies a close relationship with the land of a hamlet; it is a demonstration of rights. This aspect was most important for viri- and neolocally living 'owners', who took the opportunity to introduce their children to the residents and let them distribute gifts as public demonstrations of 'ownership'.

**The platform**

A week before the final feast, all the men of Losina, some *labalaba*, and other helpers went across to Normanby to cut the timber for the platform. The trunks of trees and bundles of bamboo were shipped to Dobu on a diesel-engine vessel (M.V. Kwadima) while the men proudly blew the conch shell as they approached the beach of Losina. The building material was floated ashore and carried a little way inland where it was placed under leaves. After their work was finished, all the men were served an opulent meal that the women of Losina had cooked during the day.

When I asked about the building material, 'Auntie' Labenia explained that it is hidden from view as a precaution against the powerful bush spirit Taumudumudulele who would otherwise put some deadly magic on it. "Although we all know that this building material is hidden next to the path under branches with green leaves we should never go close to it. We women are not to touch it at all, or to step over it. Otherwise we will not have enough yams
to fill the platform!" (field notes, 8.1.1993).

The cutting (goa) and covering (bwasa) of the building material forced the people to finish all their preparations, and the last trips to pick up pigs and yams were made in haste. The time of preparation was over, Taumudumudulele might find the material for the platform under the leaves. More than usual, possible attacks by witches scared the residents of Losina. Rumours spread about an attack of witches (welabana), about the rarely mentioned, hungry sea witches (gelaboi), and about the appearance of Taumudumudulele. Alleged sightings were widely discussed in the evenings. Nobody was supposed to leave the hamlet at night and many people were too scared to use the toilet in the early morning hours, the time when Taumudumudulele was believed to walk home after spending the night with a witch-lover. I was warned repeatedly that 'one look into your face will instantly kill you'. In fact the fear became so intense that Kaibado, the organiser of the feast (tonisagali), had to repel Taumudumudulele with his powerful magic to quieten the rumours.

At the last meeting before the actual sagali began, on 10 January, the tonisagali collected exact information about all debts that would have to be repaid. Not only the number of baskets of yams but also their contents were memorised. How many kwateya and siakutu yams had to be returned from which occasion and who was supposed to provide it? Where did the three baskets end up that someone had claimed to have given before? Whose pigs would be killed for the ceremonial meals? The memory of the dead likewise became important for the planning at this stage, because during the actual feast there are some occasions when their habits are imitated, until at the very end the last restrictions related to their deaths, including the taboo on mentioning their names, are lifted. As Lilly, Jerome and Gibson had been the children of missionaries, their idiosyncratic habits were related to their Christian upbringing: Lilly had loved to sing hymns and usually wore meri blaus;
Jerome had spoken a funny kind of broken English and always wore a blue laplap. These characteristics were to be recalled during the celebration of their sagali. The time-table for the events was arranged and duties were delegated to the different matrilineages. Another point of discussion was whether the singing should be made into a competition (doe) or not. Some people said that the quality of singing would be better if it was organised as a competition between two or three villages, but the tonisagali objected because it was now too late to arrange, an argument that was generally accepted. This meeting went on from seven to eleven at night and some of the women fell asleep, exhausted by the day's work. After the meeting, the tonisagali confirmed once again the consensus of the women, and, thus reassured, distributed pieces of black tobacco to all participants.

The next day marked the beginning of feasting time and from this day on nobody was supposed to sleep at night. Naturally, everybody went silently into their houses for at least a few hour's sleep during the day or night, but sleep deprivation was a significant feature of the following week. On 11 January the timber was taken out of its hiding place and the men built a large platform (bwaima si sala). It was twenty-one metres long and three metres wide, had four sets of steps and was about three metres high (see Diagram 16 below). It was constructed near the old grave site of the hamlet of the deceased. This site, located within the centre of the hamlet, had not been used for decades and some women and children spent hours weeding it, encircling (laba) it with clam shells (kalitabu), and spreading clean sand inside the encircled area so that it was easily visible and nobody would carelessly step on it.

The building of the platform was ideally not to be watched by women; but those who lived next to the site could stay and do their work without objection. While the men were working on the platform the women did even more cooking than before. In addition to niaula, the food for the workers (the male residents of Losina, some labalaba and eyena and other voluntary helpers), they also had to prepare the feasting food for the ceremonial meal that took place after the completion of the platform. The food was served on two tables, the second reserved for the more casually involved, non-related (to'umala) helpers, who were mainly men from
neighbouring hamlets.

That afternoon, our labalaba, headed by their maternal uncle Benjamin, brought a large pig, covered with a fine mat and underneath decorated with objects of the dead man: his bow tie, shirt, axe, belt, shoes, lime spatula, and his basket. The pig and its stretcher were covered in betelnuts, streamers of betelnuts, balloons and two-Kina notes. I took photos of the three baskets of yam seeds, fourteen baskets of yams, eleven bunches of bananas and numerous betelnuts that came with the pig. As usual, the labalaba cried, when they approached Losina, but this time their sorrow seemed even more genuine. 'Auntie' Labenia explained that they had brought the last remaining possessions of their deceased father who had died at his wife's hamlet. "Ideally", she said, "we should get our mementos and also fasten them onto this pig, to remain there when it is killed and singed, so that 'everything is finished'. Me and my sisters, however, do not want to part with our memento. I think that today this happens often among people with more education. They keep photographs and other memories that should have been destroyed at sagali." In the evening, Benjamin came over to our house and said that there were fifteen more baskets of yams, the last harvest of the deceased, and that the labalaba would bring them as their pegita tomorrow (field notes, 12.1. 1993).

At sunset, the male 'owners' of Losina had a second large meal. Their mothers and sisters served it on the platform. This ceremony is called esanalasa (to bite a piece of food in order to eat it) and serves as a 'warming-up' of the platform. Informally divided into their matrilineages they sat in two rows facing each other across spread banana leaves that were covered with feasting food: pork, fish, large yams, and mona pudding. The children were allowed to eat as much pork and fish as they could grab, and some people did not wait until the opening Christian grace (tapwalolo) was finished. The spouses (aiyai) ate their share of the same food on the ground in front of the platform. In the evening, a Coleman lamp was lit and people sat around, telling stories, chewing betelnuts and playing card games ('Five-hundred') until sunrise. The platform, once completed, should only be climbed by the landowners. Its presence increased the tension through fear of Taumudumudulele and the vigils were held to prevent his malicious manipulations. He could put magic on the platform and cause people's death when they climbed up. This was the principal reason for the exhausting vigils.

The next day was devoted to loading the yams on top of the platform (emasula). The yoguli was blown continuously as basket by basket was carried up and
emptied.\textsuperscript{35} Again, each matrilineage had its own section and each household put all its yams on its own heap (\textit{siwa}). In some cases, when there were many siblings, they formed pairs and pooled their yams. The \textit{waliesa} (namesake) from the \textit{labalaba} side of the late Gibson, Litiati, had his own heap (called \textit{bolu}). His land rights had already been granted informally when he had built his shelter in Losina a week previously, but to observe proper procedure he had to act as an 'owner' by climbing the platform and distributing \textit{bwabwale} yams. The heavy baskets were usually carried up the steps by women, but men also helped. Men carried the baskets on their shoulders and occasionally a landowner's husband climbed up as well to help his wife. Although this was – strictly speaking – against the rules, nobody objected.

When most of the yams had been arranged in piles on the platform, it became obvious that there was not enough space left for the pork and the people who were to distribute it. In the early afternoon, some men quickly began to build extensions wherever feasible so that the platform became roughly 'L'-shaped. Most of the yams had to be repacked into baskets and the mood was tense. To make it worse, there was a little rain from time to time and the yams had to be covered up with mats (\textit{bubula}) and canvas. A lot of quarrelling went on within the matrilineages and whoever was able to stay clear of the platform did so. Some men tried to catch some sleep before dusk, after the extension was completed. Again there was a vigil at night, consisting mainly of young and middle-aged men who played cards and kept themselves awake by chewing betelnuts. The free supply of betelnuts attracted men from neighbouring villages, too, and in the light of the Coleman they guarded the platform in a vigil that was not only for Taumudumudulele but also to watch for ordinary thieves, so the \textit{tonisagali} told me.\textsuperscript{36}

In the early morning of the next day, the work on the platform continued. Women

\textsuperscript{35} I learned later that this was a mistake because the \textit{yoguli} should have been blown only once at the beginning of \textit{emasula}.

\textsuperscript{36} It is curious that this could be thought to be a problem, as yam houses are never locked and at night time it would be very easy to steal yams anywhere. I never heard about any such incident, however.
brought more yams and started to tie long kwateya yams on sticks or pieces of sugarcane. The boys helped wherever they were needed and tied bunches of banana to the frame underneath the platform. The long yams on sticks (eto’etosowala), bunches of sugarcane (tou) and betelnuts (magi) were tied to the railing of the platform. These were for decoration; the platform indeed did look prosperous and fertile with its colourful leaves and fruits and the elegant loops of sugar cane. A few large pigs that were to be given live were tied to the posts underneath the platform and were occasionally sprinkled with water and fed.

While the final preparations went on, yet more eyena and labalaba arrived with their gifts. At this stage everybody was sick of the sound of the yoguli because it meant that extra work had to be done. When the evening came, the women started cooking again, for their families as well as for the next ceremony, the night-long singing of Christian hymns (wali ewa’ewala).

Diagram 16: The platform of Losina’s sagali feast

This night before the final feast is dedicated to the memory of the habits of the deceased. After a person’s death, people who had a personal relationship with the deceased would express their sorrow by avoiding certain activities because of the painful memories they brought. The footpath that the dead person always used on a
visit, the area of beach where he used to pull up his canoe or where she used to clean her saucepans; the swearword that someone often used, or the songs and stories that were in his or her repertoire; the kind of yams ('uma) that she or he liked most, and the way she or he did anything in a distinctive way – in short, actions that triggered recollection, might be individually chosen as a way of expressing grief. As one of my friends put it: "Every time I take this detour, I think of my dead uncle (wa'agu) and feel sadness about his death". Such voluntary observances go beyond kinship links insofar as they are imposed neither automatically nor by collective matrilineage decision, but from a person's own free will. These restrictions are lifted with sagali, when a gift is made 'to finish it off' (ana ebe'losalowa), by doing it again for the first time during the sagali. In theory, any such characteristic habit of the deceased could be celebrated, like dancing if the person was a great dancer (lausa ewa'ewala), or joking (tueya ewa'ewala), even swearing (enabuda ewa'ewala), talking about women (onawaine ewa'ewala) or men (onatai ewa'ewala), smoking (mue ewa'ewala) and so on. At all the sagali feasts on Dobu that I learned about, however, singing was chosen as the means to commemorate the dead. This was partly because some hamlets have well-trained choirs who know many hymns, while traditional dancing is out of fashion on Dobu, and Christian morality prohibits swearing.37

Three groups of singers were invited and many people joined them. Coleman lamps were hung on the platform and the singing took place directly in front of it. Surrounded by about two hundred people, neither Taumudumudulele nor any thieves could come and do any harm to the impressively loaded and decorated platform. The singers were provided with betelnuts and tobacco and the women and girls of Losina served hot tea and buttered scones and biscuits twice during the night. As some Losina women were also expected to join the singers they had been divided into two groups. All the women were very tired and had to force themselves to stay awake and fulfil their duties. A little rain around midnight did not stop the singing because the groups sought shelter underneath the platform. I

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37 At a bwana awana feast, however, I witnessed an event of all-night joking.
did not hear anybody speaking in funny English, although it had been planned to do so. Perhaps everybody was too tired to remember. I couldn't stay awake and went to bed well before daybreak, when the women had just began to cook another huge meal to feed the singers at sunrise. The general exhaustion had a powerful impact on this stage of the sagali, increasing existing tensions and leading to open arguments.

On 14 January the feast reached its peak. At eight o'clock in the morning, when the singers left, the swapping of pigs (etogelasa) began. This procedure is necessary to enable the affines who supplied the pigs via utua bawena exchanges, to eat their share of pork (the etouyosa gift, see below). As the pigs' innards are eaten by their owners this would also in some cases be similar to eating bwabwale. By swapping pigs of the same size this breach of taboo is circumvented. According to some people even the pigs that were brought from other places should have been swapped because they had spent some time in the village being fed by their owners. A few families did not join the etogelasa and killed their own pigs because they had bought them for cash and so did not have to worry about food restrictions. The other pigs were brought to an empty spot at the edge of the village and laid side by side to compare their sizes. After swapping they were killed (e'unua bawe) by their owners or helpers. Women did not attend the killing. Most of the pigs were speared with sharpened metal rods and the blood was kept inside their bodies by plugging the spear wound with a small piece of wood or coconut husk. The others were clubbed to death with axes so that no blood was spilled. The singeing (gabu) of the pigs took place immediately afterwards. Once it was done the owner with a son carried the pig down to the beach, washed and scraped its skin. The landowning women joined in when it was placed on some coconut leaves on the beach, and issued orders about how to butcher it. Pieces of different sizes had to be given to different people and those who were to do the distributing knew exactly what pieces they needed. The fillets, a few other nice fleshy pieces, and the organs were taken by the women as well as the blood. The offal was washed in the sea and also kept for consumption. The children impatiently waited to be given the bladder which they blew up and kicked around as a soccer ball.
While the men were busy cutting and carving the pigs and carrying the pieces up onto the platform, some older children cleaned the guts in the sea and the women cooked or fried the meat that they had kept. Male teenagers ate a lot of the roasted liver and heart, reminiscent of pre-Christian beliefs that roasted food is good for a man's vigour and magical 'heat'. Some children sat on the platform and chased the flies from the raw meat, while we, the girls and young women, were shouted at to get dressed and to don our 'grass' skirts. We had to stand still, turning slowly, while an older woman kneeled before us and trimmed the skirts evenly while admonishing us to wear them gracefully. When the skirts were done, we had to rub our skins with grated coconuts, comb our hair and put on our finery like arm bands (nipuna) and hair bands (dagula), but not the necklace (bagi). Mothers advised their daughters which gifts to give to whom, and many people wrote down small lists with the names of the people who had to receive certain gifts. We ate a light meal of yams and pork, then we took our bowl dishes (gaeba) with one or two large yams. As the senior women gave us final advice and tied bagi on our backs, we all grew a little nervous. By the early afternoon a large crowd of to'une ('receivers') had assembled around the platform. Well over five hundred people filled every available space as they waited for the distribution to begin. The diagram below shows the transformation that had taken place in the hamlet during the previous weeks of preparation and feasting.

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38 The trimming of the skirts is an occasion for older women to give lectures on beauty, grace and humility, a service that is regarded as 'work'. A man's judgement is needed to confirm that a skirt is clipped to the right length.

39 The perforated edges of my computer paper were used as hair bands by some girls.
ON TOP OF THE WORLD – SAGALI EUPHORIA

A long blast of the yoguli at half-past-three was our sign to form a line and parade clockwise around the platform (talaboi ana oabu), each of us holding the dish with the yams on our heads. On reaching the central steps, we all emptied the yams onto the ground (ali'ali ana oabuye), and the eldest woman called up (bwau laga) to the sky: "Oh, Yabowaine, you are looking down on us and because of your work we are working!" (Oo, Yabowaine, u ita'ita mwa'utama ta imu guinuega a guiguinue!) And all the woman yelled in a particular way ('ooouuuuuu!'') called oluwa. This was the sign for the fifty or so to'eguyai (distributing persons) to climb the platform and take their positions, grouped according to their matrilineages.

