

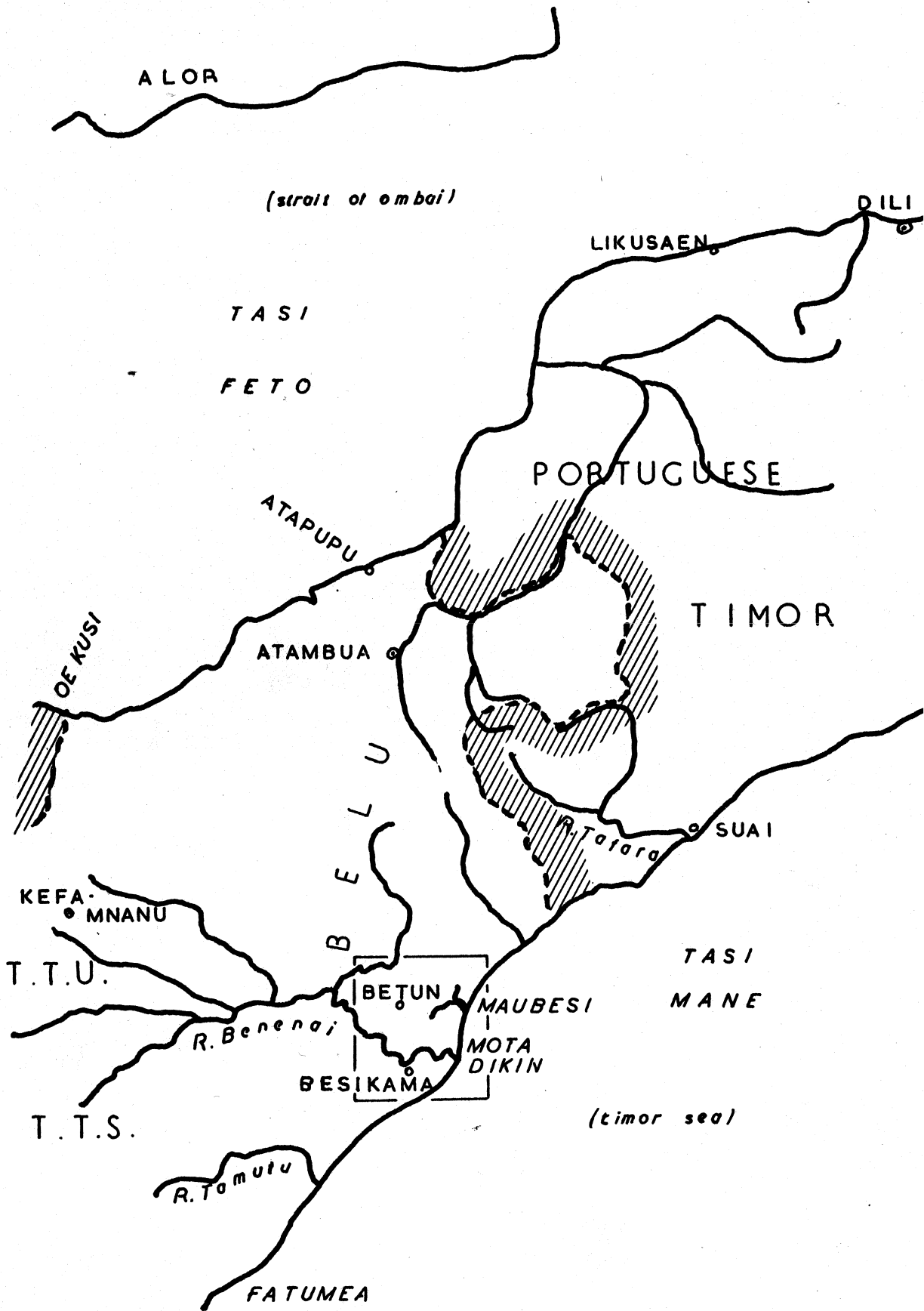
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SOME MATRIARCHIC ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE  
SOUTHERN TETUN OF MIDDLE TIMOR

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Thesis submitted for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Australian National University.

