USE OF THESIS

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A Bwanalwana trading canoe sets sail from Tubetube.
CHANGING PATHS

An Historical Ethnography of the
Traders of Tubetube

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Except where otherwise acknowledged
in the text, this thesis represents my
original research.

Martha Macintyre

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PREFACE

In reading the accounts of European visitors to southeast Papua in the nineteenth century I have been variously puzzled, enraged and fascinated by their observations. Occasionally a description provoked joyous recognition as some scrap of information, buried in a passage often redolent of colonial racism or pious evangelism, matched my own experience or information. Moresby's description of the Bwanabwana as he first saw it in 1873 was one such piece. He and his men stood on a hill on Kitai and looked eastwards where:

... island after island floated on the bosom of an intense blue sea, some volcanic, lofty, and rugged, others coralline, low, white and covered with graceful trees, with every variety of form and tint, of light and shadow, in the nearest ones, whilst those beyond faded out as they distanced into dim shapes, faint clouds - very dreams of islands -

(Moresby 1875:154).

More than a century later I too was amazed by the beauty of the Bwanabwana. No maps had prepared me for the profusion of tiny islands; no photographs had captured the brilliance and variety of colours I saw in the sea, reefs and islands. In writing this thesis I have often been afflicted by the Bwanabwana disease yanua kasiebwa, a homesickness for the beauty of these "very dreams of islands", and the people who live there.

The field research on which this thesis is based was conducted over a two-year period. I spent a total of just over eleven months in the Bwanabwana, from September 1979 to March 1980, June of 1980 and from February to May 1981.
On Tubetube I lived in Malapisi hamlet which is adjacent to the main hamlet of Bwasaikaene where the mission and primary school are located. All public meetings were held on the beach directly in front of my house — the area that had been the "barracks" during the period of colonial administration. I was ideally situated to observe the public life of the community.

Fred Boita of Dekawaese hamlet was the only Tubetube person who spoke English fluently and he became my assistant, interpreter and friend. I was adopted by his family and in the process acquired six sisters, three brothers and innumerable other relatives. Two of my elder sisters, Deidei and Edith, gave me two daughters, Catherine and Mary, who lived with me throughout my fieldwork. Everybody on Tubetube assisted my research but I must express special appreciation of the contributions made by my adoptive family, the people of Dekawaese. My sisters and daughters became my companions and instructors. My thanks to my parents Idi and Boita, to Deidei who was my pottery teacher; to Edith who was my neighbour and confidante and to my other sisters, Genai, Waulai, Sainema and Bala; also to my brothers Michael and Ebenezer.

During my first stay I concentrated on learning the language. Fred taught me for several hours each morning while my sisters insisted that I use my limited conversational skills as I sat or worked with them in the afternoons. After four months I had a passive knowledge of the language. By the end of my fieldwork I could speak fluently enough to deliver a farewell speech. Although I reached the stage of being able to transcribe and translate taped interviews, I depended on Fred to explain the various levels of meaning and full import of the texts I produced. As my fieldwork progressed I spent most of my mornings...
interviewing and my evenings transcribing tapes. People were not at all intimidated by the microphone and they often sat by as Fred or I transcribed their words, expanding or explaining their original accounts.

Of course much of my data was acquired simply by observing and asking questions about what I saw. In October 1979, after only six weeks in the field, I went to Ole in the Laselinie Group to attend a sol (memorial feast) and I had to work unassisted by an interpreter. On that occasion a young man sat beside me on a house platform and throughout the day recorded a commentary of events. An older man from Kwalaia and a Koyaggaugau woman also offered to explain the ceremony so I sat uncomprehendingly as they spoke into the microphone. Later I was able to understand what these people recorded, and the texts from a total of six hours of tape included information more rich and detailed than I could possibly have elicited. I never discovered the name of my Kwalaia informant but remain indebted to him for his invaluable words.

During my fieldwork I observed all the transactions referred to as modern Tubetube customs in this thesis. There were several deaths on the island and on each occasion I attended the funeral. Kune traders from Dobu, Panaeat and Murua visited the Bwanabwana while I was there so that I was able to observe transactions and interview traders. I used Tubetube language for these interviews, my adoptive mother’s brother Russell Silas interpreting the Panaeat language for me. As a member of the susu who own Dekawaese hamlet I participated in several of the mortuary exchanges described in the final chapter.