Simi, a man in his late twenties, the eldest son of the eldest daughter of the late Lilly, gave the first speech (awawala) to formally open the distribution.

The speech contained arrogant assertions like "Whose sagali is this? This is our sagali. We set the rules. Don't keep all for yourself. Share and divide!" (Yaita
ina sagali? Abo'ama ima sagali. Abo'ama loiloina. Geya'abo wa lisilugu! Wa asepala be wa eguyai!) It was short and sounded aggressive, but as it was delivered by a junior man, it was less domineering than most speeches of elderly men that I heard on Dobu (field notes, 13.1.1993).

The blast of the yoguli marked the next stage and Simi proclaimed: "Diluba, aami ali'ali gete! Losina aami ali'ali gote! Ta bawe nidi!" (Your ali'ali gift! And these pigs there!) He pointed to two substantial pieces of pork hanging beneath the steps, and to the two piles of yams that we had carried to the platform. These gifts, called ali'ali (cemetery), were for the 'same clan' hamlets, Diluba (in Mwanomwanona) and Losina (in Enaiya) who help Losina with burial obligations. In this light, the insulting character of Manukalai's initial ali'ali gift to Losina at his sister's dugumalala feast becomes clear. It was as if Manukalai had accused Losina of acting like a 'helping hamlet' of the same clan, thus undermining his legitimate authority.

This first gift had been minutely discussed during the last meeting. Would it be better to mention but one of the villages and give a larger gift? The other village had to be repaid from their last feast. All agreed that both villages should get a part of the ali'ali gift and that the women should throw their yams onto two different heaps. This also made sense as many women would climb onto the platform. If all of them contributed to only one ali'ali gift it would have been too large. Whose pork would be added? Someone from the to'ali and someone who had to repay old debts agreed to contribute with a pig's leg (field notes, 14.1.1993).

After the ali'ali gift was announced, the next gift was called out from the platform by Simi: "We'itaa, ami lomwamwadu!" This gift was for the hamlet We'itaa, to end the mourning silence after a recent death (mwamwadu). The people of that hamlet received a basket of yams and a leg of pork. In our case, there had been no recent deaths in the immediate vicinity but Losina had received some lomwamwadu when Lilly died, and so we repaid this debt. At the last meeting, this question had been discussed as well. Another option would have been to give a smaller gift to all the surrounding hamlets in the Edugaura locality, called lomwamwadu sa'u asa ('to all hamlets'), but Losina people chose to pay off the outstanding debt first.40 The sound

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40 At Losina's next feast, on 1st August 1993, the sa'u asa option was chosen.
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of the yoguli announced the last part of Simi’s speech. He explained that this sagali was made for his maternal grandmother and her brothers, and for the ‘name of Losina’ (Losina ina ale manuna). At this strategic moment, he could also have shouted recriminations and threats, or expressed self-accusations and apologies, as I have seen at other feasts. He had been advised, however, to refrain from aggressive speech, as his matrilineage had decided to return Manukalai’s shaming gift at the very end of the distribution.

Again the yoguli was blown, marking the transition to the second phase of the distribution: the gifts for affines (etouyosa). Now the mood began to change from nervousness to self-confidence. Individuals from each household called out those affines (eyena) who had brought pigs and yams and gave them each a large portion of pork and a basket of yams. This was not regarded as a down-payment of the losusu gift but rather as an acknowledgment of the debt, which will be repaid when the other party makes a feast.

On this occasion, Rosie (see example p.286-7) apologised to her mother-in-law. She called her by the appropriate term (Lawagu Gomwa) and added: "Your etouyosa! I am sorry for my faults. It is shameful for me but because of my sickness I cannot work hard. If you wish I will come and help you in the kitchen." Then she advised the boys to hand down a very generous gift: half a pig and a basket of yams (field notes, 13.1.1993).

Others, too, added comments to their cry or made short speeches when the gift was picked up. These were often amicable but sometimes or openly aggressive since this was a rare opportunity to publicly state grievances, though it was limited by the short time and the general noise. People rushed to receive their etouyosa, to be further distributed amongst all the households of the hamlet. At the same time, the next kind of gift was being called out by other matrilineages, and as etouyosa finally ended, the shouting of talaboi (literally ‘platform’), became prevalent. Talaboi is given to those eyena who brought some yams but no pig. They also receive some pork and yams, but often slightly less. It again depends on previous obligations, but in general the yams are not packed into baskets, rather five to eight

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41 Amu etouyosa! Sorry sinabwana igu loegesi manuna. Ya omeiameia ta igu le’oasa manuna nigeya ya da paisewa ai’aila ga eguma mama be ya lelema kisiniya.
tubers are handed down in dishes. These gifts were sometimes accompanied by a bunch of bananas.

Those who have done 'work' for the feast are the next to receive gifts. At the last meeting we had been urged to give generously to the singers, the boys who had helped to build and guard the platform and to the women's groups who had helped in cooking and related work of hospitality. Now we had to find our places on the crowded platform, advise the men how to carve the pigs, pick up a good-sized portion and a few yams, proceed to the edge of the platform, make eye-contact with an appropriate recipient and shout out to him or her. My voice never succeeded in competing with those of my 'aunties', and I had to wait for a gap in the cacophony of shouting voices. The helpers were called according to their contribution (*Towali, e'unemi* – Singers, your share!). One of them picked up the gift and divided it. One or two yams and a small piece of pork was an appropriate share. The women who had trimmed our skirts and had helped us to put on our finery were called out individually, just as other people who had contributed in any remarkable way.

After all the helpers had been gratified, an even more chaotic phase set in. We had to return small gifts owing from previous *sagali* feasts. After these obligations were fulfilled, the distribution to guests and friends, relatives, namesakes and other visitors began. Holding up two yams and a small piece of pork, the *to'eguyai* (givers) yelled on the top of their voices down to the crowd of waiting people: *Sinagu Mary, e'uneyo!* (Mother Mary, your share!); *Nibagu Gaula, e'uneyo!* *Lomaninima!* (Cross-cousin from Gaula hamlet, your share! Come here quickly!); *Taubada Mulisi'iya, e'uneyo!* (My husband from Mulisi'iya, your share!); *Waliesa, e'uneyo, igu waliesa Nemunemu!* (Namesake, your share, my namesake from Nemunemu hamlet!). When all the pork was finished, the shouts were modified slightly: *Tasigu Seniani, e'uneyo! Aamu bebaimo!* (My sister Seniani, your share of yams only!); or *Nu'ugu Toni, amu bebaimo, nigeya aada bawemo* (My brother Toni, your plain yams, there is no more pork for us (inc) to eat!). The shouting was so loud and uncoordinated that it was hard to make out whose name was being called. Those who managed to distribute quickly ran out of pork first and helped themselves to their matrikin's remaining pieces – one more reason to be quick.
Sometimes people would not hear their names and we would stand idly holding the gift, trying to call even louder or in a momentary silence. If nobody collected the gift, another name was announced shortly afterwards, as everybody on the platform was intent on finishing the remaining yams by giving them away. Only one pile of yams, called bolu, remained on the platform. This was bwabwale, the last harvest of Gibson's garden, the pegita gift from his children. Again the yoguli was blown and a dramatic stage of the sagali began.

Some women had prepared huge baskets, enlarged with sticks and filled with yams. They were decorated with pieces of cloth, plaited baskets (tana), betelnuts and sometimes with additional gifts such as two-Kina notes or chewing gum. Such an enlarged basket (kodo sebwagibwagilina) is a gift to show gratitude for extraordinary help. One of them was prepared in the name of the deceased Lilly and given to one of her namesakes. As the eldest daughter called out "Lilly e'uneyo!" the name was uttered in public for the first time and was now free to be used again. This was a sad moment for the children of Lilly and I saw one of her daughters silently shed some tears. The basket, a large piece of pork, a bunch bananas and another of sugarcane were accepted by her namesake from Piesiya village who would return it later (lotau). This gift simultaneously expressed 'respect' towards the hamlet of Lilly's father, a gesture of gratitude and acknowledgment of duty of Lilly's children for their asa tubuna (grandfather's place). The yoguli was blown again and some women presented a kodo sebwagibwagilina to their husbands as a token of love and gratitude for their support (oboboma) during the feast and in general. I was told that such a basket could also be given to one's marriage partner together with a humiliating speech, reciting all their failings. This did not happen at our sagali or at any other feast that I observed, though I was told that it sometimes results in public squabbling. It was such a shaming gift that Manukalai gave to Losina. Then the yoguli was blown again and Litiati, Gibson's son, the labalaba who had just been granted resident status in Losina (toni lo'elo'ebutu), gave a heartbreaking speech of thanks. He presented a huge basket with a pig's leg, a bunch of bananas and sugarcane to one of our affines who had provided the money to purchase Gibson's coffin. The memory of his father was so overwhelming that he
sobbed desperately and his 'fathers' rushed to comfort him. His father's niece finished the speech in the son's name as he was unable to compose himself.42

Finally the yoguli was blown for the last engorged basket. A junior woman stepped in front of the platform and apologised for the teenagers' misbehaviour the previous year. She held a small bagi necklace in her hand and placed it on top of the basket. When she mentioned the dispute, Manukalai was very upset. He looked so angry that I feared some trouble would break out. When he was told which of the pigs lying underneath the platform he was being given, he cheered up a little but maintained an aggressive demeanour. In 1997 he explained to me that the bagi was ridiculously small and that he could not possibly accept it as a counter gift for his mwali named Pwouladaita. "That will stay their debt forever," he said, "together with the ali'ali gift."

When these gifts had been distributed the yoguli was blown again and the decoration on the platform was distributed to the crowd: the long yams on sugarcanes (eto' etosowala) and remaining bunches of bananas were given to friends, paternal relatives, or people who had so far received nothing. At this stage, kula gifts can be made if partners are among the visitors, by blowing the yoguli and throwing down a bagi or mwali while shouting the name of the gift, such as 'maisa!' (return gift) or 'aga!' (initiatory gift). Visitors began to share (asepala) their accumulated gifts among themselves by dropping some yams and pork in front of a person and announcing: "This is our yams for consumption (ada bebai)!" No reference is made to the pork, as 'yams are more important than pork' (bebai yage sinabwana ga enega bawe yage gidalina). It would also appear as gagasa (showing-off) to emphasise the pork, although pork is more welcome than yam as people crave fatty food. This was the time for quick and discreet apologies, as from a boy to his lover's parents for making them feel 'his' gwasa (by sleeping over). The gift is made by saying 'sorry for giving gwasa' (gwasa ana tututauna) while

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42 Conspicuous mourning is appropriate for labalaba in neighbouring areas, too (see Chowning, 1989:113, Digim'Rina 1995:181).
dropping a generous share.

At sunset, the feast reached its final climax, when at last the bunches of betelnuts 
(magi saladi) were distributed. Young people came closer to the platform and tried 
to persuade their friends or relatives to throw the betelnuts down to them. Some 
to'eguyai smashed the bunches against the railing of the platform (magi sapisapi) so 
that the betelnuts flew in all directions, but others threw single nuts down to their 
friends. Some younger men and women aimed at particular people that they did not 
like very much, trying to hit them by throwing as hard as they could. This was the 
end of the distribution, a glorious display of Losina's power. Betelnuts are one of 
the most desired items of everyday consumption and the act of throwing them down 
to the excitedly begging crowd made us all feel superior.

When dusk set in, the visitors left an empty platform behind and made their way 
home, loaded with gifts. Unavoidably, however, some people who were left without 
a share would later complain that 'they looked at our bottoms for nothing' (siasiama 
si itena daidaita), referring in a slightly rude manner to the visitors' view of those 
who are bending over to gather yams while standing three metres higher.
Fortunately, such feelings were not concentrated in any particular hamlet, so to my 
knowledge 'our' sagali feast did not trigger another one, aimed at shaming Losina 
for neglect of exchange relations. Every household ate a good meal, chatted about 
the incidents of the feast and went to sleep very early. After dinner, the 
to'ebwabwale for Gibson climbed the platform and emptied the last pile of yams 
(bolu) into baskets that they distributed equally amongst all the matrilineages of 
Losina. Everybody felt happy and excited, and when asked, everybody said they 
simply wanted to have a good rest (a need that was utterly sensible to me). Only 
few men, mostly affines, guarded the empty platform during the night.

At this stage, the remaining tasks of the feast had to be re-scheduled because of a 
sudden death in the father's group of one of Losina's matrilineages. Obligations 
concerning this death took priority over the correct finishing of the sagali.

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43 See, however, Thune's symbolic interpretation of 'being quiet after sagali' (1980:235).
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Everything was postponed and the members of the matrilineage went to their classificatory father's hamlet for *basa*. We handed over the *ege'egelu* yams and cried over the corpse until we were led away to rinse our hands from the 'dirt of death' (*baila*). The weekend further delayed the proceedings of *sagali*, because no feasting activity could take place on Sunday; but on Monday, finally, we finished the *sagali*. On that day, 18 January, the men demolished the platform (*ata'ata ana ligeya*) by simply cutting the bindings that held the construction together.44 The building material was not needed by anyone and it was left to rot at the side of the footpath. The women cooked the last large meal thereby using up all the sticks of firewood that were only partly burned during the cooking for *sagali* (*kepwanigita si e'alapio'asi*). One more pig was killed and divided amongst the women of the different matrilineages of Losina, who cooked their share with the last *sagali* yams (*masula i tupwa*). The cooked food was evenly spread on layers of banana leaves, and all residents of Losina ate together on the ground close to the spot where the platform had stood. This last meal was quickly consumed without any further announcements or speeches. It seemed as if everybody was simply happy that it was all over and that the feast had been successful (*paisewa bobo'ana*). The rigid distinction between 'owners' and affines that had been prevalent throughout the feast was dissolved by the act of eating the same food in public, finishing all the leftovers of *sagali* and thereby reconstituting normality. The following table gives some statistical documentation of the size of this feast and the accumulated wealth that had been distributed.

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44 According to Fortune, the platform should remain standing (1932:199). To my knowledge, this is regarded as dangerous and 'wrong' on Dobu (as also in Basima, see Digim'Rina 1995:184n.). One post, however, is sometimes left erect as a memorial (*weiweiyala*).
### Table 14: Losina *sagali* statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th><em>susu 1</em></th>
<th><em>susu 2</em></th>
<th><em>susu 3</em></th>
<th><em>susu 4</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults residents</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent residents</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults on platform</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution: Yams (baskets)</td>
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<td>99</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution: Pigs</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution: Money (Kina)</td>
<td>8030</td>
<td>4485</td>
<td>2545</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpers (no. groups)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpers total: Yams</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpers total: Pigs</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total: Yams</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: Pigs</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

**LOVE, SHAME AND DUTY**

I have shown in this chapter how shame can be used strategically to force someone into an exchange of *une* and yams. It appears that mortuary feasts are the main occasion to publicly 'put shame' on others, because they provide the contextual opportunity to exchange *une* and yams. They also provide the emotional grounds for relations of domination through the division into *to'ebwabwale* ('eaters') and *to'etabutabu* ('non-eaters'). The former rule the feast, while the latter are submissive in a public display of grief and 'respect'. Conspicuous failure in mourning demeanour is read as a declaration of rebellion against the *to'ebwabwale*’s authority; it is a cause for shame, indicating character traits of a 'hard' person (*pa'ala*) without feelings. The association of shame with the physical body has been noted in the

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45 See appendix 8 for a table of each household's contribution to the *sagali*.