2nd May 1967

To the S.V.D. Missionaries in Timor

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## PREFACE

A research scholarship of the Australian National University, Canberra, has made possible the preparation and execution of field work, and the completion of this dissertation to be submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Timor is not among the favoured fields of the students of Australia; they have at their disposal a large choice of places and peoples who are, if not closer than Timor, at least of much easier access. Except during the tragic years of World War II, Timor has never been a much heard-of place. About one half of the literature, moreover, is in Dutch, most of the remainder being in Portuguese.

~~Although~~ Insufficiently studied societies to our North are many; ~~and~~, even/ ~~for~~ those which have been much studied <sup>have</sup> ~~the~~ problems yet to be solved <sup>which</sup> ~~are~~ equally many, <sup>Y</sup> Timor, and particularly the region known as Belu, has been chosen for its theoretical interest, namely, its alleged prescriptive alliance system. The existence of such a system was probable according to H.J. GRIJZEN, a 'controleur' of the Dutch administration who published a short monograph in 1904. Professor B.A.G. VROKLAGE, on the other hand, who conducted an extensive ethnographic survey of the whole of Belu in 1937 was of the contrary opinion and denied most contemptuously the existence of any form of circulating connubium, although the kinship terminologies which he recorded were not categorically against it.

Dr R. NEEDHAM, who supervised my work during the Diploma and B.Litt. courses at the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford, and who had already been engaged for some time upon a 'minute and one by one examination of the societies characterized by a compulsory rule of marriage' (Lévi-Strauss in Bastide 1962: 40), suggested to me that I should conduct my research in this particular part of Timor. The Belu Subdivision had the further peculiarity of being divided into two sub-cultures, the first in the north being patrilineal with virilocal marriage, and the second in the southern plain matrilineal with uxrilocal marriage. The project took ~~st~~ ~~form~~ consequently, to study this particular area in the South in order to see if the men really do circulate by connubium in a matrilineal society which prescribes marriage with the mother's brother's daughter, as one is lead to think is the case with the semi-nomadic Siriono of eastern Bolivia and the swidden cultivating Mnong Gar of central Viêt Nam. Professor J.A. BARNES and Dr J.D. FREEMAN as Head of Department and as Supervisor, respectively, agreed that I should go to Indonesian Timor for a field trip of about 18 months, and accordingly provided generous material, intellectual and moral support.

I left for Timor in October 1962 accompanied by my wife and child, then aged 4, via Dili, capital of the Portuguese Overseas Province of Timor, with a special visa of the Indonesian Government to enter Indonesia by this route. Recommendations and personal interventions by Professor Sir John CRAWFORD and Dr H. FEITH helped very much towards the obtaining of this special authorization. Although actual travel from Canberra to the subdivision of Belu takes a mere 5 days, it was not until Christmas,

or until after two months, that we could consider ourse as more or less settled at our base of Betun. The delay can be attributed to inadequate transport facilities and of communications generally in this part of Indonesia. Thus the simplest problems of an administrative kind or of supply require weeks for their solution or are altogether insoluble. A somewhat longer time was necessary in leaving the country to return to Australia via the same route, when most of my difficulties arose from a desire to avoid calling at Djakarta. I left Betun at the end of April and arrived in Canberra in mid-July 1964. However the time I was able to devote to ethnography was not even the 16 months between these two dates for about two months in all had to be spent in lengthy journeys to the Residency capital Kupang, once, and to the Regency capital, Atambua, some 4 or 5 times, in attempts to solve problems of bureaucracy and supply. In these matters I often received much help from Mr A.A. BERE-TALLO, Chief Executive of the Subdivision or Regency of Belu (Bupati Kepala Daerah Swatantra Tingkat II Belu), from the Subdivision Secretary Mr A.N. PATTIWAEI, and most considerately and faithfully from the North Western District Officer (Kepala Ketjamatan Tasi Feto Barat) Mr B.J. MANEK and his family whose generous hospitality and assistance, both material and moral, was best appreciated when we realized the hardship to which they were themselves subjected. I recall the hospitality and assistance given by the two successive District Officers of Eastern and Central Malaka, Mr E.J. LAKKA and Mr L.S. TEESERAN who each in turn offered to share their official house in Betun during our stay there. It is difficult to state how much gratitude is owed to the Reverend Fathers, Sisters and Friars of the Missionary Society of the

Divine Word, (S.V.D.) who, slightly suspicious and hesitating as to what to expect from us in the beginning regretted in the end the departure of a family which they considered as 'a living illustration for their moral and sanitarian teachings'. Suspicious or not, they always showed the greatest eagerness to offer any assistance which was only limited by the poor conditions of existence equal for all - in that part of eastern Indonesia.