My major informants on Tubetube were Panetan Silas and John Wesley, men of Leikikiu hamlet. Panetan is the pastor and the acknowledged leader of the community. Both men are important kune traders and are
John Wesley displaying two fine mwaliku.

Matwele, a famous kuna trader from Buyangu.

Panetan Silas, a kune trader of renown, pastor and leader of the Tubo community.

Karioa, his brother, one of my major informants on kuna.
considered experts on all aspects of Tubetube history and custom. They spent many hours explaining trade and exchange, telling me stories of the past and discussing their customs and those of their ancestors. They were eloquent and patient teachers who often prepared an outline of the information I asked about and then returned and spoke at length upon particular subjects. So for example, when I asked Panetan "What is a kitomwa?", he delivered a lecture on kitomwa, defining them, explaining their various uses, the ways of acquiring them and the ways of talking about them.

My debt to both these men is obvious in this thesis for I often quote from their long lectures to me. Very often they provided me with analytical insights and drew comparisons between their own customs and those of their neighbours which became the basis for my own analysis. John and Panetan first pointed out to me the effects of pacification on Tubetube kune and the similarities between appeasement and kune exchanges. While it is axiomatic that texts do not "speak for themselves", I must confess that when I compared my own discussion of pacification with those of my informants I was inclined to think that these texts were the exceptions. It is always the case that an ethnographer's greatest debt is to those people who are recorded as "informants" — my debt to Panetan Silas and John Wesley is immeasurable.

The great kune men of Koyagautu: Wasalaulau, Toaladi, Matoa and Mwalubelai, spent many hours explaining the intricacies of their trading paths and the meaning of kune. Mwalubelai and his wife Kuwadegu were my hosts during my visits to that island and I thank them for their hospitality and assistance.

Special thanks are also due to the following elders, dualao and kedulumao whose knowledge of the past and prodigious memories provided
me with much of the data for this thesis: Kwatau (Susannah), Elanoa, Gwen, Panisi, Naiduwalu and two men who died during my visit, Kwauki and Abiu.

Mr. Luke Ume, a Tubetube man who now lives in Port Moresby has contributed greatly to my understanding of Bwanabwana language and culture. He has assisted me with translations, explained subtleties and complexities in my written texts and corrected many errors. A graduate of the University of Papua New Guinea, Luke Ume represents a generation of Papua New Guineans whose experience and education makes them more fitting interpreters of their own culture than people like me who spend only a year doing field research. I thank him sincerely for his enthusiastic support of my work and his generous contributions to its accuracy. All errors are my own.

Almost all Tubetube people are literate in their own language. Throughout this thesis I have used the orthography which they use. While I am aware that this is a departure from scholarly practice, I believe that, in view of their pride in their literacy, it would be presumptuous and invidious to impose my system of spelling on their words.

I acknowledge the assistance of members of the Milne Bay Provincial Government administration who gave me access to records and provided me with information about the Bwanabwana area: Mr. P. Polisbo, Mr. Tom Elaisa, Mr. Verne Guise, Mr. Luke Paiteli, and Mr. John Standing. I thank also the people who offered me help and hospitality in Samarai and Alotau: Mr. Albie Munt, Mr. John Wynands and especially Dr. Peter Barss and Martha Barss who were supportive friends and whose warm welcome I came to depend upon whenever I made the long journey to the mainland.
My thanks also to Mr. Levi George who, on a visit to Canberra, spent several hours being interviewed about the Louisiades and trade alliances.

I received assistance from other anthropologists who have worked in Milne Bay Province. I extend my gratitude to the following people: Dr. Debbora Battaglia, Ms Shirley Campbell, Dr. Fred Damon, Dr. Geoffrey Irwin, Dr. Maria Lepowsky, Professor Nancy Munn, and Dr. Erhard Schlesier.

The Australian National University provided a scholarship and funded my field research on Tubetub. My work has benefitted from discussions with Dr. Jim Allen, Dr. Douglas Yen of Prehistory and Professor Nigel Oram, who was a Visiting Fellow in the Research School of Pacific Studies. Dr. Tom Dutton and Mr. Malcolm Ross of the Linguistics Department were most helpful.

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In producing this thesis I was assisted by Mr. Keith Campbell and Ms W. Mumford who drew the maps, Ms Norma Chin who typed the manuscript and staff of the Instructional Resources Unit who printed the photographs. I am extremely appreciative of their services.