46 'Owners' 52; spouses: 19; *labalaba*; 1.
literature (e.g. Epstein 1984:38ff, Strathern 1977). For a Dobu person, shame 'spears the skin', it reaches the 'inside' and affects the whole individual. Shame affects the person similarly as a sign of failure to 'work'. This becomes obvious with respect to mourning attitudes, the most important form of 'work' in Dobu life.

When I sailed to Sawa'edi on Fergusson Island with a friend, we went to his 'father's' hamlet, where he was abruptly told that his paternal aunt had died not long ago. This spoilt my friend's day entirely and he was very upset. "They did not tell me about her death and so I came here with empty hands - what a terrible shame (omeia'meia)! I should have attended the basa feasts for her, I should have brought some baskets of yams, maybe even a pig, as pegita, to show my grief. At least, I should have come at an arranged date with my matrilineage to bring matabola!" Innocently paying a short visit with empty hands was a faux-pas, and his shame made him feel miserable for the rest of the day. He constantly enumerated his resources and tried to figure out the best way to regain his good name with these people. Although he was not treated with scorn and simply informed about this death in a neutral fashion, the news hit him hard and he immediately left the village. It might have been a strategy of these people to increase the size of the gift that he would ultimately bring, but nevertheless, he now felt obliged to organise a proper apology (ta'ona), consisting of a gift and a formal speech. When I returned in 1997, he told me that instead of formal matabola, he 'worked' at the sagali feast for his paternal aunt in 1995, approaching the hamlet in mourning demeanour, with a pig and five baskets of yams as pegita (field notes).

For Fortune, such cases cause only a 'sting' as Dobuans "are thickskinned individuals" (1932:57). I cannot agree, because I have frequently observed instances of deep shame (as in the example above) and I learned about elaborate verbal shaming methods that cause a great deal more discomfort than a 'sting'. Terms of reference, for example, can be used sarcastically to 'put shame', to seek revenge for disrespectful behaviour of to'etabutabu-. The example of Manukalai's ali'ali gift to Losina shows that sometimes it can be done so subtly it remains unnoticed, especially when younger people do not have a thorough understanding of the meaning of particular sagali gifts. The insulting character of a sarcastic misuse of kinship terms is evidence of the moral pressure upon individuals to act according to the defined role. This is fundamental for those relationships that are defined as based on 'respect' and sentimental love, as between spouses or a man and his children. When an individual acts as a widow or widower, 'father' or labalaba, it is his or her duty to play the appropriate role, disregarding the actual nature of their
relationship with the deceased person.

Any lapse of mourning respect is sanctioned with shaming techniques that are available on an everyday basis without any exchange of gifts, as by referring to one's 'son' as 'maternal uncle' (wa'a). Wa'adai means 'our maternal uncle' or 'our sister's child' in the inclusive possessive form (-da or -dai) of all kinship terms.\textsuperscript{47} By implication, it accuses a widower or son of acting as though he was a maternal uncle or nephew, one who receives food by inheritance (to'ebwabwale), though he is in fact in the relation of 'giver' (to'etabutabu-). In the same way, a widow who does not obey the mourning rules can be called sinadai (our mother) by the matrilineage of the deceased, a biting criticism of her mourning attitude: "She acts as if she were our mother (i.e. a woman of the same matrilineage) who does not have to give bwabwale to us."

While these shaming mechanisms are used to exercise control over widows and widowers as well as labalaba or male care-givers, the latter relationship is more significant as it offers options for forging close bonds between single matrilineages and their hamlets. As I have shown, labalaba can gain access to paternal resources through the institution of 'substitution' (lo'epa'elu). But the voluntary character of this form of adoption leads to the understanding that apart from the availability of resources the personal qualities of an individual are crucial in any decision to accept a 'substitute'. While labalaba can be adopted, widows and widowers are expelled from the hamlet after the mourning period. No other exchanges take place and only their death triggers a final sequence of feasts. The hamlet of a widow continues to support the deceased spouse's hamlet, but such gifts are no longer regarded as affinal exchanges as they are presented by her children who act as labalaba towards their 'fathers' – a switch in generation terms that indicates the change in power relations from strictly balanced gift exchanges (losusu) between equal hamlets to emotionally charged gifts of tribute (pegita, seudana, esio daita) from children to their 'fathers'. The gifts of labalaba symbolise an affective relationship and sense of

\textsuperscript{47} Fortune mentions the word wadai to refer to an individualistic man (1932:57).
duty towards their 'fathers', a duty that is reinforced through the risk of otherwise being shamed by attracting public criticism. In future events, their 'work' will be rewarded with 'help' from all members of their deceased father's matrilineage. These persons incorporate the father, live in his place and use his land. They corporately engage in a relationship of mutual care, so long as the matrilineage is satisfied with the personal qualities of their labalaba as exemplified by their 'work'.

In practice, the public gaze reinforces 'respectful' behaviour between a man, his wife, and the children of his household, a fragile unit that is only weakly held together by the exercise of self-discipline (alamai'ita) of both spouses, who should cooperate in their distinctive spheres of everyday work to become alawata and esa'esea, 'wealthy and respected'. When a marriage lasts for many years, the children get used to their 'father' and often develop close bonds of affective love, bonds that can last even if the marriage ends in divorce. The 'love between father and son', or more precisely, between a man and the children of his wife, is not only an ideology, a rhetoric and a duty in Dobu. If it becomes real, paternal matrilineages are able to embrace their 'son' and make him part of his father's susu without compromise. This bond of love and friendship, symbolised by oboboma gifts, is mimicked by the logic of pegita gifts, when labalaba return their dead father both physically (body, yams and 'une) and metaphysically (the father's 'work') to his matrilineal heirs.48

The gift of pegita, unlike other Big Gifts, underlines the fundamentally inferior position of labalaba. Like children whining for love, they beg for acceptance, putting themselves into the hands of the to'ebwabwale and maintaining the mourning restrictions for their father that his heirs have determined for them. Gibson's children were released quickly from mourning, and his widow did not have to suffer greatly during her short seclusion in the libu hut. However, after the death of their father, they experienced their father's matrilineage as an ultimate

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48 Fortune mentions an asymmetrical joking relationship between a child and the husbands of his mother's sisters, a child calling such a person 'my navel' (1932:64). This is incorrect according to Dobu informants. Instead of 'my navel' (madigu), he calls such a man 'father' (tamagu). It is likely that Fortune confused the term with madia-, a reciprocal term for stepfather and stepchild that is not widely used (see Macintyre 1983a:362 for Tubetube).
authority that granted their release from restrictions only through gift exchanges and expelled their mother, the widow, after a short time. In contrast to Fortune's view of 'fathers' who mercilessly proceed to kill disrespectful labalaba (1932:53, see epigraph to this chapter), my experience points towards a wide spectrum of possible relationships, ideally based on mutual 'respect'.

My 'sister' told me that her father promised her a valuable bagi when he died, but his brother kept it as the big man of the matrilineage. When he died, however, the bagi was not returned by his children and she is too 'shy' to remind them. She said that it would look as if she suspected them of having stolen the bagi, an impossible accusation between 'fathers' and labalaba, a shameful affair (fieldnotes).

As this example shows, 'shyness', a form of self-induced shame, is not only a sanction but also indicates a self-conscious reflection on morals. The fragile emotional bond between 'fathers' and labalaba is safeguarded by embodied ethics based on 'respect' and love, making a person feel 'shy' or 'ashamed' in contexts like the one quoted above. These ethics insist on the exchange of appropriate gifts to show that their feelings are in line with good manners. This is also apparent when people state that the most shameful experience they can think of would be a 'father's' refusal (called gadiwa'ila) to accept gifts brought to them as labalaba, sending them back with the message "taumi wa e'ai!" ('eat it yourselves!). Such a response would not only cut off all future relationships but also publicly announce the deficient personal ethics of the labalaba.

The Dobu man, it follows, is not 'puzzled' by the matrilineal doctrine. He regards the reproductive side of life as the main 'work' of women (his wives and his sisters) and fulfils his duty towards both his matrilineage and his household by 'working' for them. This 'work' is specifically defined: as a 'loving father' he provides it on an everyday basis, as a brother or maternal uncle he is involved in mortuary feasting and other issues of matrilineal concern. In this latter role, he can provide for his children beyond his death by preparing the ground for his 'namesake' to take over his land rights. This procedure is socially approved as it demonstrates the good manners of all persons involved, their 'respect', ability to maintain self-discipline and willingness to share (amayaba, alamai'ita and oboboma). In this light, the
practiced bond between paternal relatives gives evidence of personal qualities rather than degrees of affection. Dobu men might well be 'detachable husbands' but they are typically not 'detachable fathers'.
CONCLUSION

If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we resemble you in that.

Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, act 3

In this thesis I have tried to show that the ethnographically constructed 'other', as Dobuan, is more similar to 'us' than the previous literature suggested. Similarities and differences can readily be understood when viewed in the light of exchange practice and ideology. The Dobu concept of the person is based on individual as well as 'dividual' dimensions. While individuality, the 'inner' part of persons, eludes direct scrutiny, it can be deduced from ethical precepts and the practice of social exchanges, that is, from activities that are accessible to observation. The close-grained ethnographic data on exchange I have presented give evidence of rational calculation and agency, consistent with an ideology of personhood based on the notion of individual, innate character traits that influence social performance. These traits are constructed as the 'base' of a person. People attempt to show their positively valued traits, simultaneously aiming at hiding negatively valued characteristics. Self-conscious monitoring is required because people, vulnerable to magical seduction, believe that physical appearance depends on morally appropriate conduct.

My approach was based on the intensity of my own involvement in the reciprocal exchange of words, gazes, emotions and other gifts of everyday living. My participation was an apprenticeship in *bubuna* Dobu (the Dobu way of life), exemplified by my efforts to engage in appropriate exchanges and to present myself as a 'good' person. This strategy conforms with the Dobu way of enculturating strangers (see Syme 1985:94ff; Young 1989:110,126), testing an outsider's capabilities and commitment to become a member, however marginal, of their society.

Exchange is always more than the give-and-take of visible things and it permits some access to the 'inner' dimension of a person. Since individual wishes do not
always correspond with ethical rules, self-discipline is a necessary attribute of a 'good' person. 'Work' is the supreme demonstration of self-discipline and therefore a measure of virtuous personal conduct. Exchange, parting with and sacrificing something of value (including one's energy), is 'work' because one has to control one's 'inner' feelings and inclinations of indifference and laziness, greediness and stinginess, hunger and pain, envy or anger, shyness or shame.

Observing and participating in Dobu Islanders' lives and exchange practices gives an intimate view of individual agency in a circumscribed social world. This world consists of places connected by paths and 'owned' by exchange partners. The inhabitants of Dobu manage their individual networks by exchanging a range of gifts, using 'paths' of social relationships that determine the range of footpaths a person can use, the range of hamlets that a person can visit and the range of their resources.

Small gifts, like betelnuts, tobacco and assistance in daily chores, are evidence of proper everyday conduct and create 'small paths'. These gifts test a person's ability to 'keep a straight back', to be happy and industrious yet humble and respectful. Dobu people are required to 'stay at home and mind their own business'; to refrain from 'useless wandering'. This ethic restricts the sphere of everyday life to relatively few places and people, creating social pressure to conform and to be 'good', hard-working and happy. The intensity of this pressure is particularly obvious when individuals are expected to share when they wish to keep things for themselves. Strategies of hiding everyday wealth, or avoiding hard work by pretending to be sick, reflect the tensions between the 'inner' and 'outer' dimensions of persons. Such strategies are nonetheless evidence of agency and choice: persons are multiply linked and can activate relations of mutual help by conforming to the ethics of exchange, thereby extending their world and gaining more options to spend time with people they like and devote themselves to tasks that match their interests and talents.

Over the years, the paths created by small gifts will change. They are not usually dependable unless a person invests more 'work' in their maintenance. In order to
cement interpersonal relationships, persons use Big Gifts, symbols of their accumulated power. By parting with valuables of a higher order, *kula* valuables, pigs and large yams, individuals make statements about their personalities and achievements. Since Big Gifts are linked with magical knowledge, they embody the power of such knowledge, passed down the generations to those who deserve it because they are 'good'.

This ideology requires individuals to pay 'respect' to elders, affines, paternal relatives and guests (such as *kula* partners). Attitudes of 'respect' are based on self-discipline and friendliness. Since individuals are torn between selfish desires and moral requirements, risking public sanctions of shame when following illegitimate desires (such as privately feasting on delicacies or committing adultery), they fear detection. Such fear is easily understood in the light of implicit sanctions of illness and death caused by witches, sorcerers, and God. As I argued, hamlet life is characterised by a panoptic form of perpetual surveillance. As people attempt to keep their valuables hidden to avoid sharing them, they also try to hide their selfish thoughts and feelings to avoid being punished for them. The dangers of 'negative exchange' create an atmosphere of distrust under a surface that is composed of friendly smiles. Although Dobu people are not pathological ('paranoid'), their belief in the retributive power of witches and sorcerers is conductive to self-conscious monitoring of behaviour. From a Dobu point of view, the social pressure these beliefs generate is beneficial as it forces individuals to be well-mannered and to contribute to overall friendly ('respectful') interactions within residence groups and beyond.

In order to be considered 'good', knowing the 'names of gifts' is essential. The terms for exchanges constitute charts that indicate the context for gifts, prescribe the modalities of repayments and serve as mnemonic devices for remembering debts. The symbolism inherent in 'named gifts' creates categories for social interaction, as occurs in most (if not all) cultures. My mother, for example, rejected the idea of Mother's Day gifts, because "you cannot show gratitude for my work just once a year." Birthday presents, on the other hand, annually celebrate an individual's
existence without reference to work, as they are subject to balanced reciprocity. Christmas gifts are directly exchanged and one aims at balance. These gifts carry different symbolic meanings and require different strategies, and although they are all exchanged at prescribed dates that might appear randomly scheduled to an outsider, it is crucial for good social relations to make the right present at the right time. In practice, however, it often happens that such exchanges fail to be satisfactory.

Reciprocity, it follows, is not a "mechanical law" (to use Bourdieu's expression [1977:9]). In Dobu, it is embedded in manifold types of exchange, their symbolic connotations and corresponding interpretations of ethics. In everyday practice, reciprocity depends on individual feelings and strategies and appears in a variety of forms, as negative exchange as well as social profit (prestige and physical well-being). The Dobu vernacular has no specific term for reciprocity; maisa or e'isa refer to countergifts as well as to verbal replies and social sanctions, to notions of interaction rather than to equivalence.

In Dobu, production, distribution and consumption are not separate categories of exchange but overlapping in the way they are perceived: as 'work', 'help', or expressions of shame or anger, domination or subordination. Exchange creates history, as in food production and informal distribution that defines the seasons of the year, in kula that highlights events of personal success or failure, or sagali feasts that mark the change of generations. As 'work', exchange marks the pulse of time and builds paths in space.