In the beginning of our stay, particularly in towns such as Kupang and Atambua, the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) which both my wife and I had studied long before - mainly at the Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes, Paris - was used. Communication became more difficult at our base of Betun where nearly all of the people we had to deal with had practically no knowledge of Indonesian. The local language, Tetun, which definitely belongs to the Indonesian family of languages is not, fortunately, very complex and its pronunciation does not offer insurmountable difficulties to French tongues. Its difficulties lie elsewhere and some of them will be briefly examined in the course of this dissertation. Tuition in the language would have been useful and we spared no effort to find a coach, but for various circumstantial reasons we could not find a permanent teacher, nor later, any kind of permanent assistant. The economic conditions prevailing at the moment in Timor account for a great part of this situation. By employing a bilingual native I would take from him time otherwise devoted to his garden work and, owing to the rate of exchange, I was unable to offer a salary to compensate for the absence of a crop. I was not able to offer payment in kind either, for paper-money was no more to me than to the people themselves a suitable means of

procuring trade or other goods, such as cloth, yarn, and kerosene, which can be exchanged for food and services. The Government for its offices, and the Mission for its schools, workshops and building sites succeed well enough in recruiting, except that in the case of the workshops and building sites the missionaries have to rely on other ethnic groups such as the Dawan or the Buná, the Tetun people of the south Belu plain keeping away from the proletarian condition. As for the teaching and public services, their members are provided, in addition to the very low salaries, with the compensation of various material benefits, such as army style shoes, uniforms, plus the assurance of being given priority when cloth, yarn or kerosene were made available at low government price; and further, the not negligible assurance of obtaining generous leave for most occasions of the agricultural and ceremonial cycles. In such conditions, only temporary, occasional informants could be used; they broadly fall into two categories, those who would not accept any reward, not even gifts, in order to avoid being tied in any way, and those whose claims were exorbitant in relation to the service and information given. A very few did not belong to either category, and can be termed familiars or companions; the list of their names is very short, they were: Fransiscus Bere Feto Malak, Balthazar Seran Manek Bot, Cornelis Baria Lak Metan, Kalau Fahik Fouk and Domenicus Nahak. As familiar as they became in the end none of them ever was regular, assiduous or even interested enough to deserve the title of 'assistant'. Nothing approaching the kind of devoted guide-interpreter assistant, whom some colleagues working in other parts of the world are able to attach themselves, was ever obtained. This is the main reason why I did not succeed in combining

thoroughly a whole village or a series of villages with censuses, inventories, and genealogies. Information of this kind which I finally obtained came from different villages, and, as even a superficial observer would soon realize, the villages are far from all following the same pattern.

The absence of an assistant was particularly painful in the beginning but was felt during the whole of my stay for several texts which I had recorded from the very beginning were left untranscribed (let alone translated and commented upon) until practically the last few weeks. These texts - narratives, epic poems sung in choirs, etc. were mostly recorded, on tape, to assist me in learning language. They became in fact an attraction and a means to get on easily with the people: the tape-recorder and I rarely missed an important gathering. It is on such occasions that old men feel more inclined to speak about their customs and history, although there is always some restraint caused by the fear of the one who speaks to divulge his precious knowledge ~~and~~ that he may 'die a bad death' if, being not knowledgeable enough, a contradictor interrupts and says: wrong!