Finally I am indebted to my supervisors. Professor Roger Keesing was always prepared to help me and his critical insights were invariably offered with warmth and encouragement. Dr. Michael Young spent many hours discussing my work with me. He managed to make challenging and
fundamental criticisms almost painless and he was encouraging during periods of self-doubt. I thank him for his personal and intellectual support.

Sections of this thesis have been published or are to appear in forthcoming publications. Chapter 4 is in Vol. 18, No. 1 (1983) of The Journal of Pacific History; Chapter 8 is to appear in a volume on Massim Mortuary Rituals edited by F. Damon and R. Wagner; part of Chapter 2 has been included in an essay for Modernization and the Emergence of a Landless Peasantry, edited by G. Appell; and part of Chapter 5 has been included in a jointly written paper with J. Allen which is to be included in a volume on "Pacific Production Systems", edited by D. Yen.
A NOTE ON MY USE OF THE WRITINGS OF REV. A. GUY AND REV. J.T. FIELD

I have made extensive use of the writings of two Methodist missionaries, most of which are unpublished or very hard to find in libraries.

Rev. J.T. Field, the first missionary on Tubetube, kept detailed diaries (now lost), wrote two articles on Tubetube customs and contributed regular reports to the Methodist magazine The Spectator. No complete run of this paper exists in any library. A long letter describing the burial of a Tubetube leader, which he wrote to Rev. George Brown, is published as an appendix to Brown's Melanesians and Polynesians (1910). The published writings of Field which I used were mostly in the form of cuttings, kindly made available to me by Dr. Alan Tippett of Canberra. They form part of the collected papers of Lorimer Fison, who was head of the Wesleyan Overseas Mission, when Field was in Papua. The cuttings unfortunately often lack pagination. I attempted to find dates of publication and page references by examining the copies of The Spectator in the La Trobe Library, Melbourne. In view of the limited time available for me to undertake archival research I decided against this when I discovered that the relevant copies were in disarray and many were in such a state of disintegration that correct pagination had to be deduced, as corners had been torn off. I was unable to find some of the articles I had seen in the Fison Collection. For this reason many of the citations from Field appear in the text with the year of publication as the only reference.
The papers of Rev. Alfred Guy are currently held by his descendents. These papers are uncatalogued and consist of diaries; letters from Guy to his family in Australia; letters from Papuans to Guy; notes for sermons in Tubetube and English; exercise books recording customs and language and observations about the lives of the Papuans with whom he worked. A collection of Guy's work on the Tubetube language is in the possession of Professor A. Capell.

Guy was an amateur short story writer and his papers include the manuscripts for three unpublished novels: an autobiography, a story for children called "Yamua Niu" (A Place of Coconuts/Coconut Village) about life in a Papuan village, and "Highway Up to God" which is the story of the conversion of a southern Massim community. In "Highway Up to God" the story is woven into a description of the customs and beliefs of the islanders before Europeans arrived. Although it is set in an imaginary Bunaman village it is apparent from his notes for the novel that the bulk of his information came from Tubetube informants whom Field had taught to write and who followed him to Bunama in 1901 when the mission was relocated. Guy collected accounts from elderly informants between 1918 and 1934. A few of the original documents remain, interleaved with Guy's notes and elaborated translations. These faded tattered papers, written in pencil by men and women who were among the first literate Papuans, record myths (6 pages), traditional beliefs and customs associated with war and burial (9 pages). All are written in Tubetube language. Only one writer, Kelebi Toginutu who was a Bunama man married to a Tubetube woman — records his people's traditions with the critically comparative eye of the recent convert. He became the first ordained Papuan Methodist Minister and worked on Tubetube for many years. The other writers express themselves simply, only occasionally
noting the demise of a custom since the arrival of the mission.

Guy was an excellent photographer and I have included some of his photographs in this thesis. Aware that some of the customs he observed were “dying” he set about to record many of them on film. So, while some may deplore his influence, which contributed to the deaths of some practices, we can at least be grateful that he saw some value in photographing and describing them when they were alive.

Alfred Guy was a major figure in the transformation of Tubetube culture and is remembered as such today. It was his prominence in their oral history that inspired me to search for his relatives after my first field trip in the hope of finding his papers. The search yielded far more material than I could even read in the time available to me.

One of the most productive ways that I used these papers was by taking copies of photographs back to Tubetube. These stimulated discussion, reminiscences and debate about past events and people, enabling me to record data that in all probability would have been inaccessible to me. As news of the photographs spread, people came from other islands to see pictures of their parents and themselves as children.