As I have shown throughout this thesis, 'names of gifts' are a highly complex and socially significant matter in Dobu. It is important to note, however, that this complexity seems to be on the decline as affinal exchanges are becoming more infrequent and those families who live in urban areas fail to teach the importance of mortuary gifts to their children. As some of the terms for gift giving seem to be falling into disuse, strategies for interpersonal bonding and the expression of conflict might also change. The social importance of 'work' might in future be redefined with respect to the increasing appreciation of monetary wealth and its
uses and the adoption of *dimdim* ways of life. The social value of work (or labour), however, as an expression of personality and goodwill, continues to form a basis for the construction of kinship and uxorilocal residence.

'The best workmen in Papua' (Young 1983c), it could be argued, were cherished for their stamina, obedience and goodwill because the Dobu 'work ethic' was recognisably similar to that of their masters. In some ways, the Dobu concept of 'work' resembles the Protestant ethic as analysed by Max Weber (1904-1905). Like Calvinists, Dobu people embrace the virtue of self-denial for deferred personal benefit and maintain humble attitudes while working hard. Both expect rewards from their self-restraint in the form of wealth, health and happiness; both detest arrogance and 'showing-off' (*gagasa*) and believe in the idea of punishment through a panoptic force that causes misfortune, illness and death.

The superior indulgence of the *seigneur* and the parvenu ostentation of the *nouveau riche* are equally detestable to asceticism. But, on the other hand, it has the highest ethical appreciation of the sober, middle-class, self-made man. 'God blesseth His trade' is a stock remark about those good men who had successfully followed the divine hints. The whole power of the God of the Old Testament, who rewards His people for their obedience in this life, necessarily exercised a similar influence on the Puritan... (Weber 1958:163)

The ideological background of these similar ethical standards is, of course, hardly comparable. For Dobu people, material wealth was proof of personal qualities as well as a means to gain political influence and to expand personal space through distribution. Calvinists regarded it as a means of answering God's calling and a strategy for salvation. While Calvinists were a part of a hierarchical structure, mostly from the mercantile "middle class", Dobu society is politically egalitarian in the sense that individual effort and personality determines a person's influence. As

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such, Dobu leaders have to secure the support of their followers (by displaying their power and formally distributing it) while Calvinists had no access to political leadership. Dobu ethics favour an egalitarian distribution of wealth (so that "everybody can be happy") while Calvinists sought to create new wealth, and ultimately salvation, by reinvesting their profits into expanding economic enterprises.

While founded on entirely different historical circumstances and ideologies, both Calvinists and Dobu people constructed a reflexive relation between an ascetic lifestyle and material success. 'Good' character shines through an individual's 'work' and is reflected in his or her 'beauty'. As humans cannot always conform to such ethics nor remain healthy all their lives, they carry the burden of secret misbehaviour and expect punishment; they interpret misfortune as reprisal for bad conduct. These parallels could well have facilitated the conversion to Christianity by the Wesleyan Methodists, who Weber referred to as "the Anglo-American movement corresponding to Continental Pietism" (1958:139).

The development debate would classify Dobu Islanders as 'underdeveloped rurals', lacking access to basic facilities such as health, education and infrastructure. In fact, much could be done to improve the islanders' most basic needs, such as access to fresh water, hospitals and medicine. Conditions for school children are far below Western standards, 'drop-outs' mostly return home to begin subsistence gardening and forget what they learned at school. Apart from outrigger-canoes, all means of transport are expensive and unreliable; footpaths on Dobu are rough and some hamlet clusters virtually inaccessible in heavy rain or at high tide. It has never been any better on Dobu, though, and most people seem not to be too concerned. There is little motivation to improve everyday life by, for example, building safe chicken huts, drum ovens or digging and cementing wells.

As I have shown, money sits uneasily between the world system and local wealth.

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On Dobu, the use of money has to follow the egalitarian ethic while the world system is hierarchical. New gender roles are in dissonance with the notions of 'respect' and 'work'. The misconception that 'Westerners don't work', acquired from video films, soap operas, advertisements and visiting tourists, leads people to idealise dimdim life as a heaven of luxury without effort or risk (witchcraft). Since Dobu Islanders have strong links with relatives who live and work in urban areas, there is a constant flow to and from Dobu, of retired individuals searching for a place to live on Dobu and of young, educated men and women who leave but retain bonds with their home island. Others have returned after they divorced, developed health disorders, went bankrupt or became wanted criminals. Those who live in towns contribute to the spreading of ideas that mortuary feasts are a sign of backwardness, that men oppress and that women are in need of liberation.

My thesis has attempted to deconstruct Fortune's image of the Dobuan. Although it has explored the same domains of life as Sorcerers, the features that were formerly associated with Dobuans appear in a different light. In fact, the ethics of exchange neither point to exceptional treacherousness nor to exotic otherness. Self-discipline, friendliness and 'respect' seem to be requirements of social life that are not confined to Dobu. Neither are they particularly 'Melanesian'; I found no evidence of any fundamental difference between 'them' and myself (a nominal Protestant) as postulated in the theoretical model of Marilyn Strathern. 'Being there' gave me access to an understanding of their worldview that was possible only because it was grounded in notions of similarity: "As if a dimdim was not a tomota...."

Contemporary Dobu is part of the world economy as well as a unique culture with its own peculiarities of gift exchange. As elsewhere, Dobu individuals try to keep-while-giving, to follow their ambitions, to take revenge when offended, to face challenges and to make friends and foes. Some like adventures and travel while others prefer to stay at home. As elsewhere, Dobu Islanders feel shame and anger, envy and sentimental love; and as everywhere, the price of love is grief.
Appendices

1. List of words for 'inner' states
2. Transcript and translation of the myth Gagasa be Amayaba
3. List of affinal exchanges
4. List of yam cultivars ('una')
5. List of sources for cash other than remittances
6. Diagram: The year (Tubudao idi tuta)
7. Transcript of the myth "Kasabwaibwaileta and bagi Goma'alakedakeda"
8. Table of contributions of each household to the sagali feast in Losina
9. Bibliography
10. Plates
### Appendix 1: Words for 'inner' states

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dobu</th>
<th>Literally</th>
<th>English</th>
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<td>a- lotona mwa'adega</td>
<td>his/her-feeling-how</td>
<td>horny, to feel sexy</td>
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<td>alamai'ita</td>
<td>carry-with-care</td>
<td>self-control, endurance, long suffering</td>
</tr>
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<td>amayaba</td>
<td></td>
<td>to respect, respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>ate-i 'uya'uya</td>
<td>liver is hurting</td>
<td>deep sadness, mourning, grief, heartache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ate'eidaida</td>
<td>liver-crushed</td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ate'ubu'ubu</td>
<td>liver-deceive</td>
<td>to worry about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ategu</td>
<td>liver-my</td>
<td>my darling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atenua'ole'ole</td>
<td>'heart'-'mind'-pity</td>
<td>compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atepe'ala</td>
<td>liver-hard</td>
<td>strong, to withstand influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atepatu</td>
<td>liver-strong</td>
<td>brave, courageous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bobo'a-</td>
<td></td>
<td>fine, well, good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>botana</td>
<td></td>
<td>hunger, appetite, famine time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bulolowa</td>
<td></td>
<td>angry, anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dagegela</td>
<td></td>
<td>greedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deba'ose</td>
<td>head-</td>
<td>stingy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deba-i sakosakowasi</td>
<td>head-going-around</td>
<td>giddy, dizzy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esinua</td>
<td>also-'mind'</td>
<td>to choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e'ipi'ipi</td>
<td></td>
<td>jealous, envious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emisa</td>
<td></td>
<td>trust, rely upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gagasa</td>
<td></td>
<td>show off, proud, boastful, arrogant</td>
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<tr>
<td>gamwasoala</td>
<td>stomach-fury/chaos,</td>
<td>angry, upset, annoyed, furious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geyanua-</td>
<td>not-'mind'</td>
<td>not to like, desire, wish, want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwasa, nadiwala</td>
<td></td>
<td>lassitude after someone left the hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwau'a'ala</td>
<td>spine- very-straight</td>
<td>excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwaugu'itoyase, also guitoyasa, gwautoyasa</td>
<td>my back is stiff</td>
<td>lazy, unmotivated, bored, listless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwusuo'ala</td>
<td>back-carry</td>
<td>happy, satisfied, relieved, gay, glad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabalea-</td>
<td></td>
<td>mentally disordered, crazy, mad,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lausi-</td>
<td></td>
<td>to poison, drug-induced effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le'oasa</td>
<td></td>
<td>sickness, illness, sick or ill, disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lo'ame'ame</td>
<td></td>
<td>fed up, tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lotona</td>
<td></td>
<td>feeling, taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maina</td>
<td></td>
<td>smell, odor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mata'eno'eno</td>
<td>eye-is-sleeping</td>
<td>tired, sleepy</td>
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<tr>
<td>matabalabala</td>
<td>eyes-go-across</td>
<td>to flirt, to lust for</td>
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<tr>
<td>matasabu</td>
<td>eye-tear</td>
<td>shaming, to humiliate</td>
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<tr>
<td>mwagwamwagwa</td>
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<td>tasty, delicious</td>
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<td><strong>mwalatoi</strong></td>
<td><strong>meaning</strong></td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mwa</strong></td>
<td>understanding, knowledge</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mwa</strong></td>
<td>heaviness</td>
<td>weight, pregnancy, sorrow, problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mwa</strong></td>
<td>stench, stink</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>to hear, listen, understand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua'</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-bad</td>
<td>angry, upset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to uproot-like-a-tree</td>
<td>repent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-from-above</td>
<td>hypocrisy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to care</td>
<td>to remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to look-after</td>
<td>to care for, to feel responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to return</td>
<td>to think about the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to build-a-fire</td>
<td>pity, mercy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua-i</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-is-wandering</td>
<td>wondering, amazement, confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuaibu</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-blind</td>
<td>dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-bitter</td>
<td>bitter/sour minded, resentful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nua</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-swallow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nualoba, nuanai</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to find, 'mind'-hot</td>
<td>to remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuamanwa</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to descend</td>
<td>humble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuamanwa</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-heavy</td>
<td>sadness, disappointment, grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuana</strong></td>
<td>to think, want, plan, wish, sexual desire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuapota</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-clogged</td>
<td>stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuasiwaloa</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-quiet</td>
<td>peace of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuatu'e</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-going up, 'mind'-high</td>
<td>boastful, conceited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuamwataya</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-long-like-snake</td>
<td>to forget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuaseyana</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-to move-out</td>
<td>generous, thoughtful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nualu</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-bone</td>
<td>to forget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuayaina</strong></td>
<td>'mind'-firm</td>
<td>to think intensely, to hope, to wonder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>oboboma</strong></td>
<td>care, love, friendship, voluntary help, gift</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>omfiamfia</strong></td>
<td>to feel ashamed, embarrassed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>oopala, debopala</strong></td>
<td>body-hard, head-hard</td>
<td>big headed, stubborn, naughty, wilful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>panaita</strong></td>
<td>used to someone or something</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sena</strong></td>
<td>resentful, willing to kill oneself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sinopu</strong></td>
<td>wisdom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tagwala</strong></td>
<td>to agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>to'umali</strong></td>
<td>bad, dangerous, ugly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uya</strong></td>
<td>pain, ache, hurt, grief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>waivai</strong></td>
<td>power, strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>yaleyale</strong></td>
<td>faith, trust</td>
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</table>
Appendix 2: Original text and translation of Amayaba be Gagasa
(as told by Saemi of Sanaloa)

Gagasa be Amayaba


Enega wate i neya i abala Aneya. Enega i talaloged, kalimana nigeya ta da epitiena. I enoapwesa ga wate i eya. I tenaya ta enega wate i bwaudolo. I gwae: "Ei, niba, mwa ta tauya?" "Ya, tuga dabalaya nuagu i ewena ga siwalowa ga ya eneyaneya, tuga ya eneyaneya besobeso ya tauya." I gwae: "O, bobo’ana. Ega umu naoyu salu nina totenaya, nate ena ebweuna wate kaiyele i miami, ta kaiyale nina eguma i loina, enana maibo'ana u nono." Enega i gwae: "O, bobo’ana." "Ee ga es i neya, neya neya neya enega es eee ga enega esi Sawaua na i lugu.

I nao, kaiyale nina i ta bagulaya. Bagulaya i toutauya, ta enega waga i lisina. Waga i lisina ta i laga dabala i too. I tootoolo ta i dunewed. I sanatauyu aena ubuswana esido eee ena kaiyale nina i iyanoduwa. Bagulega i memai. Enega tai nina i autai. Ana esana sana Amayaba. I autai ga i tauya tayu tayu tayu yae ga es i kaiyale nina i memai i lobena edaya. Enega i gwae: "Tubugu, u me'e be imu koda ya ali!" Enega ina kodo i ebw’ena ga i alena. I alena ta enega i gwae: "Me’e be wate imu kaiwe ya ali!" Ina kaiwe i alena ga es i ma’iana si mai ga si ta asaya. Si nao ga si sa’uya eee, enega i gwae: "O, tubugu, aada masula u da guinuy. Ta esi i gwae: "Bobo’ana." I nao ga naipi i ewena i nao ga masula i etagonina. Etagonina manimanina ga i e’ulena ga i wawena ga i towatowa enega wate kaiyale nina i gwae: "O, tubugu! U da nao be ida asa u da siiyayoni!" Kaiyale nina i loina, i nao ga wate tai nina i siyayowa.

I siyayowa ga i gumwala ta i gwae: "O, tubugu, u da nao be igu bwasi u da ebwela) be u da e’esiwegu!" Enega kaiyale nina ina loina maibo’ana tuga tai nina i mulimuliye gwama nina. I nua ga ina bwasi i etowena ga i bwelina ga i tauya ga i esiwena ta i mai ga i alenamo ga i nao ga i esiwen. I esiwen ga i gumwala ta enega i tauvelona (gleyadayadena) ga i alina, i me’ena ga i sa’unaya ina ebemia ena. I sa’unaya eee enega i gwae: "O, tubugu, aada masula u da guinue be ta da 'a" Enega esi masula i esikalina ga i mai ga tebolo ena. Tebolo ena si e’ai ta enega i ‘emwa’emwasala ena. I gwae: "Ta e’ai ta ta ‘emwa’emwasala."
Enega tai nina i gwae: "Bobo'ana." Enega si e'ai si 'emwa'emwasala. I gwae: "Gete ta a'ai be i gugumwala u nao be gote niu nina u mwela, kekiliwe. U mwela be u tautauya be alana ta ara gamwagamwanina ta posisina ta gamwagamwanega ebweuna u gitaga. Be u mwa'uta. Geya'abo u laulaumwa'ute ta u mwa'utenamo. Enega i gwae: "O, bobo'ana."

Si 'ai ga i gumwala enega i toolo ga esi i nao ga niu nina i mwelena. I nao ga alana, ala gamwagamwanina ta posisina ta enega gamwagamwanega ebweuna i gitagenena. I gitagenena ga i mwa'utenama. Enega i gwae: "Tubugu, mwaao enaya ya sa'u?" I gwae: "U owa be u ta ga imu wagaya u sa'. Imu waga kulinginaya u sa'u. U sa'u ta enega u gegelu. U gegelu be u neyaneya, u tauta eee, be eguma one (nuganuganina) alapwasi geya'abo u sanasana'ila. Two (eluwenena) alapwasi, geya'abo u sanasana'ila. three (etonina) alapwasi u sanaila. I gwae: "Eee, bobo'ana."