How to attract people was never a serious problem, since apart from the tape-recorder, I had a wife and a child. We soon realized on the contrary that our problem was how to get rid of unwanted swarms of on-lookers. Market days, national feasts and anniversaries were always trying in this respect. These occasions brought into 'town' from the surrounding villages groups of youths and files of women and children who came quite determined to repay visits which I had made on some previous occasion to scrutinize us as closely as I had them. I had been grateful at the allocation of financial support enabling me to tal

my wife with me as a precious auxiliary in the investigation of a 'matriarchal' society. But, although her participation in my research was quite extensive and her contribution to the results she obtained, quite valuable, she could unfortunately devote only a small proportion of her time to actual research, the rest of it being taken up in the absorbing task of maintaining an acceptable standard of hygiene in the house. This was particularly made necessary by the presence of our daughter. As leaving her behind had been out of question, there was no alternative but to take her along with us, but we soon realized that the advantages for her as well as for us, were counterbalanced by the fact that she was a constant source of anxiety to my wife who had to prevent her from testing the depth of every mud-puddle and the taste of every fruit. These childish experiments would have been less disturbing if the nearest doctor had been nearer than two days journey on foot. But, apart from some common diseases of children and the hardly avoidable malarial fevers, health was maintained at a reasonable level, and the child did not suffer too much. She, at least, recovered well in the few months following our return to Australia. But taking a young child on such a field expedition is an experiment we cannot recommend and which we shall not attempt again, except if this is to be done in a country where the health service and communications are under European control or of a comparable standard.

N.B. Neither this dissertation nor any part of it is intended for publication or non-academic circulation in its present form.

entailed a return to eroticism, and tended to a regression in the development of vegetation towards spontaneous generation, profusion and abundance characteristic of the low sodden soils. This vegetative condition of the early world had been the setting of the promiscuous age of human society. On the contrary, to a matriarchal golden age corresponded a vegetative evolution leading to a woman-controlled agriculture on firm grounds, on a generous Demetric earth which yielded only to ordered labour.

In the course of historical times - which are in Bachofen's conception almost co-extensive to the total geological and palaeontological times - there had been variations in the shading of the successive stages of matriarchy and patriarchy, and finally the latter triumphed and succeeded in obliterating the former stages. These shadings were due to changes in the religious systems, and are largely to be accounted for by external influences. For instance, in the case of the Dionysiac period, the phallic cults were brought back from Asia by the armies of Alexander the Great. The assumption which underlies this is obvious. Other areas had other systems, and their evolution was not synchronic to that of the Ancient World and at times there was interference - in both ways alternatively - between the centre (Athens and Rome) and the ends of the earth. The further we go, the lower the level of evolution we meet. Wilhelm Schmidt, Fritz Graebner and their 'Kulturkreis' school of ethnology, alone, bear the criticisms for this view, but it is largely imputable to Bachofen's evolutionistic theory.



Now matriarchy is certainly an ambiguous term in the use of anyone who does not hold with Bachofen <sup>that</sup> ~~for~~ an ~~actual~~ stage of mother-rule ~~to have~~ actually developed, endured and declined, ~~and in~~ which women had political and military powers in their hands. Numerous authors who could not admit this extreme sense of the word but who would not either get rid of it, have <sup>e</sup>tampered it down. Tylor is one of them and Malinowski is another. E.B. Tylor, in his famous article on method in ethnology, scarcely used the term which he restricted to meaning either descent and succession through women, or residence with wife's maternal kin after marriage, or a combination of both. But, yielding to the mode of the time, eight years later, he rewrote the article, first published in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, for The Nineteen Century under the title 'The Matriarchal Family System'. B. Malinowski, back from the Trobriands, published shorter accounts variously entitled 'Mutterrechtliche Familie, etc.'; Complex and Myth in Mother-right', 'Forschungen in einer mutterrechtliche Gemeinschaft'. But, in reverse to Tylor's procedure, he tended to reduce the conspicuousness of the term on reissuing the articles as chapters in 'Sex and Repression etc.', and in 'The Sexual Life, etc.'.

Several contemporary and later authors wondered just what underlied the term and whether mother-right was the proper rendering for 'Mutterrecht', instead of matriarchy or matriarchate or vice versa. To my sense, they are just as equivalent and just as improper when applied to anything else than what Bachofen meant. Both Tylor and

Malinowski appear to be simply mistaken.<sup>1</sup> But it is in Malinowski that the mistake is more conspicuous when he is seen to introduce the concept of potestas in his 'matriarchal' society, a potestas vested in the maternal uncle. It is clear that the proper term, in the case of the Trobrianders, should be 'avunculo-potestal' and not otherwise, but a catchword such as 'matriarchal' is hard to get rid of. Incidentally, whether the term is a Greek or a Latin compound, or an English or German derivation of a Latin root \*regs-, or of yet another primitive Latin root \*potse- does not make much difference ultimately in meaning.<sup>2</sup>

If it is proposed to retain the term 'matriarchal' to qualify the society under examination, it is for reasons provided by its ideological and actual structure,<sup>and</sup> its mythical and actual history, and in consideration of the status of women in their role of mothers, sisters, and wives.