My references to the Guy papers are mainly limited to subjects about which I had oral testimony from modern informants, either because it endorses their evidence or enhances it in some respect. As most of Guy’s notebooks lack page numbers, so do my references to them. I have used titles only where he did himself, for example when referring to his notebook entitled “Some Fighting Customs”. It is likely that some of the Guy Papers will be deposited in the National Library, Canberra. I have copies of the three unpublished novels and some photographs in my personal possession. I am extremely grateful to the late Mr. Frank
Eliaam Guy and Mrs. Gwen Brockhouse for their generosity in making their father's papers available to me and for their permission to reproduce some of his photographs.
ABSTRACT

In this thesis I examine processes of economic and social change and the ways in which they have transformed the small island community of Tubetube in Milne Bay Province, P.N.G. since contact. The study is based on anthropological fieldwork and historical research and proceeds from an analysis of the modern economy.

Prior to European intervention in the region, Tubetube people were sea-faring traders who were able to support a large population on imported goods. They were participants in the network of inter-island exchange called kune (kula) and my study of the economic changes which affected trading relationships entails an assessment of Tubetube kune over the last hundred years. I argue that pacification, the introduction of European goods, and the Christian conversion of the Tubetube people effected profound changes in their trading economy and the system of alliances between separate communities. I explore the nature of these changes and the conservative ideologies of exchange which have sustained and adapted to new political relationships and economic strategies.
INTRODUCTION IN KAINA TUBETUBE


Yagu esinuwane Tubetube yagu sitadi kaiwena esanele wasa na silele o edi'ededena iyaele buki kolili imiyamiya, bwaite ede'ededene iyaele buki kolili imiyamiya, bwaite ede'ededene siya dimdim bagubagunali tolaoma bwanabwana siya silele. Ali sauga ulisi sigita Bwanabwana kikiuana na ana tomo sinabinabi sosi. Yanua kaigeda besiele nima kaigeda o labuji nume kolili sitro'oto'olo, susu yanalialaone silalaki.


Tubetube tomoliyao beyabeyana siya tokalea yo siya tomo tokankan yali loumi kolili. Na saugana tapwalolo yo gavemani yo togimwa.
siyawatagili yali miyamiya sibui.


Yagu gitesipwa yanua kaigeda kaigeda kalolimena bwaite besiele nume kali nabinabi mwa besiele labui o yaiyona na tomo o Tubetube kana boda ibeku ilgibi 140. Yagu gitesipwa yaboyol iyaelemo sikalakalau keikeile, tupwaliyao sileyaleyau kalaune kolili. Na iyamo tubulao mumugali sikwalamaleleko.

Bagubagunana bwaite buki kalona mena yawalo masala besiele ala bwanabwana kaivena, gubesi tomo yalimiyamiya, yali lololoina yali paisoa kolili; gubesi tomo yali soiso yana tabe man, susu yo boda, Yakawatoki lalakina tomo meuloimi kolimiukaiwena yami saguiyau miyamiya kana kamwasa kolili, kawa elium yo ginali meuloili kolili.

Buki luvaluwali namena tubulao mumugali kaleya kolili gubesi kaleyane yali yalautomli tabi gubesi yali labini. Isa kitomwa kamwasa lalakili kolili sisagesageni siya besiele susu o diya yali gogo, tabe isa pwoali koina silaoma o mwana ali gogo maisali. Tupwana bwaite tubulao mumugali yakalailiya taatubalao kolili. Siya tabe yali taatubalao kolili bwaite kamwasaan sikayale. Tupwana buki kolili yayasili lobaili, tupwana lete (Mr. Field yo Mr. Guy siya mesinale bagubagunali) sauga tupwali gabemani yo togimwala yali lipoti kikiuli kolili yayasili lobaili. Bwaite yagu loya kolili bwaite ede'edede meuloina yapei gogon na sabana takatali meuloila kaleya kana kamwasa yo miyamiya saugaline kaloli mensa bomamo tokololo.

Tabe yae'edede yoi gubesi taukanona o beyabeyana kan ali gimwagimwala yan'ana siya ala tali bwanabwana saliamena besiele Duau yo
Bwasilaki. Yae ede'edeyoi miyamiya an bui o sensi - dimdim ali kilam, kan patuna walwaluli, gulewa ilopanaisi susupani. Bwaite buine o sensine miyamiya kaiwena yawalo masalayagili na sabana takatai towea miyamiya kana koleya baguna yo yagu gitesipw a bolimene 1979 ilaoma 1981.