Si gelu. I gelu ga neya neya neya neya neya neya neya neya eee i alapwasi. I alapwasiya, nigeya i sanasana'ila. Wate i talalaga ga i alapwasiya, nigeya i sanasana'ila. Enega i talalagaya ta sulu i alapwasiya, nate i sana'ila. I sanasana'ila - waine, nigeya e'etete. Nadigega dimdim nina gete ma'edai ta miamia, nadigega waine ana ita i apwesa. Enega i itena ta i da gwauz'ola, i gwae: "O, mwanegu ni'atu ya lobena." Ta esi tuga neya i sa'una ta i gila ga waine i alinamo i me'ena ga nuganinaya i sa'una ta neya i lomwa'utenaya, idi asaya si lugu.

Si nao ga si luguya ta tamana be sinana si pilipilidoloma ta tasina Gagasa. Si pilidolo ga si sanasananaoya - ni'atu si gwae"Eee! Mwaao enega waine u ewena?" Tai nina nigeya i da ona. Ana esana sana Amayaba. I gwae: "Ja, tuga ya tayta ga ya adadana, ebweuna kaiyale ena ga ina waine i ebwa'egu." Eee nate enega ni'atu Gagasa i gwae: "Ooh! Gibwai, abo'agu igu tuta. Na, gibwai ya tautauya, ebwe u waine i mwa'egeni ya ewa be ya me'e. Iiih, tumada, waine gete oba'obana. Na, gibwai nina ya tataya ga wate ya ta be mwanegu ya ewa be ya me'e."


Aneya i nao ga salu nina ena i lotueya ta enega i sanasanalagaya anua gete kalimana. I eyala wate salana. Enega "E, niba, nate batua mwaao?" "Ja! Ni'atu ya

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I talabala Sawaunaa ga esi i lugu ga ina waga i lisi ai'a'ilina dabalaya gete i sa'unaya, i tootoolo ta i lo'itadadana. I sanata eee kaiyale nina wadawadaema ni'atu i ta ga i lobagula ga wate i naba ga i mema. Kaiwe i alinaya ta i naba. I itena ga nigeya siewesiewenaya be i ta be i lemei. Ana esana sana Gagasa. Ta i nao ga i toolo stakim (egogona) ga ta esi sanata ga tuga i dunedunei. Kaiyale nina i taeume taeume taeume taeume eee ga esi selabenaya ga i gwaie: "O, tubugu! U da mai be kodo u da nabai be kaiwe u da ali be ta da laga! Anuaya!" "Ja!! Yabweya ya maiya nigeya wate lema manuna! Nigeya kodo manuna sabi naba ya memai, nigeya kaiwe sabi alina. Yabweya ya maiya mwanegu manuna. Mwanegu manuna ya mai." Ga esi i gwaie: "O, bobo'ana!"

Ta kaiyale ma'iana si laga. Si laga ga esi kaiyale nina i sa'u ga si ewaiaiata ga i gumwala ta i gwaie: "O, tubugu! U da mai be aada e'ai u da guiguinue ta ya da ewaiaata." "Ja!! Yabweya nigeya guinue e'ai manuna ya memai. Yabweya ya maiya mwanegu manuna!" Enega i ona "O, bobo'ana." Ta nate atua i ona limana be i gumwala be mulliga i guinue guinue nidi. Ga esi i mimiana ga i gwaie: "O, tubugu!" I nai ga e'ai i guinuega ga i meso ga i sa'un ga i mimai, tai nina. Ta i ona limana ben ta i guinue. "Tubugu, u da mai be igu kaiyai u da ebwela be ya da esiwe." "Ooh, yabweya nigeya ya da maiya kaiyai sabi ebwela manuna, yabweya ya maiya mwanegu manuna!"

Ga esi i nao ga ina kaiyai nina i ebwelen ga i nao ga i alinamo ga i nao ga i esiwena. I tauwelona ga i me'ena ga i sa'unaya ta enega i gwaie: "O, tubugu! U mai be aada masula u guinue be ta e'ai ta enega ta emwa'emwasala!" Ga esi i nao ga masula i alinama i mai ga i esikalena i tebolona (gibubuna) ga si e'ai ta enega si emwa'emwasala. I gwaie: "Gete ta a'a be i gugumwala enega u nanao be gote niu nina u mwela. Be posisina i mimia, ala gamwagamwanina i mimia ta alana gete saolina, atua nadigega gwanegwanina ga nata tauna ebwena u ewa be u mwautenama." I gwaie: "O, bobo'ana." Si ai ga atua nigeya e'ai i losalowa ta i gimiatoolu. "Ya nao be niu ya mwela. Mwanegu manuna."

I nao ga niu i mwelena ga i ta ga ebwena alanega i gitagen. Nate sana nia i e'onenega ga i nonono. Nate gwanegwandaga ga esena i mwa'utenama. I mwa'utenama, "Tubugu, mwa'o ya sa'u?" I gwaie: "U dolo be imu wagaya u sa'u. U sa'u be enega u gegerlu." I nai ga esi ina wagaya i usena. I usenaya ga nata ana neya i alina ga i nai, ina waga i pelena ga i gelu. I gelu ga i gwaie: "U talanao be nate eguma bwagabwagaya i alapwasi one - geya'abo u sanasana'ila. Alapwasi two - geya'abo u sanasana'ila. Etonina enaya u sana'ila."

I gwaie: "O!" Ga esi i lomwa'utena. I neya neya neya neya neya neya neya neyaa gee ga esi ni'atu bwagabwagaya ta i alapwasi. One - nigeya i sanasana'ila. I neya neya neya neya eee ga i alapwasi two - nigeya three i lobaloba alapwasi ga tuga two
enaya ta i gimisana'ilä. I sanasana'iläya – tooliya tooliya, kaiyale segwasegwana ana ita tuga to'uto'umali ai'ailina, matana putaputa yaitai, tuga ana ita gadigadilulu ai'ailina, i sana'ilä ga i itena tuga ni'atu i gamwaso'ala. "U sobu!" I gwae: "U sobu!" Nate enega "U sosobu! Geyanuagu ya ita'itayo!"

Enega esi ni'atu i gamwaso'ala ga neya i ewenaya, neya enega si e'upwa be si bwabwawa. Si ewa, si ewa eee ga waga si bonina. Waga si bonina ga ni'atu si sanakawaudena (sanakabobo), ni'atu waine i ewaiwai ta tai i ewaiwai, aena i loemwamwasi. I gwae: "Ya loemwamwasi, nigeiya igu nuanua! Tumada, oyo gete waine to'umaliyo, gete welavelabaniyo!" I náo ga nate, nate nigeiya, ida tai i ewaiwai, nigeiya e'etete. Aena gota mane nadigega be i unui ta ida waine nina sana welabana. Nate waine i nuanua ewaiwai nate waga tuga si buibuidadane. Si ewaena, si e'upwatootoolo si ewaedi si ewaedi ga si tube oya'a ina asaya.

Si tubeooya'a ga esı tamana be sinana si doloma ga si sanasanaya'a matasidia. Sitefout nidi si doloma tauna mwanawanena, tamana be sinana mwanediao si sanasananaya, ta tamana i gwae: "Ei, u lomanini, waine nate u ta be u sa! Nate mane enega waine u ewena ga u me'ene'e?" Enega i gwae: "Tauna nate i kabo gete to'umalina i ebwa'egu waine ya me'ena." Aena goti paima nadigega, i gwae: "Lowa u wai ga igu asega u usegu ga u me'eguya imu asaya bada tuga ta miimi." I lagaena ga tuga ma'iana. Ta tai nina abo i toluguya iabe boiboiya i loapwesama geyanuana. Ta waine bada, tuga ana nuanwat. Ta tanisana lowa ebweu i nugarinaya ebweu tasina i aina ga i nugarinama, tanisana manuna nuana i nuanuamwau. Enega mana Gagasa nina eguma i etoluguya mitawaya be i mamai tuga i ununamo mwanenena. Nigeiya aena ma'iana si mialuwa, nigeiya ma'iana si enolawa, nate tuga ina ebemiya dumadumana ta Gagasa tuga sai abawesobeso namo. Enega ebweu waine i nuanuamwau tanisana manuna.

Eee, enega ebweu tuta matasinena si le'oasa kabokabo. Si le'oasa kabokabo ga si eno'eno ta sinadina mwanawanena nate be tamadina Gagasa nina niaena si etoluguya ga i taunya. Sinadina be tamadia si taunya wate mitawaya ta manatudina si taunya, Amayaba ma'edia si taunya, ta nata matasina siteluwa waine nina. Si miamiana ga i gumwalamaya, tuga goti ida yakwaiye nigeiya mwalatoninamo, mwao si taunya. Ni'atu si taunya sinadina ena, idi asaya. Ta bada asa daisina. Ta enega nata egamu si ta ga mitawaya ni'atu si adadana ta adi lotona ni'atu nigeiya bobo'ana. Sai, Amayaba wate ana lotona nigeiya bobo'ana, mwanena ni'atu i taunya. Si apwesama, asa kakae. Si pilite anuaya, nigeiya. Si dolo le'away, si ebesa, nigeiya. Si nato goti mitawaya si bwau, nigeiya. Ni'atu si ta ida asaya. Enega ni'atu Amayaba nuana i mwao, mwanena manuna. Ga nigeiya i da 'ai. Tuga i nuanuamwau asiata ebweuna ebweuna. Ta Gagasa nate i ona "Tua nada! Yabweya geyanuagu! Manuna ya ta ga waine bobo'ana tumada oyo lowa u ta ga waine ga u me'ena, ta yabweya ya tautauya ga to'umalina ya yaina ga ya me'ena, enega geyanuagu, tua nada!" Tauna goti geyanuana ta Amayaba mwanena manuna i e'ate'uuya'uya. Enega si miamiana eee, ga si miamwamwasa.
Neda bubune kalakea sopile! Sopisopile ga ... Maikeli debanaya.
Gagasa and Amayaba

Once a couple had two sons. One was called Gagasa (Show-off), the other was called Amayaba (Respect). One morning, Amayaba packed his fishing gear and paddled out to the small islands. As he arrived at the island of Kaluwana he saw a huge heron, as big as a house, who was sitting in the sun warming himself up. Amayaba went ashore and the bird asked him: “Hey, cross cousin, where are you off to?” He replied: “Ah, I am just paddling around. The nice calm day has tempted me and I just paddle around.” The bird said: “Yes, that’s fine. If you go on this direction you will find something nice. On one of the islands.”

Then he went across to the island of Aneya. When he went ashore, a giant crab was lying on the beach, enjoying the sunlight. When the crab saw him, it called out: “Hey, cross cousin, where are you off to?” He replied: “Oh no, I was attracted by the low tide and the calm day and so I just paddle around for nothing.” The crab said: “Yes, that’s fine. But if you go further to that island over there you will meet an old woman. And if she demands something you must obey.” Amayaba answered: “All right.” Then he took off and after a long time he reached the island of Sawa’una.

When he arrived the old woman was in her garden. He pulled up the canoe and waded ashore, looking out for her. She was walking home from the garden and he could see her at the point of the island. So the young man rushed to meet the old woman - his manners were like his name. When he finally reached her on the path he said: “Grandmother, let me carry your basket!” So he took her basket onto his shoulder and said: “Let me also carry your firewood!” He carried them to her hamlet. When they arrived he put the burdens down and offered: “Grandmother, let me cook our food!” She said: “You may cook then.” So he sat down, took his knife and quickly peeled the vegetables. He half cooked them then poured coconut cream on top, and left them cook fully. The old woman came along and said: “My grandson, go and sweep the hamlet!” The young man did what she said and swept the place clean.

After he finished sweeping the old woman said: “My grandson, come and heat up water and help me to wash!” The young man did exactly what she wanted: he boiled some water, went and washed himself, then carried her over and helped her to wash and to dry herself, then carried her back to her sitting place. When he sat her down she said: “My grandson, dish out our food so that we can eat.” So he dished out the food and they sat down at the table. When they were seated she announced: “Let us eat first and tell stories afterwards.”

The young man agreed and after they finished eating they started to talk. She said: “When your food is finished you go over there and climb that coconut palm with the green nuts on it. Go up to the sprouting bud, and in the middle you will find some old coconuts. Pick the one that grows in the middle and climb down. Do not
throw the coconut down but carry it with you.” So he said: “All right.”

Amayaba finished his meal and climbed the coconut palm. He got the correct coconut out of the middle of old coconuts right in the middle of the fresh bud. He carried it down and asked: “Grandmother, where shall I put it?” She replied: “Take it and put it into your canoe. Put it in the back and then paddle off. Just go, and when you hear an explosion do not turn around. Not the first time, not the second time, but the third time you can turn around and look. He said: “That will be done.”

He took off and paddled for a long time until something exploded behind him. However, he did not turn around. As he paddled on there was a second explosion behind him, but he did not turn around. He paddled on and when the green coconut exploded for the third time he turned around and looked. He saw a woman, so beautiful and gorgeous that words can’t tell. So he looked at her and became very happy and said: “Oh yes, I have found my wife.” He put his paddle down, lifted the woman up and made her sit in the front of the canoe. Then he paddled until they arrived at his home beach.

When they arrived on the beach, his parents and his brother Gagasa came running down. When they saw them his parents asked: “Son, from where did you bring this woman?” But he would not tell. His manners were just like his name (full of respect). He only said: “Well, when I was out I met an old lady and she gave me one of her daughters.” Upon hearing this, his brother Gagasa boasted: “Ah, is that so? Then I will go tomorrow and get myself a wife like yours. I will take her and bring her here. Ihh, this woman is truly pretty. Tomorrow it is my turn and I will take and bring my wife home, too!

So the next morning Gagasa set off. He took his canoe, put inside his fishing gear and paddle, pushed the boat into the sea and paddled off. He paddled fast and reached the island of Karuwana. As he reached the shore, the huge heron was enjoying the morning sun. The bird called: “Hello, cross cousin, what are you up to this morning?” “Shut up, will you! Who wants you anyway?” His name was like his manners (no respect). “Who wants you? With your ugly long beak and legs, I don’t want you to call me from the beach. Shut up!” “Then go,” said the bird. So he paddled away and went on until he reached the island of Aneya.

At Aneya he disembarked and when he looked around he saw the giant crab, bathing in the sun. The crab greeted him: “Hello, cross cousin, where are you going today?” “Shut up, will you! I have said it already once today. I do not want people to call me. You are so ugly, your back and claws are so wide! I do not want to see your ugliness any longer! That’s it.” “Then go,” said the crab. He paddled away and after a time he too arrived at the island of Sawa’una.

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¹ That is, not mention that she must be the daughter of a witch after the way she appeared.
He pulled his canoe up on Sawa'una and then took a look around. He soon discovered the old woman, who had just finished her gardening work and was carrying her basket on her head as she walked home, carrying her firewood too. He saw her but he did not offer to help her. His manners were like his name. He just stood there, waiting for her to come closer, watching her as she carried her burden along the path. When she reached him she said: “My grandson, carry my basket and my firewood back to the house!” “Ha! I didn’t come here to carry baskets or firewood. I didn’t come to help you at all! I came just to get my wife! I came for my woman. Do you understand?” The old woman replied: “Yes, I do.”