The Tetun-speaking kingdom of Wehali, and its immediate neighbours of the plain of south middle Timor, have a strictly matrilineal and uxorilocal social organization. They are surrounded by a hill people, most of them also Tetun-speakers, whose organization is essentially patrilineal and virilocal. The contrast is

---

1

Tylor (1885:459) "...among the Arabs to this day, strongly patriarchal as their society is in most respects, there survives that most matriarchal idea that one's nearest relative is not one's father, but one's maternal uncle". Malinowski (1927:26) "'Matriarchate' - the rule of the mother - does not in any way entail a stern, terrible mother-virago".

2

Partridge 1958:s.v.

not limited to these features and it does not amount to a just-so table of oppositions between two neighbouring and antagonistic cultures. On the contrary, a wide politico-religious system underlies and justifies this contrast.

Firstly, the system has been made possible by several extraneous conditions which belong to the physical order. The Wehali social system would probably not have developed in this way on a coral reef or in a steppe, to take extreme examples.

Secondly, there are historical reasons for the system to have been devised and applied with an aim towards political dominance, but this is a native theory and, although as such it has no more and no less value than Bachofen's, it can be maintained that it ~~holds its~~ value as a rationalization of an existing situation. The existence of the politico-religious system as it stands, or as it ought to be ideally, and the entailments of it in most sectors of this culture, belong to the sociological order.

Thirdly, a complementary study of the genesis and aetiology of this culture would have to be done on a psychological level. But, at this stage of the study, only indications can be made of the directions into which this might be done.

Although each of the three orders corresponds to a particular aspect of time - permanence of the physical order, synchrony for the sociological and diachrony for the psychological conditions - it is evident that they are all intricately interwoven in reality.

The conditions of the physical order are those of geography, climate and general environment, as well as

those of physical anthropology and of the material culture of the regions considered.

In this island of the Little Sunda Archipelago, Wehali in the south plain of its middle part, has been kept away from foreign contacts through the centuries by a central mountain ridge, on the one hand, and by an inhospitable sea, on the other. The quality of the soil <sup>and</sup> the climate favoured a relative prosperity and variety in production in exchange of minimum labour. Land was, and still is, easily available.

These peoples of middle Timor distinguish themselves in general by the use of a language, Tetun, which belongs more closely to the Common Indonesian family than those of most of their hill neighbours, particularly those of Eastern Timor where affinities are noticeable with languages of the West Irian peninsula (Vogelkop). Among the Tetun-speakers themselves, it is the peoples of the south plains of Wehali and Suai who are also the most distinctly Indonesian in their physical characters ~~in comparison~~ <sup>with</sup> ~~respect~~ of their hill neighbours, an impression which is confirmed by an analysis of the data recorded by Vroklage in 1937 and tabulated by Barge [1942, 43-45].

On the one hand, the ecological conditions provide ~~few~~ <sup>little</sup> opportunities inside the society of Wehali to create a spirit of competition and emulation, while on the other hand, they add up with these cultural features to mean for Wehali a superiority over its hill neighbours, due to a greater ease in life and a higher degree of refinement in manners and appearance.

The conditions of the sociological order belong to several domains. Whether in the mythical history and in whatever can be safely reconstructed of the actual

history of the area, or from the recent attempts of the administration to deal with its organization, diarchy stands out as the main principle. According to it, there is a male and a female power, <sup>the</sup> female power is vested in Wehali kingship which is dominant over the male vassal states. In the diarchy, women in Wehali are also dominant over men in their households. In matters of kinship and marriage, descent and succession, uxori-locality appears to be both the consequence and the condition of women's dominance, or at least the necessary guarantee for its upholding.