Iyamo ginauli tupwaliyao nige naga sibubui o nige sisesensi koinaele bwaite yagu walo masala ana kaba mwamwasi koina kan yawalo masala mumugala boita o yala toboita kaiweli - buga, ligaliga ya soi. Sensine kalonamena tupwana ala kamwasa o mumugala beyabeya siyaele meyali kaiwe simiyamiya kulukulu lamena yokatelamena. Susu, man o boda kaigeda ty a ginauli lalakina Tubetube kalonamena; boda kaigeda yo man mekali yanasaoy lau bagu kaiwena. Yala toboita taebe kaiweli tapaisowa (soi) kaiwena ele tayakasisiyagili taebe koina kaba loina yala miyamiya kaiweli ta kayakayale.

Tupwana bwaite mumugane ikwalaleleko o sensi na kalona mena nuwanuwatu inane ikaiwe koinaele bwaite yagu bukine mwa besiele "Mumugala Tubweina yo Sensine" kaiwena te yalele Tubetube kalonamena.

Esanaele bwaite yagu paisowane kan siya tomo nige Tubetube wasana sikakatai kan siyasili, taebe ginaule tupwaliyao kan nige kaloliyao meuloina yalilivasi. Besiele kan mulimena kabu bwaite kaiweli yae ede'edede.

Iyamo komiu Tubetube tomoliyao yanaliyao toyasili, nuwagu inae esanaele tupwana ginauli kan nigele yalelele yataluli bwaite bukine kalonamena. Siya besiele nuwatu'tu lalakili koliyau. Yaboiyoi yagu paisowa kalonamena nigele yalilivasi yagu yaliyaya miyamiya kaiwena Tubetube kalonamena. Koinaele nuwanuwagu bwaite koina yawalo masala komiu toyasili, tomo Tubetube koina simiyamiya siya tomulolo yo tosagou. Yanuwatu kalatan meisa Fred yo Panetan yagu neil kalakala bili yalilivasi koliyau. Nige sauga yabo siba "Iya yawasosi dimdimne
kuluKulu kololo!" Tabe yanuatu yali talawasi yo yali ede'edede John Wesley ibomayo iede'edede italawasiyan ko yamalumalu e dagelagu ikamkamna. Tabe Leikiki taubala yabo italawasiyan. Bwaite yagu gite besiele komiu tomo Tubetubeyami miyamiy ya mu mugani tu bimiyao kollili ilaoma kabona iyaele nuwaniu mena yo am li ede'edede kaloli mena.


Yakawatoki boda Malapisi kollili kaiwena sitalam yali yano wa mena yamiya. Yali yano wa idewadewa sos wi na nuwagu iyai. Yakawa kagutoki yali keduluma Walolo Panisi koina kaiwena ele nigele imunamuna munai yagu yana yano wa miyan'na kaiwena.

Tabe besiele siya tomo Koyagagu, Ole yo Naluwaluwal. Yakawatoki lalakina yami mulolo yo yamisaguiyau kaiwena. Na Tubetube kalonamena numeliyao yao yano wa yi kau kaka ko tomo kaigeda kaigeda wa yagu eliam wa ototoguwa. Yakawatoki siya sine sineo toykenayagau kan
pelipeli koina, gulewa kabi koina, kan loliga koina yo kaina Tubetube yakeyan'na koina. Siya bwaite sinesineone mwa Edith Boita, Deidei Arthur, Edith Moabe, Jean Panetan, Doris Wesley, Baiiala Ben yo sine yaboilo un'aki ge esana yakakatai esanaele kasiebwa ilobaai yako koinele meyagu yakasisi. Meuloili bwaite sinesineone a'livasi koliau mumuga yo gubesi miyamiya Tubetube kalonamena, besiele Tubetube sinesineo'liyao yali miyamiya o sinesine Tubetube koina toweya yali miyamiya kana koley.

Bwaite buKine koina nuwanuwagu lalakina yalivasi "Mulolo" koinele mwa bwaite walone yagu livasina ilalakisosi, esanaele yakatai "Mulolo" iya ginauli lalakina Tubetube kalonamena. Koinele bwaite bukine yaeyawa komiu boda Tubetube kolimiu besiele kilakilalagü yami mulolo yo suguiyau maisali.