So they walked to her hamlet. She put down her burden and regained her breath, then she said: “My grandson, prepare our dinner while I have a rest.” “Enough! I said I didn’t come for work but to get my wife!” So she said: “I see.” But after refusing so rudely he finally did the work for her and prepared the food. When it was cooked she called him: “My grandson! Come here and prepare some hot water for me to wash!” As before, he replied harshly: “Ha, I told you, I didn’t come here to heat up water, I came to get my wife!” But again, he finally prepared her bath, carried her over and helped her to wash. He rubbed her dry and carried her back and she said: “My grandson, come and dish out our food so that we can eat first and have a talk afterwards.”

He came with the food and dished it out and they sat down at the table and ate. She said: “Now we eat and when we have finished you go over there and climb this coconut tree over there. And next to that old coconut up there next to the middle budding branch which is almost ripe, one of the ripe coconuts you shall pick and bring down.” He said: “All right.” They ate and he did not even finish his food before he got up and climbed up the palm tree. “I go over there and grab the coconut. For my wife.”

So he climbed up and took the one that the old woman had told him to pick, the ripe one. When he brought it down he asked: “Grandmother, where shall I put it?” She replied: “Put it into your canoe and go.” He put the coconut into his canoe and took his paddle, pushed the boat into the sea and set off. While he was setting into the canoe, the old woman said: “Paddle away but do not turn around when the coconut explodes for the first and second time. Turn round and look when it explodes for the third time.”

He said: “Fine.” And he left. He paddled for a long while until finally the coconut exploded for the first time. But he did not turn around. He paddled on and on, and when he heard the second explosion he turned around. He did not wait for the third explosion. When he turned around he saw the fattest, biggest old woman, with white hair and incredibly ugly. Her eyes were infected and full of pus; in short: she looked disgusting. As he looked at her he became very angry. “Jump out!” he shouted, “Jump out!” And again he yelled: “You jump out, will you! I don’t want to see you any longer!”

The woman became angry, too, and they started fighting with the paddles. They
were fighting so fiercely that the canoe capsized and turned upside down. Both lost their strength and it looked as if both would drown. He yelled: “I am dying, I don’t want to! Damn it, you are a disgusting woman, a real witch!” He was losing strength while trying to turn the canoe over, but he did not succeed. She thought she’d wait unless he killed her. But this woman was a powerful witch, and when she felt he was weak she just turned the canoe over. And they started fighting again, standing in the canoe, and they did not stop fighting until they reached his beach and both swam ashore.

As they arrived his parents and his brother with his wife came down to the beach. His father said: “Hey, come up and show us your wife. Is this the woman you went to get?” He replied: “The old woman has deceived me and given me this terrible woman.” He tried to chase her away again but she said: “You came to pick me up from my hamlet and you have brought me here, so we have to stay together.” She went up to the hamlet and just stayed with him.

But this man never went to the garden with her, never returned to the village at night. He did not want her and the woman just stayed sad and alone in the hamlet. Her sister, the one who had come before her, sympathised with her. When Gagasa came back from the bush he used to hit her all the time. They never sat together, they did not sleep together, both had their separate sleeping places and Gagasa kept on scolding her as well. So the other woman felt sorry for her abused sister.

One day both sisters pretended to be sick. They said that they were sick and would stay at home sleeping while the parents, Gagasa and Amayaba went out together. The two sisters waited and when all was quiet they went away for good and nobody saw them. They went home to their mother, to their own hamlet. And they left their husbands’ hamlet empty. Those people who were in the bush felt unsettled and had uneasy feelings. And Amayaba should have had bad feelings as his beloved wife left him, too. They arrived in the hamlet, nobody there. They looked inside the houses, but nobody. They went down to the beach, searching, but nothing. They called into the bush, no answer. So Amayaba became very sad for his wife who had left him. He did not feel like eating and just felt sad one day after the other. Gagasa said: “Never mind! I did not want her anyway. I went for a beautiful woman like the one that you brought (what a lovely person!) but I got only this ugly, bad one. So never mind, I had enough!” But Amayaba remained very sad because of his lost wife. So they stayed until they all died.

The little lice are jumping, jumping over to ... Michael.
### Appendix 3: List of affinal exchanges

In bold: the writer has participated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the gift</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gwali</td>
<td>courtship: compensatory gift for sleeping with a girl</td>
<td>betelnuts and tobacco for the parents of a girlfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>po'ala</td>
<td>engagement</td>
<td>gift category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maginugwa</td>
<td>engagement: if gift is accepted marriage is planned</td>
<td>parcel of betelnuts sent to the girl's hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miaboda</td>
<td>girl's relatives block her lover inside the house</td>
<td>boy gives tobacco and betelnuts; also gardening work for girl's relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egoi</td>
<td>when couple begins matrimonial life <em>(loebwalayaiyai)</em></td>
<td>roasted yams are held under the nose of each spouse at two separate feasts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>susuwala</td>
<td>wife moves to husband's place or as a part of <em>loebwalayaiyai</em></td>
<td>wife sweeps husband's hamlet and distributes food <em>(e'oasi)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e'tolutolu</td>
<td>first gardening season</td>
<td>relatives of both spouses help each other in planting yams, bring seed yams and bebai and receive cooked food <em>(e'oasi)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esuwala</td>
<td>major affinal exchanges</td>
<td>each household of a spouse's hamlet contributes with yams to a prestation. Later balanced in the same way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abigwegwe</td>
<td>gift for wife</td>
<td>husband's relatives give 'une (oeyesi)and household items (gwegwe) to his wife's relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loduwaduwa</td>
<td>gift after birth of first child to compensate the mother</td>
<td>husband's relatives bring a <em>kula shell and bebai to new mother</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tababa</td>
<td>return gift for use of gardening land</td>
<td>gift of 'une and bebai to the land owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pwatu'ala</td>
<td>exchange between brothers-in-law (facultative)</td>
<td>gifts of <em>bebai</em> and 'une during the marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedi'oe</td>
<td>gift from husband to wife</td>
<td>big fish 'to make wife and baby strong'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oalasuya</td>
<td>exchange between the spouses' relatives</td>
<td>big fish and <em>mona</em> pudding that the spouses must not touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta ebewa</td>
<td>gifts between the spouses' hamlets</td>
<td>cooked food <em>(buyo)</em> and <em>mona</em>; later, a pig and <em>bebai</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bawe sebuwa</td>
<td>option of pwatu'ala</td>
<td>a pig for spouse's sister in exchange for lots of cooked food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magisola</td>
<td>option of pwatu'ala</td>
<td>ripe bunches of betelnuts on a pole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 4: Yam seeds (‘uma)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of cultivar (kwateya)</th>
<th>No. of hamlets</th>
<th>Characteristics (hamlet clusters in bold)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amalaeta</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Egadoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balau’ewa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Egadoi, literally 'sorcerer-take'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodalau</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Egadoi, literally 'group-yellow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botiya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Edugaula, round, white and hard flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulebulelala</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Edugaula, red skin, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunebune</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enaia, literally 'pigeon', long or round, skin reddish, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daipo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Edugaula, red top, white bottom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damoni</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Edugaula, long or round, skin reddish, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayakulo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Edugaula, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didi (Awa’upwa, Dubwala, Kwakwakwala)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mwanomwanona, Egadoi, Enaia, men’s yams (long), white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomanumu</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Edugaula, long or round, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitaimalolona</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Edugaula, round, rough skin, bottom flat, like Gomanumu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotokoto</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Enaia, Egadoi, very large, long and straight, white or red skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwateya Duau</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wabuna, ‘from Duau’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwateya biti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Balabala, ‘from Fiji’, round, hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwata</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Edugaula, literally 'snake', long and bent, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikala</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mwanomwanona, white skin, centre red, like Suwasuwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinepwe’uli</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mwanomwanona, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwasuwa (Tobwala)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Edugaula, long or round, red top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waladiya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wabuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamusa pulipulina</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Edugaula, round, reddish or white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamusa dududula</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Edugaula, long yams, reddish or white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of cultivar (siyakutu)</td>
<td>No. of hamlets</td>
<td>Characteristics (hamlet clusters in bold)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawabwaduwe</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Edugaula, long, white flesh, ('good yams')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitumona</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Balabala, literally 'small yams-pudding'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeyasa</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Edugaula, round, white skin, few thorns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mala'eta</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Edugaula, skin hairy, white or dark red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momo'uwa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Edugaula, round, black skin, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muyoi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Balabala, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanalawa (Gadagada)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sanaroa, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No'ai</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Edugaula, round, small, early, like Sabewa, tastes like Momo'uwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupu'elo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enaia, round yams, black skin, red flesh, hairy skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pwe'au</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Edugaula, long, soft, white flesh, scaly skin, sweet taste, low value but early (from April onwards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabewa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Edugaula, soft, low value, early, widow's food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabunamwado</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mwanomwanona, round or long, white flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetuboia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Balabala, white flesh with pink top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetugulugulu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Edugaula, long, red flesh like Uyagasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetukumu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wabuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulia'a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wabuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uyagasi</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Edugaula, long, white flesh, 'good yams'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also Dixon for a list of 'uma (n.d.:101,164).
Appendix 5: Business on Dobu Island, census data 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hamlet</th>
<th>Dinghies</th>
<th>Source of cash (other than remittances)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asatupi</td>
<td>1 under repair</td>
<td>Local markets (fish, pigs, yams, plantain bananas, betelnuts), for two years a canteen, now empty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We'itaa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Canteen for two years, now empty, local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutuwana</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets, presently some 2nd hand clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doeluya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Canteen runs well, local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebwaiobwaio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Canteen empty, dinghy just covers its costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemunemmu</td>
<td>1 under repair</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losina</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Canteen makes deficits, sometimes 'Mutrus' market, local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenakena alena</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets, sometimes 'Mutrus' market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyal Alena</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oatabwaya</td>
<td>MS Kwadima</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obunebune</td>
<td>1 in Esa'ala</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sape'u</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walauya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwemweyala</td>
<td>1 under repair</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulisi'i'ya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Local markets, dinghy: profits to bank account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asanedu</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets, canteen owned by one man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaula</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Canteen owned by one man, men in workforce, local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piesiya</td>
<td>1, M.V.Pesieda</td>
<td>Canteen empty because of <em>lowaga</em>, local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewasiya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Canteen, local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namowa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tala'a'ai</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diluba</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwakwamoiya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamwalalaina</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iyaya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kakao investment cooperation shareholder since 1992, 10-100 K./yr., local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soiso kalena</td>
<td></td>
<td>Canteen runs well, local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liadolo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets, empty canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bweuliya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siwabuya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Localities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budoya</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa'uya</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losina</td>
<td>Canteen, local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagamoe</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asalimwau</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budobudoya</td>
<td>Local markets, <em>yams or fish</em>, <em>kiwali</em> (<em>Trocus</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apo'a</td>
<td>Local markets, very rarely <em>Sea cucumber</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabala alena</td>
<td>Canteen is empty, local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le'awayaya</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawagumana</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwatete</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebibiyia</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa'etana</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todibu 1</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manbush</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuyaina</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usewaya 1</td>
<td>Dinghy generated some cash (charter), but now under repair, local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upwapoi M.V.Kwantas</td>
<td>Canteen making deficit, local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buai</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabowae</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowada</td>
<td>Will try copra this year, otherwise local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwalae</td>
<td>Local markets, especially <em>yams</em> and betelnuts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asaluwa</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udebi</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampania</td>
<td>Local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naikwala</td>
<td>Canteen owned by Youth club, local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debatae</td>
<td>Canteen empty, local markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6:
The times of the year (*tubudao idi tua*)

- **yaiyai** (literally: 'heat')
- **komba** (north-east wind)
- **yafuhi** (soft north-east wind)
- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

- **so'aliboda**
- **tagwala**
- **botana**
- **mweia**
- **a'asasigana**
- **Kibi** rises over Gulebubu
- **sesoi**
- **mamasalai**
- **kwateya**
- **siyakutu**
- **bwabwale**
- **oalo**
- **Gomayawa** rises
- **bagubagula**
- **damasi**
- **'ai ana tua**
- **Gomayawa** disappears

---

**the women close their yam houses and one lives from the old garden**

**the women manage last year's yams and use as little as possible**

**famine time**

rotten seed yams are removed and new crop estimated by the women

literally: 'we sneak to the hamlet'; the first yam cultivars are harvested in secret

beginning of yam harvest marked by Fishes (?)

time of yam harvest

**time of plenty**

harvest of kwateya yams

harvest of siyakutu yams

**feasting time, time for exchanges**

time for fishing and preparing sticks for the new garden, repairing yam houses

beginning of gardening season marked by the Pleiades

**preparing and planting of new yam gardens**

time to harvest palolo worms

ideal time for betrothal

end of gardening season
Appendix 7: Kasabwaibwaileta and bagi Goma’alakedakeda
(as told by Simi of Sanaroa)

Kasabwaibwaileta tauna Tewara taina ta sinana ana esana
Kasabwaibwaileta himself Tewara man and his mother her name

Boluba E i miamia Kasabwaibwaileta ina asaya Tewara
Boluba. So he lived Kasabwaibwaileta his place at Tewara

ta i nuanua:’’Mwa’a dega bagi ya da ewa’esei
and he thought: ’’How bagi I can possibly get

Kiriwina enaya. Goma’alakedakeda bagi ana esana.’’
Kiriwina from. ’’Lizard-on-its-path’’ bagi its name.’’

Ee enega i miamia i gwaie: ’’Inapwanao, ana ita ta
And so he stayed he said: ’’Big Men, it looks we

giwaga be ta tatauya be bagi gote ta too Kiriwina. Aota.’’
make canoes and we will go and bagi this one we try Kiriwina. Aota.’’

Enega inapwanao maibo’adi si giwaga ga enega waga
So the Big Men all of them they made canoes and then canoes

si gumwalaya aadi masula si usena ga si pill. Pili pill...
they were ready their food they put it and they went off. Went and went

ebwe’u salu ana esana Legomatabu nate enaya si lugu
one island its name Legomatabu there inside they went ashore

ga enega Kasabwaibwaileta nina nate i aupatala maibo’ana
and then Kasabwaibwaileta this one so he distributed everything

pwatula ediya. Masula be labia be iana eisa nadigega si
grass on it. Yams and sago and fish how many of them they

unudi wate gomana enega, nate i eguyaiyena ina bodao
had caught also fishing nets with it those he distributed his group

nidi aadi iana be aadi masula.
them their fish and their food.

Ee ga nada si eno Legomatabu tomwa i ulisinaya enega si
And then there they slept on Legomatabu sunrise at they

gitae limanaya asaya si lugu. Si lugu ga inapwanao
went off again hamlet they arrived. They arrived and the Big Men

maibo’adi si epilipili bagi nina manuna si tata
all of them they ran off bagi that one for it they went off

be si lo’epa’ali, si ilana be si e’eno.
and they ate food, they came back and they went to sleep.
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Tauna i miamiana ee, i nuanua: "Mwa'adega be bagi gote ya
Himself he remained and he thought: "How and bagi that I
du ewai." Enega i gwae: "Inapwanao, mwa'adega, bagi pa'ala o?"
could get." Then he asked: "Big Men, how, bagi hard or not?"