Strict uxori-locality results in the ideas of permanence, stability, <sup>and</sup> continuity being associated with femininity and in leaving to women alone the ultimate authority, although it is by no means a gynaeocratic authority as had been imagined by Bachofen and ratified by some of its most daring followers such as, for instance, M. and M. Vaerting in 'The Dominant Sex', Pierre Gordon in 'Initiation sexuelle et évolution', Robert Graves in 'The Greek Myths'.

Men indeed have some authority in their hands too. This is particularly the case <sup>with</sup> of the administrative authority, <sup>which</sup> ~~but it~~ is a recent duty imposed upon them since colonization has reached their country. The traditional system does not require ~~from~~ them to be anything else than the visible representatives, the mobile deputies or holders of powers kept under the custody of women in the form of the houses themselves and their sacred contents. The rule of uxori-locality was not consequently detrimental to the traditional lord in the accomplishment of his functions, since he had so few of these. ~~or~~ <sup>to</sup> put it in another way, his functions were

made so insignificant because, as a result of the uxori-local rule of residence, he had to live away from his 'constituency'. The carrying out of the recently imposed administrative duties results for those who are involved in them (the lords mainly, but also some civil servants) in a compromise, temporary neolocality. In the traditional government, the lords were neither war-leaders nor judicial officers; commoner officials were vested with these functions. But even for them, powers of these kinds which they exerted in the name of their femininely connotated lords, were only held in the name of their own mothers and sisters whose houses were the seat of these functions. Ultimately, it was in the hands of the women that these powers laid.

Mobility of the men, who really neither belong to their natal nor to their conjugal houses, results for them in a loss of stability and of consciousness of permanence for their enterprises. They are not ~~the~~ essential, either in the state or in the house; they are the transitory element.

The main result of these dispositions for the suzerain kingdom of Wehali is a <sup>division</sup> ~~dissociation~~ of political power into a passive, sacred power and an active, profane but insignificant - power, a situation which accounts for the difficulties encountered in the attempts made from the beginning of the century to make regents out of the local lords.

In a parallel way, the situation in the house, which ~~lies within the range~~ <sup>from a</sup> ~~of~~ nuclear family to <sup>a</sup> matrilineage, results, through uxori-locality, in an elimination of its male members (brothers and maternal uncles) and their replacement by male residents (husbands and fathers).

Two consequences of this will be apparent in the many aspects of the life of this society. Firstly, the ephemeral value attached to men in their roles of husband and fathers <sup>is</sup> ~~as~~ seen in the difficulties they encounter in keeping their individual names remembered for more than a couple of generations, and <sup>in</sup> the vanity of their brother-uncle roles in their natal households, once they are separated from them at marriage.

Secondly, <sup>there is</sup> the continuity of the female line which suffers no interruption, and the inseparability of women from their houses.

In part one, the society will be examined in its external aspects, its environment, and in its dealings with <sup>the environment</sup> ~~it~~ in the past and in the present. The relative length of this first part is warranted by the absence of any comprehensive presentation of its setting in the literature.

In the second part, the society will be seen from an internal point of view, as it were, that is from the house, governed as it is by the exigencies of the rule of uxori-locality. The attitudes of its members and residents towards one another, in relation to their sex, to their status of kin or affine, and to the formal position which they occupy in the house will be seen ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~along~~ the various stages of the building of a house and in the progress of some of the events sacred and profane which take place in it. The house will appear, it is hoped, as a microcosm of the society of the south plains of Wehali and Suai and of the Great Timor Empire as it is conceived to have existed.

The diarchy will thus appear not exclusively as a political principle but as one effect of the great sexual

dichotomy of persons, things, and concepts in which the southern Tetun-speakers classify their world. In this male and female classification, the dominance of womanhood is affirmed through an inversion of some of the most classic couples of oppositions and enhanced by an overevaluation of whatever is thus femininely characterized. Death, hell and darkness, all sacred and feminine, are considered in the logic of the system as superior to, or more powerful than, life, coolness and light, all profane and masculine characters. The house itself is the tight frame where these associations and oppositions are illustrated throughout life and death, and maintained in the succession of the generations.