Si ona: "Bagi pa'ala. Nigeya sawesawenaya be ta ewa." I gwae:
They replied: "Bagi hard. Not possible that we get." He said:
"Oo, mana omi bobo'ami ta tebwe'ugu debagu bonu gete maibo'ana
"Yes, but you are alright but myself my head sore this everywhere
gay debagu uya. Nigeya sawesawenaya be ya tatauya tomota nina enaya.
And my head hurts. Not possible that I will go person this one to him."

Enega ebwe'u asiata enaya maibodi inapwanao si laga ga
And so one day at all of them Big Men they went inland and
si ona'ona'une tai nina ana to'ita'ita bagi nina maediya
they talked about kula man this one his looking after bagi this one among them

gay enega bada si miamia ga enega inapwana nina natuna
and then here they stayed and then Big Man that one his child

i dolo. Doloma ga i gwae: "Gwama. Yaita
she came to the shore. She came here and he said: "Child. Who
Goma'alakedakeda 'ena i miami?" I gwae: "Ya. Tamagu
Goma'alakedakeda with it stays?" She said: "Well. My father
enaya i miami." I gwae: "O. Aami wola u
with him it stays." He said: "Fine. Your salt water you
logogoni ta u mama be aana magi ya nugwa
fetch it and you come and his betelnuts I wrap up
be u ewa be u tauyei. Ta u e'onai iabe
and you take them and you bring him. And you tell him later
boiboiya ya eno be i gumwala ya wawa be
at night I sleep and it is finished I will come and
a egosigisiana." Enega gwama nina wola i gonina ga i
we can meet as friends." So child that one sea water she fetched and she
ilagama ga Kasabwaibwaileta magi i pouna i pouna
went inland and Kasabwaibwaileta betenut he skinned he skinned

i gumwala ga ma'ana ona i nugwena ga i paimina
he finished and with its spell he wrapped it and he tied it up

een ga i gwae enega gwama nina i tauyena ga i
and then he said then child that one she delivered it and he
kakena, ga i gwae: "Yaita enega?" Ga i gwae:
unwrapped, and he said: "Who from?" And she said:
"Gote tai gote esido le'awaya i eno'eno. Tai to'umalina.
"That man there down at the beach he is sleeping. Man bad.

Debana gete mai'bo'ana bonu. Ga nigeya sawesawenaya be i
His head that one all of it sore. And not possible that he

adadana. Tauna tuga esido i eno'eno. Ta i e'onai
walks about. Himself just down there he is sleeping. But he told me

aena iabe boiboiyai i mama. Wa egosigosiana. I gwae:
that later at night he will come here. You can meet him. He said:

"O bobo'ana." Magi i likamina ga mai'bo'ana nigeya
"That is fine." Betelnuts he opened them and all of them not

sawesawenaya be i guinuena. Maibo'ana i ewena.
possible that he cut them into pieces. As a whole he took it.

Nate si miamia ta i gwae: "Ya! Maisa nai, i da
So they stayed and he said: "Come on! When maybe he will

lomanini sai gete tomota nina i da mai be ya
hurry up really that person there he shall come and I

da ita. To tomota gote?"
shall see. What person that?

Ee i miamiana i boi. Ee si miamiana be
So he waited it was night. And they stayed up and

maibo'adi MeTewara inapwanao si delidoloma ni'atu
all of them Tewara people Big Men they all went to the beach already

i ta ga esi si eno'eno. Ni'atu si balubalu
it went and so they were sleeping. Already they were snoring

ta enega inapwana i tolo ta bwalana i alikokona
and then Big Man he got up and his skin he took off

ga nada. Nate ga esi i autai. I ta ga i
and left it there. That and so he went off. He went and he

gwae: "Anua nina ena u da mwela be ta da egosigosiana".
said: "House that one inside you shall climb and we shall talk as friends."

I gwae: "Ni'atu ya mai." I gwae: "O." I mwela ga i
He said: "Already I came." He replied: "Yes." He climbed and he

sanasana ga i gwae: "Ya. Gwama gete nia i e'oneguya
looked at him and he said: "Weird. Child this one today she informed me

ga tauna loebonubonuna ta tai sinabwana to'umalina.
that this one full of sores but man big bad.

Ta gete sai togomabwaina sana, nate to tai. Ta nia
But this one really handsome truly, that one which man. But today
GWAMA I E 'ONEGYA TO 'UMALINA. TAUNA BONUBONUNA." ENEGA I CHILD SHE TOLD ME BAD ONE. THAT ONE WITH SORES." SO HE

gwae: "Oyo Kasabwaibwaleta amu esana?" said: "You Kasabwaibwaleta your name?" I gwae:

"Yabweya Kasabwaibwaleta agu esana. Agu esana eluwena Kaiwa."
"Myself Kasabwaibwaleta my name. My name second Kaiwa."

I gwae: "O. Gibwai gonagonaya bagi ya pele. Ta u lulugu

He said: "Well. Tomorrow morning pass on. But you go in

ga tubugu ma'iyana wa e'eno. Tubugu me'sinabwana nate

and my grandchild with her you shall sleep. Grandchild firstborn that one

I gwae: "U lulugu he ma'iyana in the house she is sleeping." He said: "You go inside and with her

wa loiawe wa e'eno tomwa i ulisi be bagi u owa you have sex you sleep daybreak and bagi you take

be u dolo." Ee i lugu ga waine ma'iyana and you go back. So he went inside and woman with her

si eno ga tomwa i ulisi esido sinala i saesae i toolo they slept and daybreak there sun it was rising he got up

i mai ga bagi i ewena ga i gwaed: "Nate."

he came and bagi he took it and he said: "That's it."

I autai ga inapwana i mai ga i sinatae

He left and Big Man he came and he combed

ga bwalana i luguna ga bagi i gilagasina and his skin he went into it and bagi he took it

Goma'aledakeda ta i sa'u luguyena bonuna nina ena i

Goma'aledakeda and he put inside it his sore that one in it he

sa'u luguyena nate i eno'eno. put it inside it and then he went to sleep.

ENEGA SI DELITOOLO SI GWAE: "Ya, gosedai i enoweyaw."

When they all got up they said: "Well, our friend he sleeps too much.

NIGEYA EBWEU I DA ADADANA GA TUGA I KABOEDA GA

Not once he would walk around and only he tricked us and

taudamo ta mai ta bagi ta soisoi ta tauna i eno'eno."

only we we come and bagi we wait for and himself he just sleeps."

Tomwa i ulisinaya ga si delidellaga sabi ona'une ta

At daybreak and they all went inland for talking about kula and

tauna nada i eno'eno. Tubuna i e'onena: "Tubugu,

himself there he was sleeping. His grandson he told him: "My Grandson,
"u mailaga be bwalagu u loniuniu." Ga tauna i you come over here and my skin you scratch." And himself he

laga i lagana i tateee, ta debana i gilobwena came he came inland he went and but his head he massaged

enaya bonuna i giekakenaya bagi nina i itena. inside the sore he scratched bagi that one he saw it.

I itenaya ga enega i ona: "Mwa'a'adega gete tubugu He saw it and then he said: "How this one my grandfather

ni'atu bagi i ewena ga i me'ena. Ana ita boiboiyai already bagi he took it and he brought it. Its look at night

i lagawa ga i ewena." he went inland there and he took it.

Togwama esido solanaya nai nuanua nigeya simasimane i i As a child there inside maybe thought not reporting he

miana ga si deli'ilauma ta esi enega inapwanao MeTewara stayed and they all came back and so then Big Men from Tewara

i e'onedi, i gwae: "Ey. Tubugu gete bagi i ewena, boibo he told them he said: "Ey. My grandfather bagi he took it, night

enaya i laga." I gwae: "Ni'atu i ewena bagi at he went inland." He said: "Already he took it bagi

Goma'alakedakeda ga debana bonubonuna ana gigilagasinaya ta enega Goma'alakedakeda and his head his big sore its opening inside and there

i sa'u luguyena ga lagalaga ya lobena." Ni'atu. he put inside it and deep inside I found it. Already.

Si gwae: "Gibwait a autai." Tomwa i ulisinaya si lagawa They said: "Tomorrow we leave." At daybreak they went inland

si tauya. Maibo'adi inapwanao si delilaga ga gosediao they went. All Big Men they all went inland and their friends

ma'inao si enimalotona ga aadi masula si ebwa'edi aadi with them they shook hands and their food they gave them their

magi si ebwa'edi si doloma ga delimai. betelnuts they gave them they went to the beach and all came.

I gwae: "Ee inapwanao, ni'atu wa 'une saba enega ta gegelu?" He said: "Well Big Men, already you kula enough and so we leave?"

Si ona: "Ni'atu. Ta gegelu. Gete enega be Gabuwane They said: "Already. We will leave. Here from and Gabuwane
maibo'ada ta e'eno. Gibwai asa ta 'ewa." Si egelu ga
we all we will sleep. Tomorrow hamlet we take." They took off and

Gabuwane. Gulewa daisina ebwe'u salu. Aga gete tuta gulewa daisina
Gabuwane. Rocks only one island. But this time rocks only

ta lowa sagusagu si toolotoolo. Enega si lugu.
but before pandanus they grew high. There they went ashore.

Si eno ga tomwa i ulisi si gomana ga si gomana
They slept and at daybreak they fished with nets and they fished with nets

gi si mai ga si epe'oasi aana labia weyawa daita
and they came and they made sago cakes with fish his sago huge one

si ebwaesina, aana masula si lo'ebwaei sinabwadi. Taudi
they gave him his food they gave him plenty. Themselves

si e'ai manimanini, si e'ai manimanini, si e'ai manimanini
they ate quickly, they ate quickly, they ate quickly

gi esi i gumwalaya si dolo ga nimadi
and so it was finished they went to the beach and their hands

si lo'utu ga i gumwalaya si mai ga si yaguayaguma,
they washed and it was finished, they came and they chewed betel,

si laga si gwae: "Ee! Aliana gomana etoolo ta inapwana
they went inland they said: "Hey! Mast fishing nets hang up and Big Man

i e'a. Aliana si etoolona ga i gumwalaya ga
he eats. Mast they erected and it was finished and

nada ta si gwae: "Ee, ta lugu be bwasi ta gogo."
there and they said: "Well, we go in and water we fetch."

Si lugu be aadi bwasi si goi si goi be i gumwalaya
They went in and their water they fetched it was finished

ta esi bwasi si busenaya, ena si busena i gumwalaya
but then water they shat into it, inside they shat it was finished

Si doloma. Si doloma ga esi si gwae: "Inapwana!
They came back. They came back and then they said: "Big Man!

Ni'atu u aiya? U laga be aamu bwasi u gogoni,
Already you ate? You go inland and your water you fetch,

u mamai be ta gegeleu." Si laga. Inapwana
you will come and we will leave." They went inland. Big Man

nina Kasabwaibwaileta i tooo be ana bwasi i ewena
this one Kasabwaibwaileta he rose and his gourd he took it
ga i laga. Bwasi si biakasuna. Si busai. Enega
and he went inland. Water they dirtied it. They shat in it. From that
esi i miatowaga be i dedoi ta i ematakalanadi
so he sat down and he cried and he made clear
bwasi nina.
water that one. I nuanua ga i nuanua i gwae: "O gete
i gote tuga bwasi namo ena si etete ta
His thought that those just water only inside they teased but
nate ni'atu si egelu. Bwasi matakalada aana bwasi i gonina
by then already they had left. Water clear his water he fetched
i apwesama nada adi sipwasiwpamo i ita'ita.
he arrived on the beach there their sail only he was seeing.
Ee i laga be i mai, gulewa i nuguya, anua nadigega
So he went inland and he came, rock he held, house like
ana sinabwa i lodule be si lowasyedi be si tatauya
its size he threw and they steered sidewards and they went
ta yuyudiya bada si lokapudi [?]. Mali gulewa i giyaina
and their tail here they locked up. Another rock he grabbed
but there he went and he was locked up. Not possible that
wate i unudi ta esi i lotoolenb be i dedoi.
again he hit them and so he stood there and he cried.
MeTewara inapwanao si pilipilipili Tewara. Tauna i dedoiee
Tewara people Big Men they sailed quickly Tewara. Himself he cried and cried
i boi ga kwadima ebwe'una i sae.
it got dark and star one it rose.
I boiya, kwadima ebwe'u i saema be i enaide, i gwae:
It was night star one it rose and he asked he said:
"Mwao u tauta?". I gwae: "Gete batua sena nina, Dobu
"Where you going?" It replied: "This today area this one Dobu
sena nina ya pilipili. I gwae: "Oo, u tauta."
area this one I am going." He said: "Alright you go."
'Ali kwadima i eonai i gwae: "Mwao u tauta?", Another star he enquired he said: "Where you going?"
i gwae: "Duau gete sena nina ya pilipili." I gwae: it replied: "Duau this area this one I am going." He said:

"Oo tua 'eniba, u tauya." Mali kwadima i enaidei i "Alright, enough cousin you go on." Another star he asked he

i gwae: "Gete sena nina ya pilipili. Galeya sena nina." said: "This area this one I am going. Galeya area this one."

I tauta eee ga tete yabwaya gomayawa i saemaya ta It went on and then ? The Pleiades it climbed up and

i gwae: "'Eniba mwao batua?" I gwae: "Gete ya tata be he said: "Cousin where today?" It said: "This I will go and

Tewarega be enega ya enomwauta." via Tewara and then afterwards i go down and rest." It said:

"U yamwayamwa be ya sasae be ya tata be gote "You wait until I will climb up and I will go and that one

enaya ta enega agu doe ena u gegelu.". I gwae: "Oo through and so my tail/flag through you will climb up." He said: "Yes

bobona." that is good.

Gomayawa i sae ga i ta i ta i ta The Pleiades it came up and then it went it went it went

ga esi bulubuluna gete nadigega i sa'u esaya ta and so its head like this it put it exactly and

enega, ana doe i tuemaya ta ena i gelu. so its tail/flag it climbed up to here and at it he climbed up.

I gelu ga, gomayawa i bebeu, tauna i He climbed and then The Pleiades it went down himself he

losepalena ga galewaya. Galewaya waine ebweu galewa wainena let go again and was in the sky. In the sky woman one sky woman

i yaina. I yaina ga esi nada si miyami. He married. He married and then just up there they stayed.

Bada si yamwayamwana si gwae: "O inpwana ni'atu saludaitayaga Here they were waiting they said: "Oh old man already on the island

ni'atu i mwawasa." Sinana be mwanena si kwabula. Already he died." His mother and his wife they mourned.

Sinana Boluba nate ina dobe gete ena ga, mwagula i His mother Boluba that one her skirt that long and mourning rope he
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sa‘ui, mwanena nadigega yoduduna ta yuyuna ina dobe
put it his wife in the same way ? and her tail her skirt

gete bada aenaya, mwagula i sa‘ui. Yadiyadi maibo’ana,
from here to her feet mourning rope she put it. Tabu posts everywhere,

magi, niu, ana suluyaku maibo’ana yadiyadi.
betelnuts, coconuts, his king coconut all these marked by the tabu posts.

Tauna galewaya i miами ni’atu. I miamiana eee waïne ebweu
Himself in the sky he stayed already. He lived there woman one

i yaina ga natudiya ebweuna. Magosenao si
he married and then their child one. With his friends they

gewagewana ta si enukinuki. Si ekawawae be i
were playing and they speared the roll. They rolled it and it

pilipili ta gita si ewa be si ulae be si badiya
was rolling and spear they took and they throw it and they spear it

ta, wate ebweu tai i ulenama. Ebweu gwama i ulenama
and again one man he threw it here. One child he threw it here

be i pilipilima ta gita si ewa be si ulae be
and it was rolling over and spear they took and they threw and

si badi.
they speared.

Si ewena ebweu tuta si ula’ula ga, kalitabu nina
They were playing one time they were throwing and giant clam shell this one

enaya i losakayainena. Gwama nina, Kasabwaibwaileta nina natuna
inside it got stuck (the roll). Child this one Kasabwaibwaileta this one his son

i nao ga and then i giilagasina ga i gwae:
he went close and then he lifted it up and then he said:

"Eee, tamagu – tamagu!" "Eee, my father – my father! Tewara siwalowa ya ‘ita!"
"Eee, my father – my father! Tewara quiet sea I see!"

I aubodenaya ta i pili ga i ilama. Tauna
He closed it up and he run and then he came back. Himself

tenanaya i lokekeyenaya, i gwae: "Ya, mwa‘adega
at his ear he scratched it, he said: "Hmm, how comes

igu asa i ‘itaesena?" Ebweu tuta wate si enukinuki
my place he has seen it?" One time again they speared the roll

1 The game of enukinuki: a banana stem (nuki) is rolled and the boys try to hit it with spears.
and then
wate nuki nina i pilī ga i ta ga
again the roll this one it ran and then it went and then

ena i loluguyenaya ta kalitabu enega si
inside it it went in the hole and giant clam shell with which they

aubodena ga awanina. I giilagasina ga i
closed it and then in its mouth. He pulled it out and then he

gwae: "Eeeh, tamagu - tamagu! Tewara siwalowa ya 'ita!'". said: "Oh, my father - my father! Tewara quiet sea I see!"

"Oo tumada gotei. Tewara ana ebedune gote tumada."
"Oh truly there it is. Tewara its place to watch that one truly."

Ebweu tua si delisawalaya, si ta ga si
One time they all went away, they went and then they

bagubagula ta bada gogama nidi i gwae:
worked in the garden and back here children these he told them:

"E gote ena wa ta'a be wa enukinuki."
"Ei back there towards you go over and you spear the roll."

Si ta'a ga si enukinuki ta i nao ga
They went over and they speared the roll and it rolled and then

i giilagasina kalitabu nina, i sanamwauta sinana i
he lifted up giant clam this, he looked down his mother she

siyasiyayowa ta mwanena gabulaya libu ena i
was sweeping and his wife on the ground mourning hut inside she

mialugu ga i miami. I gwae:
sat inside and she lived there. He said:

"Ta gete aagu suluyaku getei, aagu magi gotei, "And this my own king coconut this one, my own betelnuts these ones,

"oys" i gwae, "Eda bobo'ana gete. Ta to'ase alena ga "Well" he said, "Path good this one. And what reason and so

bada gete ya miami. Ana 'ita ya ebusi totuta nai."
here this I live. Its look I go down when maybe."

Enega si delidelisawala tauna i le'oasaya nadige ga one
So they were all out he himself he was sick for about one

wiki, nate i enoeno. Nate kabo ta nige le'oasa.
week, that time he was in bed. This one faking and not sick.

Bagi ena i paipaisewa, bagi i sulasula.
Bagi at it he was working, bagi he threaded it up.
He threaded it and he threaded it and he threaded it and he

let it hang down and his own king coconut this one at the crown and again

back here and he threaded. He came back and then

he threaded it and then he went by and then once more his own

king coconut this one at it he touched it and then again he came

and then he rolled it up he rolled it up, he put away bagi this.

One time they went out and people all of them they all went away

and so his child he informed him he said: "You come here and

we go over and bagi you hold and with it I go down."

He went and then his child tree at it he tied him up and

bagi at it he held onto it and Kasabwaibwaileta he went

he went eee he climbed down he went he went eee

and then his own king coconut inside he sat down and before

his child he informed him he said: "When I pull a signal

then you will pull it up." And so he sat down and then he

pulled a signal and child he pulled. He pulled and he pulled.

They tore it apart bagi and so, Kasabwaibwaileta his bagi short,

but himself child this one his bagi, bagi a long one.

And so through this as well already coconut inside he was sitting and
tauna gwama nina i gwae: "O tamagu ni'atu i mwauta."

himself child this he said: "O my father already he went down."

I gwae: "Nige sawesawenaya wate tamagu ya loba
He said: "It is impossible from now on my father I see again

gete tuga." Sinana i mai ga i gwae:
this time. Her mother she came and then she said:

"Ta tamayo?" "Tamagu ni'atu i mwauta, Tewara."
And your father? "My father already he went down Tewara.

I gwae: "Oo ta nige sawesawenaya be wate ta ewa.
She said: "Yes but it is impossible again we get him.

Nate ni'atu i mwauta ina asaya." This one already he went down his village to it.

Sinana Kasabwaibwaileta nina i siyasiyayowa ta nate,
His mother Kasabwaibwaileta this one she was sweeping and there,

sipula i gitaga be i ulae be i
small nut he plucked it and he threw it and then it was

ausaili ta i gwae: "Ya! Yaita oyo natugu nate
next to her and she said: "He! Who are you my child this one

yadiyadina u giyegiye to'umaliye? Aana suluyaku nate
his tabu post you dare to spoil it? His own king coconut this one

natugu nige upwayauenamo. Etamo ya bwabwale be ya
my child not to be touched at all. Later I will bwabwale and I

upwaulei ta esi gogama aadi sulu."
break the fruits and also children their green coconuts."

Wate i siyasiyayowa i naonao wate, sipula nina
Again she was sweeping she came closer again, green nut this one

i ula be wate selabenaya i totoyeyi ta,
he threw and again next to her it fell down and,

"Yaita oyo gete u giyegiye to'umaliye natugu yadiyadina?"
"Who are you there you are spoiling my child's tabu posts?"

I gwae "Ana ita ya nao be ya dune ai'aila."
She said "It looks as if I go there and I look properly."

I nao ga i sana tue ene, i gwae, "Oo."
She went there and then she looked up to him she said, "Oh."

I gwae: "Sinagu, yabweya." I gwae: "U mwautama."
He said: "My mother it's me." She said: "You come down here.

I gwae: "Mwa'adega u mai esa?" I gwae: "Gote enega
She said: "How you came back?" He said: "There from
ga, gomayawa enega ga, galewaya ga, and then The Pleiades from and then from the sky and then

enega galewaya gete ya mwaitama!" Enega i
from up in the sky here I climbed down here!" After that he

mwaitama ga i gwae: "Ta sinagu, to'ase getedi?
climbed down to here and then he said: "But my mother what these?

Magi to'ase manuna gote nadigega?" I gwae: "Aena gote
Betelnuts why like this?" She said: "Expressing that one

gwalayo." "Ta gete mwa'adega ga igu sinebada
your death tabu." "And this how and so my wife

gotenadigega?" I gwae: "Gote aena i kwabula.
like this?" She said: "That one expressing she is a widow.

Ta u itena yabweya wate agu ita getei.
And you have seen me also my looks like this.

Mwagula gete otoguya, dobe dudulana gete ya otei."
Widow's band gete otoguya, dobe dudulana gete ya otei.

I gwae: "Oo, gibwai ida tomataiyo ta emiagogonedi,
He said: "Oh, tomorrow our whole group we call them together

ni'atu ya mai."
already I came."

Tomwa i ulisinaya, ale i sakowasi. Si gwae ese
At daybreak, message it went around. They said that

ni'atu Kasabwaibwaileta i mai. Ta ina loina nadigega,
already Kasabwaibwaileta he came. And his order like that,

gibwai ta egogonabe yage, ina awagwae giyokuna.
tomorrow we all meet and his announcement small.

Tomwa i ulisinaya si egogona ga i gwae:
At daybreak, they came together and then he said:

"Inapwanao nige wate mane nadigega aena ta,
"Respected elders not also why like this expressing and,

ta emasula." I gwae: "Anua, gota tauna anua nina."
we put the food." He said: "House, there that one house that one."

i gwae: "Nate tauna wa pita be wa pita
he said: "This the one you make walls and you make walls

aiaili be geya'abo ebweuna masamasasala. I gwae:
properly and there must not be one small hole." He said:

"Geya'abo ebweu masamasasala be ebe emasul a manuna."
"There must not be one small hole and place to put food because."
They said: "Yes, that is good."

At daybreak house they surrounded it and then everywhere

they made it they made it and then not one small hole,

all they closed it properly already and, he said:

"Tomorrow we prepare and the day after tomorrow food we prepare

and we shall eat." He said: "Because before back there myself

I was slow and you all you went first to here and not you ate."

Daybreak came and so they prepared and then

they prepared and then it went and then it was ready

and so. He said: "Ee, food at daytime it all goes up!"

Food they set it up in the house that one house completely it was full

up to its back and, women their food on a banana leaf and men

their food on a banana leaf. They put the banana leaves and then food it

all went inside and then he said: "Ee Big Men and Big Women

you all come up." He said: "Meal at daytime. We chew betelnut

afterwards it will get dark."
mawainena, mataina, matubuana, mataisinabwana ga si
with the women with the men with the young men with the old men and then they

ewena si ewena ga i gumwala ai'aila ga,
made it they made it and then it was finished completely and then

inapwana nate, ebweu kanagala nate ana esana, natei
one old man that one Kanagala that one his name, so that one

i mai ga maina sinebada, ina sinebada seigatu
he came and then with his wife, his wife short skirt

i otena. I mai i gwae: "Wa mialaga be wa
she wore it. He came he said: "You sit inside and then you

kekai ta, ya loyayuyuguma ta kenega ya
will eat and I chew betelnut first and afterwards I

mialagawa be ta kaka."
sit inside and we all will eat." Before

kwae: "Awa inapwanao wa gibodedi, wa sailidi, nenewala."
said: "Door respected men you shut them, you tie them, flies.'

Si e'ai ta tauna i ila ga, ni'atu nigeya i
They ate and himself he went back and then already not he

bulolowa ai'a'ilu tuga kelepa i sa'una ga nunganaya
angry really but club he put it and then the front of the house

i talenaya ta kuliga si epilipiliya. Kuligaya
he hit it and to the back they run away. The back of the house

i a'ila ga i talenaya ta nunganaya si
he returned to and then he hit it and to the front they

epilipiliya. I nao ga nanana'aya i talenaya
run away. He went and then the side of the house he hit it

ta ebweu nana'ana si epilipiliya. Atulabelabe ebwe'u ena
and one side they run away. Corner one at it

i talenaya ta ebweu si epilipiliya. I enonotue
he hit it and to another one they run away. He listened up

ni'atu mali enana mali enana i delideliapwesa, mali manua
already different voice different voice it was heard from inside, different bird

mali manua si gwanegwane.
different bird they were singing.

2 Kanagala (parrot) is a clan bird.
3 This man speaks with an accent, probably Tewara language (kekai, kenega, kaka - in Dobu: 'e'ai, enega, 'a'a)
Dinewiwiya tuga pilipili ga masamasasala ebweuna
Honeysucker just was running and then hole one

giyokuna nate enega i loyausena ga si itenaya
small one there through it it went out and then they saw it

ta mali manua i lugu mali manua enega i
and different bird it came out different bird through it it

apwesaya, si ewe’ewena si ewe’ewena ga awa
appeared outside they were coming out they were coming out and then door

esi weiyawadaitanina. Aena si delisawala i
was like very big one. Expressing they all went away he

gwae: "Nigeya, nate budo nina ena maibo’ami
said: "No, this budo tree there in it you all

wa yyalowina. Wa towatowa ta ami loina
you fly. You fly up and your personal rules

iyabe ya ebwaemi.”
then I give to you.”

Si deli’apwesa ga esi budo si yalowina
They all came up and then also budo tree they flew to

si yalowina si yalowina ga i ma’a
they flew to it they flew to it and then it was full

and then properly and then also he said: “You bird yourself

gate aamu masula.” Maibo’ana masula i eguyaiyena
this your personal food.” All food he distributed it

mali manua aana masula mali manua aana masula
different bird its personal food different bird its personal food

i tautenia tautenia ga kanagala ebwaena i gwae:
he went on went on and then Kanagala gave him he said:

"Oyo aamu masula besobeso – aa nigeya...” I gwae:
"You your personal food anyhow – aa no, wait...” He said:

"Ni’atu ya nonona, geya’abo u sa’usa’ulima, ni’atu
"Already I have heard, do not you put it again already

u onaya aagu besobeso. Masula tomatai ya a’ani, kwateya,
you said my personal food anyhow. Food humans I will eat, kwateya-yams,

bebai, bolo, kweyeu, udi ni’atu u sa’una besobeso
big yams, taro, greens, bananas, already you put it anyhow

aagu masula, geya’abo wate u sa’usa’ulimana.”
my personal food, do not again you put it differently again.”
And then in this way he distributed and then it was finished.  

and so he said: "All of you you all go away, and by doing so  

you places by yourself you search wherever. He said:  

"My mother you Boluba you just you crawl inside  

in the grass and your personal work is just black ant hill in it you  

scratch. And you my wife, you will go inside the high grass,  

and just high grass inside it yourself you roam around."  

Already they all went away and then the place empty. That is why when  

Tewara you go down to not even one bird you will find.  

Flying fox, possum, bush fowl their place. Everywhere  

no bird. He distributed and afterwards as well he chased them  

they all went away not more Tewara in it not with birds.
### Appendix 8: Contributions of all Losina households to the sagali feast in Losina, January 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matrilineages</th>
<th><strong>susu 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>susu 2</strong></th>
<th><strong>susu 3</strong></th>
<th><strong>susu 4</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults per household</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults on platform</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution: Yams</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution: Pigs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution: cash (Kina)</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpers (no. of groups)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpers' total: Yams</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpers' total: Pigs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: Yams</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: Pigs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per susu: Yams</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per susu: Pigs</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per susu: Kina</td>
<td>4485</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Received ta'ona gift from husband's sister.
2. 'Worked' for her son Richard's future residence claims.
3. The adopted namesake, Gibson's son.
4. Myself.
5. The household of the tonisagali
6. The couple who wanted to settle in Losina.
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Plate 2: Dobu Island, Losina beach

Plate 3: My house in Losina hamlet
Plate 4: Kula exchange: Waiting on the beach

Plate 5: Kula exchange: Talk about kula
Plate 6: *Kula exchange: Throwing of bagi*

Plate 7: *Kula exchange: Tanaleleya*
Plate 8: Sagali: Kaibado, *toni sagali*

Plate 9: Sagali: Helpers bring their gifts
Plate 10: *Sagali*: Affines and *labalaba* receive a meal in Losina

Plate 11: *Sagali:*

A pig that symbolises a dead father
Plate 12: Sagali: Filling the platform with bebai yams

Plate 13: Sagali: The senior woman calls Yabowaine

Photo: Patrick Glass
Plate 14: Sagali: Waiting to receive a gift

Plate 15: Sagali: At the end of the distribution (anthropologist complaining about sore throat)