The plan of the house, which by itself conditions the segregation of the sexes, <sup>manifests these</sup> ~~realizes the concretization of~~ the oppositions in ~~relation to~~ its masculine and feminine compartments. Under the pretence of showing respect towards women, the men really reveal their fear <sup>of</sup> ~~from~~ the women. The excesses of these attitudes and feelings in turn reveal an excessive concern for, and an excessive control of, sexual matters.

Fear of sex and fear of women will find sufficient illustrations in numerous aspects of social life. This attitude of one sex towards the other is the basis of the ideology of women's dominance. As this fear is dereistic, indeed it is unwarranted by reality, its genesis would need a particular study which is not attempted here, for it would have been necessary to approach this field with a full awareness of the developments of ethology, primatology and palaeoanthropology for an assessment, specially, of the fundamental nature of the mother-son bond.



NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION AND  
TRANSCRIPTION OF TETUN WORDS

Tetun Language was not written prior to the introduction of Latin script. The earliest transcription of Tetun words is found in Pigafetta's report (circa 1525) on his travels through the Eastern Archipelago. He mentions there the names of the settlements of the four south coast kings: 'oibich lichsana suai et Cabanaza'. The name of the first port to be mentioned on Timor, Atapupu, in the Tetun-speaking area, is transcribed ATAFUFFUZ by Diogo Ribeiro on the map he drew in 1527 and in 1529.

Many factors intervened in the various modes of transcription: place of origin of the informants and interpreters, standard of pronunciation at the time of recording, degree of attention paid by the recorder, but most of all his own nationality, Italian in the case of Pigafetta, Portuguese and Dutch for most subsequent travellers, missionaries, colonial servants.

Oibich	Lichsana,	Suai	and Cabanaza
have undergone the following variations:			
Ai Bikoe	Lixsan, Lixan	Soay	Camanace
Oi Bikoni	Loksan	Soeway	Cumenace
Babico	Lioksang	Soeai	Camenassa
Wai Wikoe	Likossá, Liquiça		Kamannassa

These names to my ear, are best rendered as

Wewiku,	Likusaen,	Suai,	Kamanassa
---------	-----------	-------	-----------

although many local and individual variations can be found. For instance Babiku is very often heard for Wewiku, especially in the district which bears that name. Similarly for Liksa, Soai, Kamnassa, but I tend to adopt the pronunciation and the transcription which prevail in Wehale (in the literature sometimes written Behale, Vaihali or Wai Hale). It is also the spelling which is adopted at

present by the Administration and the school teachers. They are inspired in this - quite rightly - by the mode of spelling of the modern Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia). The former Dutch oe is written u, the intervocalic voiceless consonants are no longer doubled as they used to be in : Tettoem, Malakka and Kamanassa, for instance.

Consonants in Tetun are: l, m, n, s, t. Several other consonants are not quite stable; they vary from one place to another and also from one individual to another sometimes.

b and w as in Wewiku ~ Bebiku

f and v as in vover ~ fofer, oar

d and r. The word for 'wild duck' is quite remarkable and is always quoted as an example of the diversity of pronunciation according to the locality by the people themselves:

kdare in Wehali

kdade in Suai

krade and krare in Wewiku

K is quite plain in most cases as in kahuk, blowpipe but it is only very slightly sounded, almost unnoticeable when it precedes an initial consonant, voiced or not.

<u>kdare</u>	could be	<u>dare</u>	wild duck
<u>kbadak</u>	" "	<u>badak</u>	short
<u>ktasak</u>	" "	<u>tasak</u>	ripe, cooked
<u>kroman</u>	" "	<u>roman</u>	clear
<u>kmeda</u>	" "	<u>meda</u>	'kuskus', a small tree marsupial,

without any change of semantic value, whereas the change of a final k for an n very often conveys an important modification of meaning, as in: tasak: ripe, cooked

tasan: silver ornament,  
not the 'crude'

silver of coins (Netherlands Indies guilders, Mexican pe and Portuguese escudos) but silver which has been melted ('cooked') and cast into ornaments such as arm-rings, ch plates, etc.

~~It further happens to~~ k, when it is intervocalic, ~~it~~ is aspirated. The intensity of this aspiration varie with the speaker more than with the locality and is generally ignored in transcription. Laka, shining, burning, would be best rendered as lahka, kokon, to try, as kohkon. But neither is it aspirated in niki, flying- nor in fukun, knuckle. Aspiration also occurs in laku, the 'musang' civet-cat, but neither in luka or nukak, sm pox, nor in bikan, chinaware plate or dish. I ~~just~~ mention this particularity of the intervocalic k, follow a posterior vowel, ~~and~~ <sup>but</sup> as I am not sure whether it is a matter of fashion or of dialect, I shall ignore it in writing as do other users of <sup>the</sup> Tetun language.

H is always well sounded, although it has a tendenc to disappear when intervocal in rapid speech, as in i(h)a at, and in o(h)in, this, just past (in space and time).

In a couple of cases its position in the word has local variations:

Wehali	h.o'o,	to kill	<u>ha'i</u> ,	fire
Nth Coast	oho	" "	<u>ahi</u>	"
Suai	h.o'o	" "	<u>ahi</u>	"

Finally h is the sign of infinitive in most verbs and in their 1st and 2nd persons of the plural. Verbs with initial h are conjugated very regularly as follows:

<u>Halo</u> ,	to do, to make, to cause to.	<del>sing</del>
Sing,	1 k.alo	plural 1 h.alo
	2 m.alo	2 h.alo
	3 n.alo	3 r.alo/n.alo

In ~~the~~ connexion <sup>with</sup> of consonants, it could be added that there is no trace in Tetun of a final glottal stop of the Malay hamzah kind.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand a velar click is found, but its use is strictly confined to the female sex, and ~~that~~ <sup>is used</sup> to express <sup>anything</sup> from simple disagreement to a denial or refusal which admits no discussion.

As for vowels, a, u and i have much the same value as they have in Indonesian, as well as o and e. But there is another o, or better ɔ, which is low and back sound as in toko, which means gecko or in teko, to cough, and is consequently very onomatopoeic. The sound ɔ is scarcely met.

E, besides ~~of~~ its normal é value of the French épou as in Tetun feto, woman, also has that of the French è mère as in Tetun fèn, wife. As the second e is less frequent than the first I shall only indicate the second by a diacritic sign (l'accent grave) as shown in the example just quoted.

The length of vowels is variable and it seems generally to correspond to the accentuation as well. Most of the time the stress is on the penult~~ima~~, and as such needs no particular sign. When the long vowel is an o it is better written ou than ō or o:, provided the u is not too much (given) distinct sounding; for example: fou or foun, new, has a diphthong which is very similar to that found in the Malagasy vao, which has the same meaning. In other cases the long vowel will be simply followed by a colon. Very often two vowels follow one another without combination. When an e followed by an o the Dutch used to write a capital E to avoid any confusion with their rendition of the sound u, as in oE, rattan and in boEk,

1

A hamzah however occurs in the language of the neighbour Bunak or Buna' of Lamaknen, Maukatar, etc.

with this language later than did the Portuguese, not knowing that such an m should be sounded n. The case of Tetun is not isolated, the same happened to the name of the island of Ceram, for Seran.

The final m is now so much adopted, that I heard educated people say: 'We ourselves say Tetun, but in Indonesian it is said Tetum.'

As for the quotation of Tetun words and their translation in the text it will be done as a rule in the following way. Tetun words and phrases will be underlined and their literal translations will immediately follow between commas. Any additional word or part of word which do not correspond to a word actually present in the original quotation will be bracketed. For instance: ai kanoik, literally piece (of) think(ing). If the literal meaning is not explicit enough or too cacologous a paraphrase will be given after the literal translation.

In order to bring out clearly the semantic element of composite words, such as kanoik above, a hyphen will be used, as in kan-oik, but as the radical is not properly o but oi, face, which may also take the form oin, facing, front of, a point will be used to separate the core of the radical from its inflexional suffix, thus oi.k. Similarly a point will be used to separate the variable from the invariable elements in the derivational prefix kan-, thus k.an. This results in cumbersome writing but the advantage is that it shows immediately the basic meaning of the word k.an-oi.k which appears at once to be derived from h.an- to think, itself an elaboration from oi, face. Incidently hanoin only represents half of the meaning of to think, second half is sometimes expressed and always implied: h.a(n)-neo.n from neo, heart.